

SICK LEAVE BANK RULES

The Negotiated Agreement between the Board of Education of Prince George's County and the Prince George's County Educators' Association provides for the establishment of a Sick Leave Bank as follows:

Article 19.3 Employees' Sick Leave Bank

An Employees' Sick Leave Bank was established effective July 1, 1978.

a. All unit members on active duty with the Prince George's County Public Schools are eligible to join the Sick Leave Bank six (6) months following his/her first day on duty and must submit the application within thirty (30) days of the first day of eligibility. Employees who elected not to join the Sick Leave Bank upon first becoming eligible will have a six-month waiting period after joining the Bank before becoming eligible to use the Bank. Participation is voluntary but requires contribution to the Bank. Only contributors will be permitted to use the Bank for payment for qualifying incapacitating or catastrophic during regularly scheduled duty days.

b. The Sick Leave Bank will be administered by a three (3) member Approval Committee appointed by the President of PGCEA. This committee shall have the responsibility of receiving requests, verifying the validity of requests, recommending approval or denial of the requests, and communicating its decision to the member and Absence Management.

c. The rules for the Sick Leave Bank will be established by a four (4) member Rules Committee, two (2) members appointed by the President of PGCEA, and two (2) members appointed by the Superintendent of Schools of Prince George's County. It shall be the purpose of this committee to recommend such rules, in addition to those provided for in this Agreement, as the committee considers what is appropriate for the operation of the Sick Leave Bank. These recommended rules must be approved by the President of PGCEA and the Superintendent of Schools before said rules take effect. Once approved, the rules will be widely distributed by the Approval Committee.

d. The contribution on the appropriate form will be authorized by the unit member and continued from year to year until cancelled in writing by the unit member. Sick leave properly authorized for contribution to the Bank will not be returned if the unit member effects cancellation. Cancellation on the proper form may be affected at any time and the unit member shall not be eligible to use the Bank as of the effective cancellation date.

e. Contributions shall be made between July 1 and October 1, except for members returning from extended leave which included the enrollment period and new hires who will be permitted to contribute within thirty (30) calendar days of their reassignment and/or start to work. Unit members returning from extended sick leave or disability leave will be permitted to contribute to the Bank only after the approval of the committee.

f. The annual rate of contribution for the school year shall be two and a half (2.5) days of sick leave. The annual rate of contribution for future years shall be determined by the Rules Committee and announced prior to July 1 of each year.

g. The maximum number of duty days that can be granted in any one fiscal year will be the remaining number of duty days a unit member is scheduled to work. In no case will the granting of leave from the Bank cause a unit member to receive more than his annual salary.

h. Members must use all accumulated sick and annual leave before applying for leave from the Bank.

i. The first thirty (30) consecutive calendar days of incapacitating illness or disability must be covered by the employee's own accumulated sick leave, annual leave, or leave without pay the first time said employee qualifies for a grant from the Bank. For subsequent grants from

the Bank, the first ten (10) calendar days of incapacitating illness or disability must be covered by the employee's own accumulated sick leave, annual leave, or leave without pay.

j. Absence Management will receive and review the decision of the Approval Committee. If the grants from the Bank are consistent with the Prince George's County Board of Education's sick leave policies and the rules of the Sick Leave Bank, Absence Management will approve these bank grants to be paid by the Prince George's County Public Schools to the member and shall forward the Bank grants to the appropriate Department for payment. In any case where the decision of Absence Management does not concur with the Approval Committee, Absence Management shall explain the full reason for the difference of opinion.

k. Bank grants will not automatically be carried over from one fiscal year to another. All bank grants will end as of the last duty day of the school year and must be renewed through the Approval Committee each school year.

l. If a unit member does not use all of the days granted from the Bank, the unused Sick Leave Bank days will be returned to the Bank.

m. If the Sick Leave Bank is terminated due to the non-existence of a negotiated agreement with PGCEA, or for any other reason, the days remaining in the Sick Leave Bank shall be returned to the then current members of said Bank, proportionally.

Sick Leave Bank Rules:

1. The Sick Leave Bank may only be used for the contributor's own personal illness; it may not be used for illness of other members of the contributor's family, or by the contributor to remain away from his/her family who is ill.

2. Only contributors will be permitted to use the Bank payment for qualifying incapacitating or catastrophic events during events during regularly scheduled duty days.

3. No employee shall be required, for the purpose of maintaining membership status in the Sick Leave Bank, to contribute more sick leave days than other members.

4. Leave from the Bank may not be used for disabilities which qualify the member for Workmen's Compensation benefits, unless the member has exhausted all Workmen's Compensation leave (Article 17.G1), their own accumulated sick and annual leave, and provided further that the member signs over any Workmen's Compensation checks for temporary disability to the Board. If there are Workmen's Compensation checks paid over to the Board, the Bank will not be charged days, or if charged, will be reimbursed the number of days for which the Workmen's Compensation payment is equivalent to a regular day of pay at the negotiated rate for that employee.

5. When the Approval Committee may reasonably presume that an applicant for a grant or an extension of a grant may be eligible for disability retirement benefits, if available, from the Maryland State Retirement System or Social Security, the Approval Committee will request that the grant applicant apply for disability benefits. Failure on the part of the grant applicant to submit a complete application, including medical information provided by the applicant's physician, within twenty (20) calendar days will disqualify the grant applicant for further Sick Leave Bank payments. Any request (for additional medical information) from the retirement system must be supplied within twenty (20) calendar days or the member's entitlement to Sick Leave Bank payments will automatically cease. The Approval Committee may grant up to a ten (10) day extension based on evidence that the physician could not provide the information within the initial twenty (20) day period.

If disability retirement is denied by the MSRS Board of Trustees, the member shall be obligated to file an appeal within twenty (20) calendar days, and the Approval Committee shall

refer the member to a physician of the committee's choice to obtain a medical prognosis as to whether the member will be able to return to his/her duties. If this report indicates that the member will not be able to resume his/her regular duties, the Approval Committee will require that the member maintain the appeal of the ruling of the retirement system denying disability retirement using the report of the physician as the basis for the continued appeal. If such report indicates that the member may be able to ultimately return to his/her regular duties, the member may dismiss the appeal.

When disability retirement is approved by the MSRS Board of Trustees, any grant from the PGCEA Sick Leave Bank that has been approved will automatically cease at the end of the month in which the disability was approved. The member is eligible to continue to receive a Sick Leave Bank grant until the end of that month.

6. Each separate application for a grant from the Bank must include a new physician's statement on the appropriate PGCEA Sick Leave Bank Form. Should you change physicians AND incur a new illness while on a current grant, then a (10) ten calendar day waiting period will be assessed. This does not include a second opinion(s) for the same illness.

7. A member of the Sick Leave Bank will lose the right to use the benefits of the Sick Leave Bank by:

- a. Termination of employment with the Board of Education of Prince George's County.
- b. Suspension without pay during the period of suspension.
- c. A member's voluntary cancellation of his/her membership in the Sick Leave Bank, as of the effective date of the cancellation.
- d. A member's written authorization to discontinue annual contribution of sick leave day(s) as of the date the contribution becomes due.
- e. Any abuse or misuse of the Rules of the Sick Leave Bank.
- f. While on approved leave of absence, for other than personal illness.
- g. Attending school.
- h. You are capped at one year from any same illness.
- i. No participation in union stipend events, programs or committees.
- j. Engaging in other compensated employment.

8. Grants not exceed the cumulative equivalent of 200 workdays. Upon exhaustion of cumulative 200 workdays of Bank leave, members shall be eligible for additional Bank leave one calendar year after their return to active employment. After satisfying this one-year waiting period of eligibility, a member shall be eligible for an additional cumulative 200 workdays of Bank leave. In no event shall a member receive more than a lifetime equivalent of cumulative 400 workdays of Bank leave while employed by PGCEA. All grant applications are subject to approval or denial based on a method to be determined by the committee established on industry standards.

9. Eligible employees who do not elect to join the Sick Leave Bank at the first opportunity afforded to them will not be permitted to join the Bank until the subsequent annual open enrollment period, July 1 through September 30.

10. The Approval Committee will review and forward to the Board of Education of Prince George's County Absence Management Department its decision on all requests to draw on the Bank within fifteen (15) working days after such request is received at PGCEA.

11. In order for new Bank membership applications to be accepted, the applications must be received at the PGCEA Center by September 30. For a new employee or any employee returning from a leave of absence, the application must be received at PGCEA within thirty (30)

calendar days of the first day on duty. Applications approved by the Approval Committee must be received by the Absence Management Department of the Prince George's County Public Schools within fourteen (14) calendar days after the deadline for receipt of the application at PGCEA.

12. All requests to draw upon the Bank must be upon a PGCEA Sick Leave Bank Request Form and submitted to PGCEA within thirty (30) calendar days of the first date Bank usage is requested.

13. All requests to draw upon the Sick Leave Bank must include a physician's statement confirming the cause of illness or confinement and certifying the existence of a disability to perform assigned duties. The form must be personally signed by a physician.

14. An applicant may be required to undergo a medical review by a physician of the Committee's choice at any time, at the member's expense. This physician's report is to be sent directly to the committee before the committee may act upon the unit member's application for a grant from the Bank.

15. In case a contributor's incapacity is of such a nature that he/she cannot personally apply for a grant, his/her application may be submitted to the Committee by his/her authorized agent or member of his/her family on his/her behalf.

16. Leave grants from the Bank shall be in units of not more than thirty (30) consecutive workdays.

17. Applicants may submit requests for extension of Bank leave grants before their prior grants expire. (Use regular Sick Leave Bank Request Form.)

18. In cases where the committee disapproves an application for membership, an application for use of the Bank, or for an extension of such use, the applicant may appeal his/her request to the PGCEA Board of Directors.

19. All forms for application for participation in the Bank, withdrawal of sick leave days, and cancellation shall be available at the Board of Education of Prince George's Absence Management Office and the PGCEA office and shall be sent to any unit member at his/her request.

20. Copies of all PGCEA Sick Leave Bank donation forms, request forms, and membership cancellations shall be marked for approval or denial by the committee. Following such action, the committee shall disperse copies of the forms to the unit member, the Board of Education of Prince George's County Absence Management, and the PGCEA Sick Leave Bank Administrator.

21. The Board of Education of Prince George's County shall maintain records of all unit member contributions, withdrawals, and the status of the Bank.

22. The Board of Education of Prince George's County Payroll Office shall report the status of the PGCEA Sick Leave Bank at any time upon the request of the Approval Committee.

23. The Board of Education of Prince George's County Payroll Office and PGCEA shall provide information to the Approval Committee upon its request for any data maintained in their files with regard to an applicant.

24. All illnesses shall be under the registered medical doctor who specializes in that disability. He or she must submit a treatment plan to the Committee. Such a plan must provide satisfactory evidence that every reasonable effort is being made to recuperate and return to work in full health as soon as possible. A second opinion can be requested by the SLB Committee.

25. Appeals Process: If an application for Sick Leave Bank benefits is denied, the employee may appeal the decision within ten (10) days of receipt of the denial letter. The appeal must be in writing and must be submitted to the PGCEA President. The President will forward the appeal to the PGCEA Board of Directors, who will review the appeal and make a decision within 30 days. The decision of the Board of Directors is final and binding.

To maintain the confidentiality of members and avoid conflicts of interest, members may not appeal in person to the Board of Directors. All appeals must be in writing and submitted through the PGCEA President. The President will present the appeal to the Board of Directors without disclosing the identity of the appellant.

Conclusion: By clarifying the appeals process, we ensure that members have a clear and fair process to follow if they are denied Sick Leave Bank benefits. The involvement of the Board of Directors adds an additional level of review to ensure that decisions are made fairly and in the best interests of all PGCEA members. The policy continues to prioritize member confidentiality and avoid conflicts of interest.

26. These Rules are subject to revision in accordance with Article 19.3 at any time without prior notice.