

## **Leave Without Pay Protocol effective 09/10**

### Preamble

The district's number one priority is to provide quality educational programs to our students. We recognize that these quality programs are delivered, supported, and maintained by staff who attend to these children's needs on a daily basis. These relationships with students form the foundation of a sense of belonging in our schools which is one of our top goals as a district.

All school-based employees have access to large blocks of time when there is no instruction of students. Summer, winter break and spring break generally provide for approximately twelve weeks a year of time when those employees may arrange their personal circumstance for travel, vacation, or family needs. In regards to 12 month employees, they are required to take time off in accordance with the needs of the operations of the district so that services to schools, students and staff are uninterrupted year-round.

When a personal or family crisis occurs unexpectedly, leaves of absence (such as illness in the family, compassionate care leave, etc.) are available for employees to attend to those unforeseen events. When an employee wishes to request a leave without pay for other than emergent personal reasons on instructional days, the district may consider such requests on a case by case basis using the following guiding principles.

### Guiding Principles

As one of the largest employers in the Comox Valley, the school district has a large number of employees with diverse needs and personal circumstances. It is expected that, from time to time, requests for a leave of absence without pay for personal time during the school year will occur and such requests would not normally be considered for approval unless for "extra-ordinary" circumstances. When considering such requests, the following guiding principles will apply:

1. Protection of instructional time – does the request impact student learning?
2. Sustaining consistency of support networks – support staff provide invaluable service on a daily basis and have a very specific skill set. Does the request result in a less efficient support network for the operation of a school either by a lack of suitable replacement or by a need to redistribute workloads during times of absence?
3. Only upon the specific recommendation for approval by the school principal will exceptional circumstances be considered. The principal must submit a rationale for the recommended approval in writing to a LWOP committee consisting of the Director of Human Resources, Assistant Superintendent, and a District Principal. The decision for final approval will be the recommendation of the LWOP committee to the Director of Human Resources.
4. Any request for leave without pay during the school year must take into account the school and district's ability to plan appropriately. As a result of this need for planning, early notification (minimum 14 days, preferably 30 days or more) is essential for appropriate consideration of the request.