

## CATASTROPHIC LEAVE

The District has established a catastrophic leave program to permit employees of the District to donate eligible sick leave credits to a leave program for use by an employee when that employee suffers from a catastrophic illness or injury. The program shall be administered by the following procedures:

1. Each employee may voluntarily participate in the District's Catastrophic Leave Program. Only those who participate will be eligible to withdraw leave time from the program. The Catastrophic Leave Program is designed to provide an extension of available sick leave for all District permanent or categorically funded employees receiving accrued sick leave.
2. At the time of employment, employees may elect to enroll in the program but will not be able to apply for catastrophic leave until the completion of six months of employment. Thereafter, employees may enroll only during the open enrollment period of February 1 through February 28 of each year.
3. To enroll, an employee must:
  - a. Have a minimum of eight days of accrued sick leave.
  - b. Make an initial donation of three days of sick leave and an annual subsequent donation of a minimum of one day of sick leave.
4. To be removed from the list of participants, an employee must file a written request with Human Resources. Previously donated leave will remain in the Catastrophic Leave Program.
5. Donated days shall comprise the Catastrophic Leave Program balance. The Director of Human Resources shall review the balance of the Leave Program annually and advise the Board of Trustees as to whether the level of donations is sufficient. Recommendations by the Director may include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - a. Approve additional one-time donations from participants.
  - b. Approve a one-time suspension of the required annual employee donation.
6. Participants are eligible to apply for catastrophic leave. Catastrophic illness or injury is a severe illness or injury which is expected to incapacitate the employee for an extended period of time and which creates a financial hardship because the employee has exhausted all of his/her accumulated paid leave time of any and all description. Note: An employee's job related illness or injury subject to worker's compensation coverage or subject to coverage under any District-supported long- or short-term disability coverage, with the exception of the first thirty (30) day waiting period, shall not be eligible for this catastrophic leave provision.

7. An employee is eligible to use the Catastrophic Leave Program when the following conditions are met:
  - a. The employee requesting use of the leave is a participant of the program.
  - b. The employee has submitted a written request that includes a physician's verification.
  - c. The employee will not receive payment for the time absent due to the illness or injury from either worker's compensation or short/long-term District-sponsored disability coverage.
  - d. The employee has exhausted all balances in all paid leave categories.
  - e. The employee has not withdrawn more than 20 days from the Catastrophic Leave Program within the previous 12 months or more than 40 days during a lifetime.
  - f. There is sufficient leave in the program (see #5).
8. The Director of Human Resources will provide payroll with authorization to pay employees from the Catastrophic Leave Program.
9. The employee shall be considered to be in a paid status while drawing from the Catastrophic Leave Program; however, any and all leave that would be earned by the employee during the period of support for the Catastrophic Leave Program will be applied to the leave and will not carry forward.

Reference: Education Code Section 87045

Approved: 8/3/04

Former Policy #337/443: "Catastrophic Leave Bank;" Adopted by Board of Trustees: November 7, 2000