FOR ACTION: Revision to Policy 3432, Sick Leave Bank

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board approve revisions to Policy 3432, Sick Leave Bank.

Background Information

Proposed revisions to Policy 3432, Sick Leave Bank, were reviewed with the Board at the last meeting, August 5, 2008. Revised administrative guidelines 3432 were also included on the agenda for the Board’s information and/or discussion. Since a provision of a Memorandum of Understanding dated June 4, 2008, has since been included in the guidelines (item 5), the final version is attached for the Board’s information. Peggy Chambers, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Personnel, shared the following details with the Board on August 5 regarding changes to this policy.

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Recognizing the toll that illness can take on employees both physically and financially, a Sick Leave Bank was established nearly 32 years ago through Board Policy 3432. The Sick Leave Bank was designed as a voluntary, income protection program for short-term illnesses or medical conditions. As Policy 3432 states:

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A sick leave bank shall be established to relieve its members from undue financial burden due to absence from work because of illness, injury, or incapacity sufficiently severe that it would make their presence in school inadvisable. The purpose of the bank is not to provide compensation for extended disabilities. All members are urged to participate in the corporation approved disability and income protection plan and to utilize available salary schedule fringe benefits to offset plan costs.

Throughout its 32-year history, Sick Leave Bank has maintained healthy levels from year to year, only dipping below 400 days in the 1990-91 school year. However, the Sick Bank began to show signs of crisis in 2000-01 and this trend continued for several school years. The Bank ended the year in negative numbers not only in 2000-2001, but also in 2001-2002, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007. Last school year (2006-2007) was the lowest point in The Bank’s history, closing the year at a negative (-) 623.75 days. More than 1,000 days were legitimately withdrawn by members that school year due to several of the following factors:

- Extensive surgeries i.e. knee replacement, rotator cuff etc…
- Long-term illnesses i.e. cancer
- Increased maternity leaves
- Complications due to maternity i.e. post partum depression, pre-mature births
- Stress and psychological issues
- The lack of incentive to move to Long-Term Disability (LTD) given current Sick Leave Bank language.

Beginning the 2007-2008 school year with a forwarding balance of 38.51, MCCSC and MCEA came together to develop a strategy to repopulate The Bank, requiring existing members to donate two additional days in order to maintain membership. Our employees responded with resounding support with additional contributions totaling more than 1,300 days. While the strategic maneuver did give The Bank a chance to rebound, supplemental safeguards were still needed to ensure that it remains a healthy mechanism for the future. Therefore, MCCSC and MCEA have made amendments to the administrative guidelines of Sick Bank Policy 3432.