



# Georgia Department of Education

## Policies and Procedures

Policy Title:	<i>Requesting and Approving Leave, State Schools</i>		
Policy Number:	<i>SS-1004 Descriptor Code-GBRI-2</i>		
Release Date:	<i>09-01-02</i>	Last Revised:	<i>11-18-04</i>

### **Purpose**

Due to the unique role of the State Schools within the Georgia Department of Education, school and student related factors must be included in administering an attendance program. Therefore, guidelines are provided for State School administration of the Georgia Department of Education policies and procedures for requesting, approving/denying, and use of annual, personal and sick leave.

### **Applicability**

This policy with guidelines applies to classified and unclassified employees of the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Georgia Academy for the Blind, and the Georgia School for the Deaf.

### **Policy**

Effective schools are characterized by a high rate of staff and student attendance. State Schools must maintain a high rate of employee attendance to achieve our goal of providing a quality education for students in a clean and safe environment. Chronic tardiness and absenteeism are strongly discouraged. Requests for leave will be considered in light of the workload and the impact of the absence on providing services to students.

### **Definitions**

*School Calendar:* The school calendar is approved annually by appropriate staff of the Department of Education and must comply with all rules of the Georgia Board of Education. The school calendar indicates at least 180 days of student attendance, and at least 200 days of 10-month employee attendance, and the dates all other staff must report.

*School year:* The school year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the following year.

*10-month employees:* Employees in 10-month positions at the State Schools are paid to work 200 days during the school year. As indicated on

the school calendar, 10-month employees report to work all 180 days in which students are in attendance, report to work 10 days for planning/staff development; and may be required to take 10 days of annual leave.

*12-month employees:* Employees in 12-month positions at the State Schools are hired to work year round. These employees follow most of the same rules as other employees of the DOE regarding reporting to work in inclement weather and observing state holidays unless otherwise noted by the school calendar or State School Policies and Procedures.

## **General Provisions**

State Schools follow State Personnel Board Rules and Department of Education Policies and Procedures governing family leave, sick leave, personal leave and annual leave. State Schools are different from other units within Department of Education necessitating special guidance in addressing leave and attendance issues. How are we different?

1. State Schools are directly responsible for the education, health, and safety of children.
2. State Schools are funded and held accountable for achieving specified goals for children within the 180 days of instruction identified on the school calendar.
3. The school calendar is a major factor in shaping the schedules and workloads of all State School employees.
4. State Schools have some employees who are 10-month staff. The salary of 10-month employees is based upon the number of days worked. The number of days worked is based upon the school calendar.
5. State Schools must utilize the time when school is not in-session to accomplish other critical tasks such as building maintenance/renovations, acquisition of supplies and materials, staff training, etc.

Each employee of the State School has a role in the effective operation of the school. The School Director of the State School will make reasonable accommodation to honor all requests for leave. Reasonable accommodation will be based upon two factors:

- a) How will this employee absence affect the operation of the school?
- b) Will this employee absence disrupt services provided by the school?

Due to the special factors already listed, absences during certain periods of the school year have a negative impact on performance. It is critical for all staff to be in attendance during critical periods: a) immediately prior to and following holiday vacation periods, and (b) at the opening/closing of school. Requests to use annual/personal leave during the periods listed above are strongly discouraged. The School Director of the State School must submit a written request to the Director of State Schools to obtain

final approval of annual/personal leave for State School employees seeking leave under the following conditions.

- During critical periods
- During professional development/planning days

### **12-Month Staff**

In general, 12-month staff of the State Schools will follow Georgia Department of Education Policies and Procedures for requesting and using sick, annual, and personal leave. However, requests to approve annual/personal leave will be considered based upon the impact of the absence on school operation.

### **10-Month Staff**

State School employees in 10-month positions are scheduled to work 190 days per year. In order for the State Schools to perform at the expected and required level of effectiveness, 10-month employees must be in attendance at least **189 of the 200 days** for which they were hired to work. Attendance of less than 189 days per year limits the employee's ability to effectively carryout his/her job responsibilities and has a negative impact on State School operations.

### Special Circumstances

The School Director with the approval of the Director of State Schools shall have the authority to approve any leave requests that are beyond the acceptable attendance rate for employees that need to use leave for approved medical purposes. The situation must be of a nature that would not allow the employee to postpone medical attention until school is not in session. The employee must provide a doctor's excuse with the leave request.

### Annual/Personal Leave

Absences of more than 3 consecutive days seriously impede program delivery. Requests to use more than 24 hours of consecutive annual/personal leave are strongly discouraged. The School Director of the State School must submit a written request to the Director of State Schools to obtain final approval of annual/personal leave for 10-month employees seeking leave totaling more than 24 consecutive hours.

Schools are required to dedicate 10 days of the school year to professional development. The State Schools utilize professional development days to focus upon training and other activities supporting school improvement. It is important for all staff to participate in professional development training and other activities. Requests to use annual/personal leave on days identified on the school calendar as in-service days or professional development days are strongly discouraged.

Sick Leave

Approval of employee requests to use sick/family leave at State Schools is guided by State Personnel Board rules and DOE Policies and Procedures. The School Director of the State School gives final approval of employee requests to use sick/family leave. In some situations the School Director may require medical documentation.

Unapproved Absences

Unapproved absences will be charged as unauthorized leave without pay. Unauthorized leave without pay will lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**Authority and/or  
Cross-Reference**

- DOE *Leave Donation* Policy (B-1006)
- DOE *Leave Without Pay* Policy
- DOE *Credit for Transferred Sick and Personal Leave from a Local School System* Policy (B-1007)
- DOE *Fair Labor Standards Act (HR-1120)* Policy
- State Personnel Board Rule 18
- Georgia Workers' Compensation Act