



# Newsletter

Acalanes Education Association

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## **Important Site Meetings Regarding Benefits Taking Place Next Week May 1<sup>st</sup>-May 5<sup>th</sup>**

### Schedule:

Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup> – Miramonte  
Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Las Lomas  
Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> – Campolindo  
Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup> – Acalanes

As discussed and outlined in the March newsletter, AEA, through the benefits committee and at the negotiations table, has been exploring the possibility of switching health care administrators. Our current benefits are administered by CalPERS. The benefits committee has been looking at possible cost savings by switching to Self Insured Schools of California (SISC), another large risk pool composed of hundreds of California school districts operated by the Kern County Office of Education.

With the last benefits committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, we are at the point where AEA and the District move from the research phase to negotiating the specifics of how a potential change in benefits would be structured. In an effort to inform all our members of the current state of play as well as answer member questions and concerns, lead negotiator Misha Buchel will be coming to each site to discuss what the potential change would mean for all stakeholders. Ultimately, any change to our benefits administrator must be ratified by the membership. Please make every effort to attend the meetings next week. If, however, you cannot attend but have questions, please email your questions to Misha or AEA leadership/negotiators.

## **Sick/Personal Necessity Leave**

### **When to Use It, When to Save It, and Other Important Things to Know**

As most people are aware, full time certificated members get 12 days of combined sick and personal necessity leave each school year. We are fortunate in that our language is very generous. If we use sick leave, we need a doctor's note after three consecutive days of illness and the District may also request a doctor's note after the 12<sup>th</sup> day of sick leave in one school year. If we use these days for personal necessity, we need to notify the District as soon as feasible for personal necessity in excess of 3 days, except in urgent situations (death, serious illness of a immediate family member, accidents involving yourself or a member of your immediate family, or your property). If we don't use all of our sick/personal necessity days in the year, they carry over and accumulate from year to year without limit.

(continued on back)

## **Sick/Personal Necessity Leave (continued)**

### **Why use the days?**

Obviously we use these days when we are sick. Working with teenagers exposes us to all kinds of germs and it's a wonder we aren't sick more often. We can also use our sick days to care for ill family members and children. Personal necessity can be used for a variety of things. Maybe you need a mental health day, you have a doctor's appointment, a close family member scheduled a wedding in September, you are running a marathon, or there is a religious holiday .... Life doesn't always happen on a school year calendar. During open enrollment for catastrophic leave, we can also donate a day and then be eligible for catastrophic leave if we suffer from a catastrophic illness down the line.

### **Why save the days?**

Banking these days is a wise thing to do because you may need them in the future or you can retire with them and get service credit. We hope that we never need an extended sick leave for ourselves or to take care of loved ones, but unfortunately, it can happen. If you have a long-term illness and have to be out for an extended period of time, you can use your accrued sick leave and not lose any salary. If you have a long-term illness and run out of sick leave days, you can get differential pay (your pay minus the cost of your sub) for up to 5 months but this means you will not get your full salary. In this situation, if your illness is "incapacitating" and you have contributed to the catastrophic leave bank, you can apply for catastrophic leave to make up the difference. Catastrophic leave has to be approved by the catastrophic leave committee and is not a guarantee.

If you are planning on having a child, maternity leave is defined in Ed. code (not our contract) as a temporary medical disability. As such, you need to use your sick days for maternity leave. If you do not have enough sick days saved up for your maternity leave, you will go onto differential leave, which again, means less than your full salary.

If a child or family member is ill, you are entitled to job-protected family medical leave, but this is unpaid unless you have accrued sick leave days you can use. We have seen a few situations in recent years where members have used up their accrued sick leave and need to care for family members and are left with unpaid leave. Catastrophic leave is not an option as catastrophic leave is for your own illness/injury, not for caring for children and other family members.

Finally, another reason for saving the days, if you can, is that they become service credit when you retire. For example, we have 186 days in our work year. If you have 186 saved sick/personal necessity days and you want to retire with 30 years of service credit, you can actually retire after year 29 with your sick days adding up and counting as your 30<sup>th</sup> year of service.

You can check to see how many days you have saved as well as review days you have used by going to employee self serve at <https://ess2.cccoe.net/MSSacalanesLive/default.aspx>. Your user name is the last four digits of your social security number. Your password is whatever you made it. If you can't remember your password, email Shelly Hadley at the District office (or call her at 6610) and she can reset it for you. If you have any questions about your absences, contact Gail Stern at the district office.

***The Next Rep Council Meeting is Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>  
at TBD. All members welcome to attend.***