



# Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

**Title of board policy being reviewed:**

GCBD-Sick Leave-Personal Illness and Injury Leave

**Describe the purpose of this policy:**

This policy ensures compliance with Oregon law while providing employees paid sick leave for personal illness or injury. It sets clear rules for accrual, documentation, extended leave, benefit impacts, and confidentiality.

Overall, it protects employees' rights, maintains operational stability, and ensures legal compliance.

**What is your experience with this policy:**

We regularly analyze and interpret school district policies like this one, including sick leave provisions, CBA alignment, FMLA/ADA compliance, and board governance implications.



**What is the plan to communicate this policy to staff, students, and/or families?**

**What is the plan to communicate this policy to linguistically diverse students and their families?**

**Is this policy:**

Easy to locate for staff?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Accessible to students and families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

This policy will be communicated to staff through inclusion in the employee handbook, review during onboarding, and periodic reminders from Human Resources. The policy will also be posted on the district website for easy access.



Clear and easy to understand?

Yes. The narrative is clear, concise, and easy to understand. It:

- Explains who will receive the information
- Describes how it will be shared
- Addresses language access
- Avoids unnecessary detail

## People

How are people affected positively or negatively by the policy? What potential barriers might people encounter? What barriers might be reduced by this policy?



This policy positively affects employees by providing paid sick leave for personal illness or injury, ensuring income protection and job security during short-term health issues. It also ensures confidentiality of medical information and compliance with state and federal laws.

Potential negative impacts may occur when sick leave is exhausted. Employees may face unpaid leave, loss of employer-paid benefits, or possible termination if they are unable to return to work within the timelines outlined in the policy.

### **Potential Barriers**

Employees may encounter barriers such as:

- Needing medical certification after five consecutive days
- Financial hardship if placed on unpaid leave
- Loss of district-paid benefits during unpaid leave (unless protected by law)

### **Barriers Reduced by This Policy**

This policy reduces barriers by:

- Providing consistent, legally compliant sick leave
- Allowing unlimited accumulation of sick leave
- Protecting employee medical confidentiality
- Clearly outlining procedures, which reduces uncertainty and inconsistent application

Overall, the policy balances employee protections with operational and legal requirements.



Can you identify the racial or ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision? Do you know the potential impacts to these populations? If you don't know, how will you find out?

This policy applies to all employees and is race-neutral on its face.

However, impacts may not be equal. Employees from historically marginalized racial or ethnic groups could face greater challenges if they have less access to healthcare, experience financial hardship during unpaid leave, or are overrepresented in lower-paid positions.

If impacts are unknown, the district can review leave data by race/ethnicity, analyze patterns in unpaid leave or separation, and consult with employee groups to assess equity impacts.

Were these populations involved in any way, at any point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy? If so, when and how?

This policy is primarily driven by Oregon law and collective bargaining agreements. To the extent that bargaining units represent a diverse workforce, employees—including those from various racial and ethnic backgrounds have been involved through union negotiations and feedback processes.



What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

This policy communicates a commitment to:

- **Employee well-being** by providing paid sick leave for illness or injury
- **Legal compliance** with Oregon law and federal protections
- **Confidentiality** of employee medical information
- **Consistency and fairness** through clear procedures and expectations
- **Operational stability** by outlining processes for extended absences

Overall, it reflects a balance between supporting employees and maintaining district responsibilities.

## Place

What kind of positive or negative environment are we creating?

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)



This policy creates a generally positive environment by supporting employee health, providing paid sick leave, protecting confidentiality, and ensuring legal compliance. It promotes clarity and consistency in how illness and extended absences are handled.

However, it may also create stress or uncertainty for employees who exhaust leave and face unpaid status, benefit loss, or possible termination.

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### **Barriers to More Equitable Outcomes**

Potential barriers include:

- **Financial:** Unpaid leave and loss of district-paid benefits may disproportionately impact lower-paid employees.
- **Healthcare Access:** Requiring medical certification may be more burdensome for employees with limited access to care.
- **Mandated/Legal:** State law requirements may limit flexibility.
- **Managerial/Programmatic:** Inconsistent implementation or lack of proactive communication could create inequities.

Addressing these barriers may require data review, consistent application, and additional supports where feasible.



## Power

How is the power of decision-making shared with those it affects?

How have you intentionally involved the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision?

Decision-making related to this policy is primarily guided by state law and collective bargaining agreements. Power is shared through the collective bargaining process, where union representatives advocate on behalf of employees. Employees may also raise concerns or seek clarification through HR, supervisors, or labor representatives.

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### **Involvement of Affected Communities**

Employees are involved through union negotiations, feedback channels, and established HR processes. If additional engagement is needed, the district can intentionally involve affected staff through surveys, focus groups, equity impact reviews, and consultation with employee affinity groups to ensure diverse perspectives inform implementation and future revisions.

## Process

Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?

Does it create other unintended consequences?



This policy is intended to create consistency and legal compliance, and on its face, it does not target any specific group. It may help reduce disparities by providing guaranteed sick leave, unlimited accrual, and clear procedures for all employees.

However, it may unintentionally maintain or worsen disparities if lower-paid employees are more affected by unpaid leave, benefit loss, or medical certification requirements. Differences in access to healthcare or financial stability could lead to unequal impacts.

Potential unintended consequences include financial hardship during extended illness, increased stress for employees nearing leave exhaustion, or retention challenges if employees are unable to return by the required timelines. Regular review of disaggregated data can help monitor and address these impacts.

## Plan

How will you reduce the negative impacts and address the barriers?

Negative impacts can be reduced by taking proactive and supportive steps during implementation.

The district can ensure **consistent application** of the policy through clear administrative procedures and supervisor training. It can reduce financial strain by clearly communicating benefit continuation options and connecting employees to available supports (e.g., FMLA, disability insurance, leave banks if applicable).

Barriers related to healthcare access can be addressed by clearly explaining documentation requirements, allowing reasonable timelines for submission, and providing information about accessible providers.

To address potential equity concerns, the district can regularly review leave data (disaggregated where appropriate), monitor patterns in unpaid leave or separation, and consult with labor partners and employee groups. Ongoing review helps identify disparities early and guide adjustments where possible.



Multnomah Education Service District

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