
BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Information/Discussion_____

Future Action_____

Action X

Item: Center Program - GRPS Transition Severance Gap

Submitted by: Dave Rodgers

Date: March 21, 2023

Recommended by: Leadership Team

Board Meeting Date: April 20, 2023

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Board of Education approve the Letter of Understanding amending the terms of severance eligibility for the center program teachers currently employed by Kent ISD who transitioned from Grand Rapids Public Schools center programs. The KIEA unit has confirmed support of this Letter of Understanding, pending Board approval.

BACKGROUND:

This recommendation seeks to improve a very unique situation that resulted from the sick leave / severance terms previously established when GRPS center programs first transitioned to Kent ISD in recent years. At the time of the center program transition, Kent ISD communicated that GRPS center program teachers electing employment status with Kent ISD would maintain the favorable terms of the GRPS severance contract language then in effect, until the end of the 2023-24 school year. Starting with the 2024-25 school year, only Kent ISD severance language would apply. The sick days earned by teachers while employed by GRPS were held in a separate allocation with Kent ISD in such a way that those earned days were applied to any absences incurred while working for Kent ISD. At the same time, they earned Kent ISD sick days each year under the KIEA agreement.

Currently in year four of center programs, next year is the critical fifth year on this issue. If nothing changes, teachers who came over from GRPS with sick leave will not only lose the ability to benefit from the favorable GRPS severance language, but they will also enter a period of no severance eligibility at all. Kent ISD severance language requires 10 years of employment for any severance eligibility. We want to be fiscally prudent here, but also cautious not to lose scarce teachers to retirement where this issue might tip some into retirement consideration who would otherwise continue to teach another year or more.

If the teachers who came from GRPS that are still actively employed with Kent ISD stay beyond 2023-24 (beyond year 5), they do not lose the ability to use those sick days, but they do lose the opportunity to count them toward GRPS severance language, as previously agreed. Furthermore, under the existing terms, there is an awkward gap during Kent ISD employment years 6-9 in which these teachers are no longer eligible for the GRPS severance, nor are they eligible for Kent ISD severance.

This Letter of Understanding which has the support of the KIEA unit improves that situation by ensuring that Kent ISD severance language applies for unused sick days earned while employed at Kent ISD so long as the sum of GRPS years of teaching and Kent ISD years of teaching equal 10 years or more.

Thank you, and as always, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.