Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

Title of board policy being reviewed:

GCBDD/GDBDD-Sick Time

Describe the purpose of this policy:

The purpose of this policy is to outline how employees earn, accrue, and use sick time; ensure compliance with Oregon paid sick leave laws; define required notice procedures; clarify increments and verification rules; and establish how sick time interacts with other forms of protected leave such as FMLA, OFLA, and ORS 332.507.

What is your experience with this policy:

Our experience with this policy is functional and operational. It is used frequently because sick time is one of the most common types of leave employees use. The policy helps HR and supervisors track accrual, usage, notice requirements, and coordination with FMLA/OFLA. Most employees use sick time without issue, while occasional challenges involve verification requirements, increment rules for licensed staff, and navigating foreseeable vs. unforeseeable notice. Overall, the policy helps maintain compliance with Oregon paid sick leave law while supporting employee health needs.

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?

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Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

> Yes, this policy is included in student and staff onboarding materials, student handbooks, intake packets, and annual training to ensure all parties understand student rights, responsibilities, and conduct expectations.

Clear and easy to understand?

> The purpose and requirements are clear, but the policy is long, dense, and includes complex legal references.

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?

Positive impacts:

- Ensures all employees—including part-time, temporary, and seasonal—have access to sick time.
- Provides clear definitions of accrual rates and rights.
- Protects employees from adverse action for using sick time.
- Aligns with Oregon law, FMLA/OFLA, and public health requirements.

Negative impacts:

- The four-hour minimum increment for licensed positions can be burdensome and may reduce flexibility.
- Verification requirements after three days may feel intrusive or stressful.
- Complex legal language may be hard for some employees to understand.
- Notice rules for foreseeable vs. unforeseeable leave may feel rigid in real-life situations.

Potential barriers:

- Employees with limited English proficiency or unfamiliarity with legal terms may struggle to interpret the policy.
- Lower-wage staff may feel pressure not to use sick time despite protections.
- The undue hardship requirement for licensed staff increments can disproportionately affect educators with childcare or medical needs.

Barriers reduced:

- Ensures all workers accrue sick time from their first day.
- Protects employees from retaliation.
- Provides clear rules for public health emergencies, reducing confusion during crises.

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?

The policy applies equally to all employees, but practical impacts may differ. Employees from racial or ethnic groups overrepresented in lower-wage, part-time, or substitute roles may rely on sick time more frequently and may experience barriers such as:

- Less flexibility for scheduling appointments.
- Higher consequences for missing work.
- Less familiarity with HR systems or legal language.

MESD does not currently have specific data showing disproportionate impacts. To understand these effects, MESD could review sick leave usage patterns disaggregated by race/ethnicity (where available), consult employee groups, or examine feedback trends.

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 driven by state law (ORS 653.601–653.661) and federal requirements (FMLA, ADA), not by local stakeholder input. Affected employee groups were not directly involved in development, evaluation, or implementation.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

The policy demonstrates MESD's commitment to:

- Employee health and wellbeing.
- Compliance with state and federal sick leave laws.
- Protecting employees from retaliation.
- Supporting safe workplaces, especially during public health emergencies.
- Maintaining consistent, fair leave administration across the organization.

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)

Positive environment:

- Encourages employees to prioritize health without fear of discipline.

- Supports safer workplaces and reduces illness spread.

- Creates predictable, standardized expectations for leave.

Negative environment:

- Verification rules and increment requirements may feel punitive to some employees.

- Strict notice timelines may create stress for employees managing unpredictable

health issues.

- The policy's legal complexity can feel inaccessible or intimidating.

Barriers to equitable outcomes include the complexity of the policy language, the four-hour minimum increment requirement for licensed staff, and verification requirements that may disproportionately affect employees with less job flexibility or fewer financial resources. Employees from historically marginalized racial or ethnic groups may face additional challenges if they are concentrated in part-time, substitute, or lower-wage roles that offer less schedule control. Limited familiarity with HR processes or legal terminology can further limit understanding of rights and protections. While the policy guarantees sick time access, uneven awareness or comfort with using leave may reinforce existing disparities.

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?

Requirements are largely dictated by state and federal law.

Process

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

Does it create other unintended consequences?

The policy maintains existing disparities rather than resolving them. While it guarantees universal access to sick time, increments, verification requirements, and complex processes may unintentionally burden employees who already face inequities. Unintended consequences may include employees underusing sick time due to fear of discipline, lack of clarity, or scheduling challenges—especially among lower-wage or marginalized groups.

Plan

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

Negative impacts can be reduced by simplifying language, providing multilingual guidance, offering training on how to access sick time, ensuring consistent communication across departments, and reviewing data for disparate impacts. HR can support employees by offering clear, empathetic guidance, reducing overuse of verification requests, and ensuring the undue hardship increment requirement is applied fairly. Additional steps include improving communication for substitutes and part-time staff, who often receive less structured information.