



Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

Title of board policy being reviewed:

GCBDF/GDBDF-Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance

Describe the purpose of this policy:

To outline that MESD provides its own equivalent paid family and medical leave plan rather than participating in Paid Leave Oregon, and to ensure compliance with state requirements for administering that plan. This includes filing required reports and providing employees with the mandatory notice poster so they understand their rights and how to access leave benefits.

What is your experience with this policy:

MESD's experience with this policy is primarily administrative. Because MESD uses an equivalent plan instead of Paid Leave Oregon, most activity involves maintaining compliance, posting required notices, and ensuring employees receive the appropriate information. Requests for paid family or medical leave are handled through HR, using the equivalent plan's established procedures.



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?

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?



Mostly yes. The policy is short, straightforward, and legally accurate. A couple of sentences could be smoothed out, but overall it is clear and easy to follow.

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 ensuring they still have access to paid family and medical leave through MESD's equivalent plan and by requiring clear notice so employees understand their rights and how to request leave. Some employees may experience confusion if they expect to use Paid Leave Oregon processes, and remote staff may rely on consistent delivery of electronic notices. Potential barriers include unclear differences between the state program and the equivalent plan or uncertainty about how to file a claim. However, the policy also reduces barriers by guaranteeing that all employees—onsite and remote—receive required information, improving access to benefits and reducing confusion around eligibility and procedures.

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 equally to all employees and does not identify or target any specific racial or ethnic groups. Because the policy governs access to paid family and medical leave through MESD's equivalent plan, it is possible that different racial or ethnic groups could experience the policy differently based on broader workforce patterns—such as job type, income level, or awareness of leave benefits. We do not currently have specific data showing whether particular groups are disproportionately affected. To understand any potential impacts, MESD could review HR leave-usage data (disaggregated by race/ethnicity where available), gather employee feedback, or consult with employee resource groups to ensure the policy is accessible and equitable for all populations.

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

The policy is primarily driven by state requirements for employers that choose to provide an equivalent plan instead of participating in Paid Leave Oregon. It follows guidance from the Oregon Employment Department and OSBA rather than a stakeholder engagement process.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

This policy communicates MESD's commitment to complying with state law while ensuring employees have access to paid family and medical leave benefits through an approved equivalent plan. It demonstrates a priority around maintaining clear communication by requiring notice posters in all worksites and for remote employees, and it reflects MESD's responsibility to administer the plan properly, including filing required tax reports. Overall, the policy shows a commitment to employee support, legal compliance, and consistent access to information for all staff.

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:

The policy helps create an environment where employees know they still have access to paid family and medical leave even though MESD is not part of Paid Leave Oregon. Posting required notices and sharing information with remote staff promotes transparency, predictability, and trust. It supports a workplace where employees can take necessary family or medical leave without fear of losing income.

Potentially Negative:

Because the policy relies on an “equivalent plan,” employees may experience uncertainty or confusion if the processes differ from the more widely known state plan. If communication is inconsistent—especially for remote or itinerant staff—it may create frustration or a sense that access varies depending on location or role.

Barriers to more equitable outcomes include the mandated structure of the equivalent plan, which limits MESD’s flexibility to simplify processes, and potential confusion between MESD’s plan and the more widely understood Paid Leave Oregon system. Programmatic and managerial barriers may arise if communication is inconsistent or if remote and itinerant employees do not receive information in the same way as on-site staff. Financial and emotional factors may also discourage some employees—particularly those in lower-wage or less flexible roles—from taking leave even when eligible. Cultural differences and fear of stigma around using paid family or medical leave can further affect equitable access. Additionally, opting out of the state plan may create a perception that the MESD process is more complicated or less standardized, which could disproportionately impact employees who already experience barriers navigating HR systems.



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?

The power of decision-making for this policy is not directly shared with those it affects. Because the policy is driven by state requirements for equivalent paid leave plans, the core decisions are made at the organizational and regulatory levels rather than through employee or community input.

The communities affected—MESD employees—were not intentionally involved in the development, implementation, or evaluation of this policy. Instead, the policy follows statutory guidance from the Oregon Employment Department and OSBA. While employees benefit from the policy, there has not been a structured process to gather their perspectives or involve them in decision-making related to how the equivalent plan is communicated or administered.

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 unlikely to significantly improve or worsen existing disparities; it largely maintains current conditions by ensuring employees still have access to paid family and medical leave through MESD's equivalent plan. Because the policy does not change eligibility or benefit levels, it does not directly address disparities in who feels able or comfortable taking leave. However, it may unintentionally create confusion or uneven access to information—particularly for remote, itinerant, or lower-wage staff who may be less familiar with navigating HR systems. Ensuring clear, accessible communication and consistent implementation can help prevent these impacts.

Plan

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

Negative impacts and barriers can be reduced by strengthening communication, improving access to information, and ensuring consistency across worksites. MESD can provide clear, plain-language explanations of how the equivalent plan works and how it differs from Paid Leave Oregon, including step-by-step guidance for filing a claim. Remote and itinerant employees should receive the notice poster and leave instructions electronically at hire and annually thereafter. HR can offer short informational sessions or FAQs to build understanding and reduce stigma around using leave. Reviewing leave-usage data (where available) can help identify groups who may be experiencing access gaps. Clear, repeated communication and equitable implementation across all employee groups will help reduce confusion and ensure all staff can use their benefits when needed.



Multnomah Education Service District
