

## Leave without Pay Board Overview

At our December Board meeting I indicated that I would do further research on LPSD's policies and procedures dealing with Leave Without Pay (LWOP).

Currently, LPSD offers classified staff members sick leave (see below), but no personal or annual leave. In discussions with Joyce Alto, LPSD payroll clerk, it was stated that approximately 60% of current classified employees utilize LWOP each school year. The reasons vary, but some examples include:

- Running out of sick leave while taking care of major medical procedures
- Attending board, corporation, or other meetings outside of the village
- Personal travel to Anchorage or other destinations
- Commercial fishing in the Chignik
- Subsistence and Migrant Activities such as extended hunting and fishing trips

A recent real-life example would be an employee who was in Anchorage for medical procedures and suffered complications and was not cleared to travel back to the village. Available sick leave was used and the employee went into LWOP status for several weeks. Under FMLA and AFLA we are required to allow employees to be absent for a qualifying condition for 12 to 18 weeks.

We also have employees that participate in the Chignik fishery and miss the first several weeks of each school year. Their absences are pre-arranged and we work with them to make sure they are covered.

Without offering alternative leave, it would be difficult to eliminate LWOP in LPSD. We have many individuals across the district who have to travel out for medical and who sit on multiple boards, etc. A quick comparison would be if Lake and Pen Board or Assembly Members didn't have leave to attend meetings, trainings, fly-ins, etc. An active board or assembly member would need several weeks of LWOP a year.

Our practice has been to require prior notice and approval for LWOP. When necessary, we hire subs for those classified staff that we know are going to be gone.

It isn't always a perfect system, but because of our unique situation/location, I don't know if we have other viable options that are fair and consistent across the district, and would leave us with an ample classified workforce.

At this time, I will hold with what is currently in place and will wait to hear from Gerda if further investigation or board discussion/action is warranted.