Type of Leave: Sabbatical

Summary: Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) provides eligible employees a one year leave of absence for the purpose of furthering professional growth by graduate study or other means as approved by the superintendent.

Eligibility
- Regular certificated teachers, regular certificated members CASE-eligible employees, and regular BCPSOPE-eligible employees with an FTE of .5 or greater and with seven or more years of satisfactory, continuous, active service. Satisfactory, continuous, active service is construed as meeting uninterrupted professional service in the system with satisfactory evaluation.
- A regular certificated teacher must be in continuous, active teaching service for at least three years following an illness, maternity, academic, unusual or imperative and military leave before being granted a sabbatical leave.
- Eligible employees must be enrolled as a full-time graduate student (24 semester hours) during the academic school year. Changes in the accepted program must be approved by the Office of Certification prior to registration.
- Non-tenured and provisional/conditional teachers are not eligible.
- The number of sabbatical leaves granted during any one year will be included in the bargaining unit agreements. If the number of budgeted sabbatical leaves has not been allocated, those which are submitted prior to April 1 will be acted upon in the order received.

Approved By: The Board of Education (board)

The application, and all required documentation noted below, should be sent to:

The Department of Human Resources
Office of Employee Absence and Risk Management
6901 Charles Street, B Building, Towson, MD  21204
Fax no. 410-337-0160

For additional information and questions, contact the Office of Leaves, 443-809-4133.

General Information
- The Application for Leaves of Absence and Conversions must be submitted, and approval of the leave request obtained, before the leave begins.
- Applications and supporting documentation (see Required Documentation section) must be submitted after September 1 and prior to April 1, preceding the school year for which such leave is requested. Complete applications received by December 1 will be acted upon by the board during that month.
- Sabbatical leaves are partially paid leaves (see Effect on Payroll section).
An employee will not be approved for a second sabbatical leave if there is another applicant meeting the qualifications for a first sabbatical leave. This restriction may be waived if the sabbatical leave is necessary in order for the employee to fulfill a residency requirement for a doctorate.

No more than two consecutive leaves of absence of any type, excluding military leave, will be granted.

In the event a person on sabbatical leave receives extra monies through any type of grant, the combined amount of those monies and the sabbatical leave allowance shall not exceed the amount of pay the person would have received as a staff member for the school year in which the sabbatical leave has been granted. In cases where the combined monies exceed the regular salary, as outlined above, the sabbatical leave salary shall be reduced accordingly.

No leave time will be regarded as active service determining the seven year sabbatical leave eligibility requirement.

The OEARM Office will send notification of the approval or denial of the leave request and any conditions that must be met, to the employee, the principal or office head and the appropriate personnel officer immediately following the board meeting in which the leave request was approved or denied.

Employees must notify the OEARM Office via phone call, email or letter immediately if the plans for the leave do not materialize or change.

Gainful, permanent employment with another employer while on an approved leave of absence may serve as justification for termination of the leave.

Employees on approved leave, paid or unpaid, may not be employed by BCPS in a temporary assignment while on leave unless authorized by the chief human resources officer.

Intermittent Leave

Intermittent leave is not available for this type leave.

Required Documentation

Completed Application for Leaves of Absence and Conversions and supporting documentation must be submitted after September 1 and prior to April 1, preceding the school year for which such leave is requested. Complete applications received by December 1 will be acted upon by the board during that month.

Documentation from the educational institution which supports the dates of the absence, an outline of proposed study to be undertaken and, if applicable, any monies received through a grant, while on leave.

Maryland State form 46, Qualified Leave Of Absence Request or Notification of Military Service Entry. This form is required to obtain state retirement service credit for the period of the approved leave and for the survivor benefit to remain in effect during this leave. For additional information and the form, employees may refer to the Maryland State Retirement Agency (MSRA) Web site.

Leave processing may be delayed or denied if documentation is not received within the required timeframe.

Effect on Position

The employee’s current position is released for all board-approved leaves. Employees returning from leave will be restored to a comparable position (see procedures outlined in the appropriate bargaining unit agreements concerning the release of positions and job restoration).

Certificated teachers will be placed no later than the beginning of the next school year if the leave expires during the school year, per the bargaining unit agreement.
If an employee rejects a position offered within his/her classification upon reinstatement, BCPS is relieved of the commitment to provide employment.

**Effect on Salary Increment**
The time spent on approved sabbatical leave will be included in computing eligibility for an annual increment.

**Effect on Payroll, Healthcare Benefits and Retirement Plans**

**Payroll**
An eligible employee who commits to at least two years of service to the board following such leave shall be paid at the rate of 60% of his/her salary during the specified period of leave.
An eligible employee who retains the option of a one-year commitment of service to the board following such leave shall be paid at the rate of 50% of his/her salary during the specified period of leave.
In the event an employee on sabbatical leave receives extra monies through any type of grant, the combined amount of those monies and the sabbatical leave allowance shall not exceed the amount of money this person would have received as a staff member for the school year in which the sabbatical leave has been granted. In cases where the combined monies exceed the regular salary, as outlined above, the sabbatical leave salary shall be reduced accordingly.

- In the event the teacher does not complete the 24 semester hours required during the sabbatical leave year, his/her sabbatical leave pay shall be reduced on the basis of the following formula: number of semester hours not completed, divided by twenty-four, times the sabbatical leave salary. (Twenty four times the sabbatical leave salary equals the amount of repayment).
- Employees who do not return to the service of the board shall be required to refund the salary paid during the sabbatical leave. Employees who return for a portion of the time to which they previously committed will be required to refund to the board the percentage difference in the amount of time worked upon return and the amount of time committed. (e.g., 10-month employee who commits to one year but works for only 5 months pays back 50% of his/her sabbatical pay.)

- **Healthcare Benefits**
  - Benefits are maintained at the current level and, during paid leave time, the BCPS/employee cost splits remain the same for the length of the sabbatical. Any change in rates or other increases will be put into affect accordingly.
  - Other salary deductions (e.g., First Financial Federal Credit Union, tax-sheltered annuities, optional life insurance, etc.) will be continued.
  - If the employee does not return to work, BCPS will bill him/her for BCPS’ portion of the healthcare premiums.

- **Retirement**
  - Maryland State Retirement Agency (MSRA) recognizes this leave as a qualified leave of absence for credit purposes. However, since this is a partially paid leave, there should be no effect on contributions and no reason to purchase time.
  - The Baltimore County Employees Retirement System (ERS) does not recognize this leave as a qualified leave of absence for credit purposes. However, since this is a partially paid leave, there should be no effect on contributions.

**Return-to-Work/Extensions/Resignation Requirements**
All employees on leave are to return to a position, request and be approved for an extension of leave (if available) or resign upon the expiration of their leave.

At least fifteen (15) business days prior to their expected date of return to BCPS, employees are responsible for notifying the OEARM Office of their intent to return to work, request an extension or resign via email, letter or phone call.

Return to Work
- The personnel officer will review the staffing needs of the schools/offices for placement and will notify employees regarding placement.
- The OEARM Office will notify appropriate administrators or office heads of the employee’s return date.

Extension of Leave
- Extensions are not available for this type of leave.

Resignation
- Employees who choose to resign from BCPS must complete the resignation and off boarding process, available on the Human Resources Intranet.
- Employees must notify the Office of Leaves at 443-809-4133 or leaves@bcps.org if they resign from leave.
- Should the teacher resign from service with of Baltimore County Public Schools, he/she will be required to refund, within the following year, the salary granted for sabbatical leave.
- If the employee resigns, he/she assumes responsibility for the BCPS portion of the healthcare premiums while on leave and will be billed accordingly.
- Employees who choose to resign may be entitled to continued healthcare coverage under COBRA, consistent with the timeframes noted in current law. The cost of this coverage is the monthly premium equivalent to the full cost plus an administrative charge of 2%.

Policy: Board of Education Policy 4203, Absences and Leaves
Rule: Superintendent’s Rule 4203, Absences and Leaves

Bargaining Unit Information
- BCPS Organization of Professional Employees (BCPSOPE)
  Article IV – Absences and Leaves
  Section 9.9

- Council of Administrative and Supervisory Employees (CASE)
  Article IX – Absences and Leaves
  Section 9.9

- Teachers Association of Baltimore County (TABCO)
  Article XII – Absences and Leaves
  Section 12.12 – 12.12.5

For informational purposes only. For additional questions or concerns, employees must refer to Board Policies, Superintendent’s Rules and appropriate bargaining unit agreements.