

**HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPPLEMENT SICK LEAVE BANK**

SUMMARY PLAN DESCRIPTION

2011-2012 PLAN YEAR

Note: The Supplemental Sick Leave Bank is governed by Board Policy and referenced in Finance Procedures, Section 1501. The Finance Procedures have been modified and reviewed in consultation.

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Exhibits

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Introduction

The Supplemental Sick Leave Bank is a bank of personal leave days given by employees who want to voluntarily participate in a plan to extend leave for employees who have serious illnesses. The purpose for creating a supplemental sick leave bank is to allow employees who have used all of their accumulated vacation, state and local leave the opportunity to request up to 30 additional leave days if a catastrophic illness causes an absence from work during the program plan year (September 1 through August 31).

As a member of the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank, an employee may receive a benefit of as many as 30 days during the program plan year. Employees may apply for benefits as many times as the need arises, as long as the total number of days used does not exceed the 30 day benefit limit per year. The Supplement Sick Leave Bank is not an accumulation of leave bank; therefore the employee must have exhausted all accumulated vacation, state and local leave prior to applying for benefits.

Eligibility

To be eligible, an employee must participate in the Teachers Retirement System of Texas and be actively employed on a regular basis (were it not for the TRS 90-day wait period); or be eligible to earn local personal leave and have available at least one day of local personal leave to transfer to the supplemental sick leave bank at the time the deduction is made. The deduction for the contributed leave day is deducted from the first pay period of the member's contract year. It is the responsibility of each participant to verify that the contributed day has been deducted, thereby ensuring that they are members of the SSLB.

Each active employee earns one day of personal leave each month actively at work. At the start of each new school year, employees are allowed to use the days when the need arises even though the employee has not worked long enough to earn them.

Enrollment

In an effort to ensure that all eligible employees have an opportunity to participate in the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank program, the district will conduct pre-enrollment and open-enrollment periods annually. The pre-enrollment period will be conducted for three weeks during the month of May; while the open enrollment period will be conducted for two weeks during the month of August.

To enroll, eligible employees should complete the Membership Enrollment and Termination Form and submit it to the Employee Support Services department. Any enrollment forms received after the official due date will not be processed. Any incomplete enrollment forms received will be returned unprocessed and due date extensions will not be offered. Therefore, it is important to complete the enrollment forms carefully. Current members are not required to re-apply since they are automatically re-enrolled each year during open enrollment.

By enrolling in the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank program, the participating employee agrees to voluntarily transfer one of their personal leave days earned during the year into the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank (For example, a 10-month employee would contribute one day to the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank, leaving the employee with nine days to use before applying for benefits). Each year thereafter one day will automatically be transferred to the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank unless the employee chooses to cancel their membership.

Benefit Qualification

To qualify to receive benefits from the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank, the member's absences must be the result of a catastrophic illness. A catastrophic illness is an illness which results in temporary disability due to sickness, surgery, injury, or complication of pregnancy and is so severe that it requires the ongoing services of a licensed medical practitioner, and prevents the employee from performing the regular material duties of his or her employment assignment for seven (7) or more consecutive work days (For example, pregnancies without serious complications and without extended hospital stays as well as elective surgeries without serious complications are not considered to be a catastrophic illness and would not be covered under the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank Program).

Also, the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank benefit must be for the member's own personal illness and can not be used for a family member's illness.

Benefit Value

The value of a Supplemental Sick Leave Bank day is equal to the member's earned daily rate of pay and will not cause an employee's salary to increase.

Coordination of Benefits

Members currently receiving income replacement benefits may apply to the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank. However, benefits will be coordinated with the member's income replacement plan to ensure that the combined monies received will not exceed the employee's daily rate of pay. For example, the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank will coordinate with Workers Compensation but the combined payments received cannot exceed the member's daily rate of pay.

Administration

The Supplemental Sick Leave Bank member or their assigned representative can initiate a request for benefits at any time. A benefit application can be obtained from Employee Support Services, however newly enrolled member requests will only be considered at the end of the enrollment period.

A member's request for benefits must be received within 30 days of the date the employee begins to lose time for which they are requesting leave days. Failure to submit a timely request will constitute a waiver of the option to request such leave days from the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank.

Three SSLB claim forms must be submitted to Houston ISD, Employee Support Services, 812 West 28th, Houston, TX 77008; via interoffice mail: Employee Support Services, Route 6, or via facsimile to 713-293-9769. Applications will be certified for employee membership. The claim will be processed once membership has been confirmed, and all claim forms are completed. All forms must be completed in its entirety and returned to Employee Support Services. Any forms received that are incomplete will be returned unprocessed.

Completed claim forms are forwarded to the disability carrier for approval or denial of the requested Supplemental Sick Leave Bank days. The carrier's decision is made within seven (7) business days and is based on the application and medical information provided. The disability carrier's final determination is forwarded to Employee Support Services. Employee Support Services coordinates approvals with payroll and sends the approval and denial notifications.

SSLB claim forms and the supporting documentation are filed and maintained by Employee Support Services for an indefinite period of time.

Benefit Appeals

In the event that an application for Supplemental Sick Leave Bank benefits is denied, appeals will be handled on an individual basis by the disability carrier. An appeal application must be completed and additional information and/or documentation for reconsideration of denial may be required. The appeals process is coordinated by Employee Support Services.

Termination

Participating employees can voluntarily terminate their Supplemental Sick Leave Bank membership effective the end of the current plan year by completing the termination portion of the Membership Enrollment and Termination Form during pre-enrollment or open-enrollment periods only. The personal leave day(s) previously contributed will not be returned.

An employee may be involuntarily terminated from the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank program under the following circumstances:

1. Separation of employment from the Houston Independent School District;
2. Suspension without pay;
3. A change in employment status which renders the employee ineligible for coverage and benefits; or
4. Misuse of the Supplemental Sick Leave Bank program.