

Baltimore County Public Schools
Department of Human Resources
Office of Employee Benefits, Leaves and Retirement

Leave Requirements and Information Sheet

Type of Leave: Personal

Summary: Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) provides eligible employees up to one year of unpaid leave for personal reasons beginning on the first duty day of the school year and extending through June 30.

Eligibility

- Regularly certificated teachers, as outlined in the bargaining unit agreement, with seven years or more continuous, active, satisfactory service, and with an FTE of .5 or greater. Satisfactory, continuous, active service is construed as meeting uninterrupted professional service in the system with satisfactory evaluation.
- Non-tenured and provisional/conditional teachers are not eligible.
- The number of personal leaves granted during any one year will be included in the bargaining unit agreements.

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 Benefits, Leaves and Retirement
6901 N. Charles Street, B Building, Towson, MD 21204
Fax no. 410-887-8950
Email to: benefits@bcps.org

For additional information and questions, contact Office of Leaves, 443-809-8947.

General Information

- The Application for Leaves of Absence and Conversions must be submitted, and approval of the leave request obtained, before the leave begins.
- In the case of consecutive leaves, if an employee does not return to work prior to the commencement of the second leave, no earned paid time (e.g., personal illness) can be used. No more than two consecutive leaves of absence of any type, excluding military leave, will be granted.
- Personal leave is granted without pay.
- Personal leaves will begin on the first duty day of the school year and extend through the following June 30. Any exception to this provision must be approved by the Superintendent.

- Employees may be granted one personal leave every seven years of continuous, active, satisfactory service with BCPS.
- No leave time will be counted as active service in determining the seven (7) year eligibility requirement.
- Personal leave time shall not be counted towards seniority as defined in the appropriate bargaining unit agreement, but is not interpreted as interrupted service.
- The Office of Benefits, Leaves and Retirement 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 Office of Benefits, Leaves and Retirement 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*. A written statement including reason for leave and beginning and returning dates of leave along with supporting documentation is also required.
- Maryland State form 46, *Qualified Leave Of Absence Request or Notification of Military Service Entry*, if applicable (see Retirement section below). 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.](#)
- Required documentation must be received 30 days prior to the commencement of the requested leave (if leave is foreseeable). If an emergency situation arises, or circumstances prevent this, employees must contact the Office of Benefits, Leaves and Retirement as soon as possible.
- 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 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, it relieves BCPS of the commitment to provide employment.

Effect on Salary Increment

- In general, an unpaid leave of absence is not counted towards the calculation for annual increments. However, employees should see their appropriate bargaining unit agreements for specific details.

Effects on Payroll, Healthcare Benefits and Retirement Plans

➤ Payroll

- In the case of consecutive leaves, if an employee does not return to work prior to the commencement of the second leave, no earned paid time (e.g., personal illness) can be used.
- This is an unpaid leave of absence.
- Upon completion of the leave and return to service with BCPS, employees are responsible for notifying the Office of Payroll (443-809-4240) as soon as possible to reestablish the payroll deduction plans.

➤ Healthcare Benefits

- The Office of Benefits will notify employees regarding continuation of healthcare coverage options, payment method, etc.
- Employees may choose to continue healthcare and flexible spending plan coverage by paying a monthly premium equivalent to the COBRA rate (full cost plus an administrative charge of 2%).
- BCPS-paid basic life insurance continues during the approved leave of absence period.
- Employees must handle other salary deductions (e.g., First Financial Federal Credit Union, optional life insurance, etc.) directly with the appropriate organization.
- Unless continuation of benefits is elected, benefits terminate on the last day of the month in which the employee worked or is in active pay status. If the employee ceases employment with BCPS after the final benefit deduction is taken at the end of the school year, coverage continues through the end of August.
- Upon completion of the leave and return to service with BCPS, employees are responsible for notifying the Office of Employee Benefits (443-809-8943) to re-enroll in benefit plans (must be re-enrolled within 30 days of return to work).

➤ Retirement

- Maryland State Retirement Agency (MSRA) may recognize this leave as a qualified leave of absence for credit purposes, depending on the reason for the leave. Therefore, the unpaid service time may be able to be purchased. Employees must contact the BCPS Office of Retirement to initiate the process. There is no timeframe to initiate the purchase of the service credit if the employee returns to work. However, if the employee is terminating, the paperwork must be received by the state no later than 60 days after expiration of the leave in order for the service to be purchased. BCPS requests the paperwork no later than 45 days after the expiration of the leave in order to process in a timely manner.

- The Baltimore County Employees Retirement System (ERS) does not recognize this leave as a qualified leave of absence for credit purposes. Therefore, the unpaid service time cannot be purchased.
- Upon completion of the leave and return to service with BCPS, employees are responsible for notifying the BCPS Office of Retirement (443-809-8949) to purchase the service time.
- The Baltimore County Employees' Retirement System (ERS) does not recognize this leave as a qualified leave of absence for credit purposes. Therefore, the unpaid service time cannot be purchased.

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 Office of Benefits, Leaves and Retirement of their intent to return to work, request an extension or resign via email, letter or phone call.
- Return to Work
 - The personnel officer reviews the staffing needs of the schools/offices for placement and will notify the employee regarding placement.
 - The Office of Benefits, Leaves and Retirement will notify the appropriate administrator or office head of the employee's return date.
 - Upon completion of the leave and return to service with BCPS, employees are responsible to notify the Office of Payroll (443-809-4240) to reestablish the payroll deduction plans as soon as possible, the Office of Employee Benefits (443-809-8943) to reenroll in benefit plans (must be reenrolled within 30 days of return to work) and the BCPS Office of Retirement (443-809-8949) to purchase the service time.
 - If the leave is a MSRA-qualified leave, eligible employees must complete Maryland state form 26, *Request to Purchase Previous Service*, and submit it while in active employment in order for the service to be purchased. This form must be submitted to the BCPS Office of Retirement.
- 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 443-809-8947 or benefits@bcps.org if they resign from leave.
 - Employees who 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%.

- MSRPS-eligible employees who choose to resign must complete Maryland State form 26, *Request to Purchase Previous Service*. BCPS requests forms are submitted to the Retirement Office within 45 days of the expiration date of the leave in order for the service to be purchased and to satisfy the state's 60 day requirement.

Policy Board of Education Policy 4203, Absences and Leaves

Rule: Superintendent's Rule 4203, Absences and Leaves

Bargaining Unit Information

Teachers Association of Baltimore County (TABCO)

Article XII – Absences and Leaves

Section 12.9-12.9.6 – Personal Leave

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