

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date: June 30, 2023

To: Principals, Division and Department Heads, Certificated Employees and San Diego Education Association Representatives

Subject: CERTIFICATED STAFF CATEGORY I AND III LEAVE OF ABSENCE APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

**Department and/or
Persons Concerned:** Certificated Staff

Due Date: January 1, 2024 for Category I Leaves of Absence
March 1, 2024 for Category III Leaves of Absence

Reference: San Diego Education Association Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 10

Action Requested: Please post a copy of circular for information regarding the Leave of Absence Program. Interested staff members need to submit application and required information as explained below.

Brief Explanation:

Article 10 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) and the San Diego Education Association (SDEA) specifies that eligible staff members may request an unpaid leave of absence. The requirements and specific details of the leave depend upon the type of leave requested.

Three categories of long-term leaves are defined in the contract. This circular addresses Category I and Category III Unrestricted leaves of absence. Category I includes leaves which support Professional Study, Travel, Opportunity Leave, Service to Other Public Agencies, Service to Professional Associations, and Other leaves determined by the Superintendent. Category III includes Military Leaves and Unrestricted leaves. Requests to begin Category I leaves must be received in the Human Resource Services Division (HRSD) by January 1, 2024, for a leave to be effective for the subsequent school year. Requests to begin Category III Unrestricted leaves of absence must be received in the Human Resource Services Division (HRSD) by March 1, 2024, for a leave to be effective for the subsequent school year. Eligible staff members must submit their request for leave using attachment I. Requests to extend a Category I leave must also be received by January 1, 2024.

Military and Category II leaves may be requested at any time.

Category I Planned Leaves (Article 10, Section 10.6)

Category I leaves are planned leaves granted to **permanent** staff members for a period of up to one (1) academic school year; and such leaves may be extended year-to-year for a total period not to exceed three (3) full academic school years within a ten (10) year period. Only **permanent** status staff members are eligible to apply for Category I long-term leaves of absence, which may be granted for any of the following reasons:

Professional Study: Permanent unit members may apply for professional study leave by outlining in writing the plan that is to be followed and the institution to be attended. In addition, a clear statement must be included in the request indicating the need for education study and the potential value to the District upon completion of such study. (See Appendix A. 4.033)

Travel: Permanent unit members may apply for a leave of absence for travel for educational purposes.

Opportunity Leave: Permanent unit members may be eligible for an opportunity leave for the purpose of improving job-related skills and knowledge that will directly benefit the District and the instructional program.

Service to Other Public Agencies: The Superintendent may recommend approval of long-term leaves of absence without pay for permanent unit members to serve another public agency in a capacity which the Superintendent determines will benefit the District and the unit member, including elected, full-time public service.

Other Leaves Determined by the Superintendent: The Superintendent may, in unusual cases, recommend the approval of other long-term, unpaid leaves of absence to permanent staff members for purposes that will benefit the district and serve the best interest of the pupils.

Service to Professional Associations: Unit members may apply for a leave of absence without pay for the purpose of serving a local, state, or national professional organization in an elected or a staff capacity.

Applicants must provide a statement explaining how the leave will directly benefit the District and the instructional program.

Category III (Other Long-Term Leaves) (Article 10, Section 10.8)

Unrestricted Leave: The District may grant a one (1) year leave of absence without pay to a permanent unit member for a reason that is mutually agreed to be of benefit to the District and the unit member. The request for an unrestricted leave of absence must be received by the Human Resource Services Division no later than March 1, 2024. An unrestricted leave of absence shall begin at the beginning of an academic school year and shall end at the conclusion of the same academic school year. An unrestricted leave is not renewable.

Military Leave: Upon receipt of proper orders, a probationary or permanent unit member shall be granted a military leave of absence under the provisions of state law for the period of time they are required to serve. (See Appendix a, 4.031)

Return to previous site or program: For any Category I, II, or III, long-term leave involving up to one (I) academic school year, a unit member, upon request prior to beginning the leave, may return to the previous site or program placement. This assurance can be given only if the unit member is ready to commence paid service at the beginning of the academic school year of the site or program in which the unit member was previously placed.

Health benefits coverage: A long-term leave of absence without pay for an academic school year does not include any district paid benefits. Staff on leave of absence without pay may continue their health benefits coverage on a self-pay basis. Information relating to benefits is on the district website at: <https://www.sandiegounified.org/departments/benefits>.

Questions regarding health, medical, and dental benefits may be referred to the Employee Benefits Department at 619-725-8130 or email employeebenefits@sandi.net.

Application procedure: Please complete the [Long-Term Leave of Absence Application Request Form](#) to request a Leave of Absence application. The Request Form is also available through the district website by clicking on Unpaid Long Term Leaves of Absence at: https://staff.sandiegounified.org/departments/human_resources/human_resources_forms/leave_of_absence_forms. Attach any required statements or documentation and obtain the signature of the school principal or Department Head. Forward the completed leave request form and attachment(s) prior to January 1, 2024 for Category I Leaves and prior to March 1, 2024 for Category III Unrestricted Leaves, Attention: LOA Team at loa@sandi.net.

Additional information regarding Long-Term Leaves of Absence is provided on the district website: [Leave of Absence - Staff Portal](#). Questions regarding leaves may be referred to the Human Resources Services Division via e-mail at loa@sandi.net.

APPROVED:

Mary R. Wager

Mary R. Wager
Senior Executive Director, Human Resources (Interim)

Attachment: [Request Form: Long Term Leave of Absence Application](#)