

**POLICY TITLE: UNPAID SABBATICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Certificated employees of COSSA shall be eligible to apply for an Unpaid Sabbatical Leave of Absence for one (1) or two (2) semesters. Application for an Unpaid Sabbatical Leave of Absence does not guarantee that the Board will grant such requested leave. Such leave will be considered by the Board in accordance with the following provisions:

1. The employee shall have previously engaged in five (5) years of professional service with COSSA. Such employee shall not be eligible for a new period of Sabbatical Leave Absence until they have engaged in an additional five (5) years of service with COSSA.
2. A Sabbatical Leave of Absence shall not be counted as time of professional service, but this period of leave will not break the “continuous service” clause of the employee’s contract status.
  - a. The employee shall not be advanced on the school’s salary schedule during or associated with the period of Sabbatical Leave of Absence.
  - b. The employee will first use all accumulated Personnel Leave as they begin the Sabbatical period. Further accrual of personnel leave does not take place while on sabbatical leave.
  - c. The employee shall retain existing accumulated Sick Leave as of the date the Sabbatical Leave of Absence commences. Further accrual of sick leave does not take place while on sabbatical leave.
  - d. The employee shall retain existing accumulated Vacation Leave (applicable only to year-round employees) as of the date the Sabbatical Leave of Absence commences. Further accrual of vacation leave does not take place while on sabbatical leave.
  - e. The period of absence for Sabbatical Leave of Absence does not count as service time for PERSI reporting/consideration.
3. A Sabbatical Leave of Absence may only be granted for the entirety of one (1) semester or two (2) semesters which comprise an entire school year. An employee cannot request nor be granted a Sabbatical Leave of Absence mid-semester nor may such employee be granted a Sabbatical Leave of Absence that straddles two school years – i.e. Spring Semester of one school year and Fall Semester of the second school year. Such limitations are of critical importance in the continuity of providing an educational program to the students

of COSSA, especially in hard-to-fill employment positions of CTE and Special Education. A request that does not fall within the parameters of this policy will not be considered for Sabbatical Leave of Absence.

4. The employee seeking to obtain a one (1) or two (2) semester Sabbatical Leave of Absence must submit a request for Sabbatical Leave of Absence, in writing. If an employee seeks to take the Fall Semester or both the Fall and Spring Semester as a period of Sabbatical Leave of Absence, the written request must be received no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> of the year prior to the requested Leave. If Sabbatical Leave is only sought for the Spring Semester the written request must be received no later than the prior August 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - a. This written request shall be submitted to the employee's program administrator.
  - b. This written request shall state, at minimum, the reason the employee is requesting a Sabbatical Leave of Absence, what the employee intends to do while on such Leave and the steps that the employee has already taken in advance of this purpose (i.e. registered for classes). See Paragraph 6 for permissible Sabbatical purposes.
  - c. The application shall include a statement of the employee's immediate supervisor indicating an agreement to, neutral position regarding or disagreement with the requested Leave.
  
5. An employee seeking to return from Sabbatical Leave of Absence shall provide notice to their program administrator, regarding the intention to return.
  - a. If the employee has taken the entire year of Leave (2 Semesters), the employee's notice must be received no later than February 15<sup>th</sup> of their intention to return for the following school year.
  - b. If the employee only took the second semester of the school year for Leave, the employee's notice must be received no later than February 15<sup>th</sup> of their intention to return for the following school year.
  - c. If the employee only took the first semester of the school year for Leave, the employee's notice must be received no later than September 20<sup>th</sup> of their intention to return for the second semester.

An employee's failure to deliver timely notice of intent to return, as stated in this Policy, is a violation of this policy and shall be construed by COSSA as the employee's intention to not return. Accordingly, a position may not be available to the employee if the employee does seek to return.

6. A Sabbatical Leave of Absence shall be used only for the following purposes:
  - a. Furtherance of the employee's education at a university/college in the field of education;
  - b. Furtherance of the employee's education through study/tour/internship/apprenticeship;
  - c. Engaging in research in the area of education;
  - d. Personal Health reasons;
  - e. Family Health reasons.

Personal and/or family health reasons for a requested leave do not override FMLA considerations and the application of such in an appropriate situation. Such personal and/or family health reason for the Sabbatical Leave of Absence is intended solely to provide an employee an additional period of potential leave, where applicable.

Sabbatical Leave of Absence shall not be granted in order for an employee to:

- Take a position at another employer or another public or private school;
  - Obtain education or experience in a field other than education;
  - Engage in activity to prepare the employee for another field of employment.
7. The school must be able to locate a certificated professional employee to temporarily fill the position of the employee seeking Sabbatical Leave of Absence.
  8. The application and request shall be reviewed by the school's Administrative Team, comprised of COSSA CEO, COSSA Special Education Director, and the COSSA Business Manager. For a career-technical instructor, the COSSA CTE Coordinator will be added to this review team. From this review, a written recommendation shall be advanced by the Administrative Team to the Board.
    - a. If the Administrative Team is recommending a denial of the request, the Administrative Team shall put such recommendation into writing and provide this written recommendation to the requesting employee prior to the Board's consideration of the employee's Sabbatical Leave Request.
    - b. If the Administrative Team's recommendation is a denial, the employee may be invited to the Board's Meeting where the Sabbatical Leave Request is being considered.

9. Upon completion of approved Sabbatical Leave of Absence the employee shall return to COSSA's employment to a position for which the employee is certificated and qualified, if such position exists and subject to the following terms.
  - a. Subsequent to the period of Sabbatical Leave of Absence the employee must return to employment with COSSA or the employee shall lose their "continuous" service consideration for contract status and shall not be automatically entitled to return to their position.
  - b. If during a period of Sabbatical Leave of Absence the program for which the employee on Leave has been discontinued by the school, and/or if the school has been subject to a Reduction in Force, the school will not guarantee re-employment the employee upon completion of the Leave Period but the employee will be given consideration based upon certification and experience and the position needs of the school..
10. If during the period of Sabbatical Leave of Absence the employee has had a good-faith change of plans (i.e. no longer wishes to take the Sabbatical), the employee must immediately communicate with their program administrator at COSSA to address such change in plans and such must be brought before the Board for consideration of approval of the changed plans.
  - a. If the certificated employee has a change of mind at any time prior to a replacement employee has been contracted, the Sabbatical Leave shall be voided and the employee may return to his/her position.
  - b. If the certificated employee has a change of mind at any time after a replacement employee has been contracted, the Board shall make a determination as to the appropriateness of the Sabbatical Leave and in no circumstance shall the employee be able to return to his/her position until such time as the Sabbatical Leave period has expired.
11. During the period of Sabbatical Leave, the employee shall be responsible for any insurance coverage and/or any other benefits previously offered by COSSA. The employee on Sabbatical Leave of Absence shall have the option to continue all health and other insurance coverages available to the school's employees, at the employee's own expense. The period of Sabbatical Leave shall be without pay.
12. The employee returning from Sabbatical Leave of Absence shall be required to submit a comprehensive written report to their program administrator, within forty-five (45) school days after the employee's return to work and shall include

information pertaining to their program of study, including copies of their transcripts for all college/university credits, research documentation etc.

13. No more than one (1) employee of COSSA shall be granted Sabbatical Leave of Absence at a single time. The consideration of such leave shall be on a first come, first serve basis, depending upon date of written request.

**LEGAL REFERENCE:**

Idaho Code 33-1216

**POLICY HISTORY:**

Adopted: December 21, 2020