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**HOUSE BILL 2685**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Frame, Dolan, J. Johnson, Leavitt, Mead, Ortiz-Self, Valdez, Bergquist, Pollet, and Kloba

AN ACT Relating to sick leave for K-12 employees; amending RCW 28A.400.300; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sick leave is an earned benefit. The state has created an attendance incentive program that allows employees with significant sick leave balances to buy out their excess sick leave at a reduced rate with one day of pay for each four days that are cashed out. State employees can also choose to carry higher sick leave balances that could be donated for shared leave or cashed out upon separation. K-12 employees have similar attendance incentive programs, but are limited by a maximum number of sick leave hours that can be carried from year to year. By limiting sick leave balances, K-12 educators are incentivized to buy out any excess sick leave each year. As a result, there are more limited amounts of sick leave and shared leave that are available if an educator faces significant personal health issues or needs leave to care for family members. Removing the artificial cap on sick leave accrual will allow K-12 employees to use the benefits they have earned if they find themselves in need or share with colleagues who may need additional time.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.400.300 and 2019 c 266 s 19 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Every board of directors, unless otherwise specially provided by law, shall:

(a) Except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, employ for not more than one year, and for sufficient cause discharge all certificated and classified employees;

(b) Adopt written policies granting leaves to persons under contracts of employment with the school district(s) in positions requiring either certification or classified qualifications, including but not limited to leaves for attendance at official or private institutes and conferences and sabbatical leaves for employees in positions requiring certification qualification, and leaves for illness, injury, bereavement and, emergencies for both certificated and classified employees, and with such compensation as the board of directors prescribe. However, the board of directors shall adopt written policies granting to such persons annual leave with compensation for illness, injury, and emergencies as follows:

(i) For such persons under contract with the school district for a full year, at least ten days;

(ii) For such persons under contract with the school district as part time employees, at least that portion of ten days as the total number of days contracted for bears to one hundred eighty days;

(iii) For certificated and classified employees, annual leave with compensation for illness, injury, and emergencies shall be granted and accrue at a rate not to exceed twelve days per year; provisions of any contract in force on June 12, 1980, which conflict with requirements of this subsection shall continue in effect until contract expiration; after expiration, any new contract executed between the parties shall be consistent with this subsection;

(iv) Compensation for leave for illness or injury actually taken shall be the same as the compensation such person would have received had such person not taken the leave provided in this proviso;

(v) Leave provided in this proviso not taken shall accumulate from year to year ((~~up to a maximum of one hundred eighty days for the purposes of RCW 28A.400.210 and 28A.400.220, and for leave purposes up to a maximum of the number of contract days agreed to in a given contract, but not greater than one year~~)). Such accumulated time may be taken at any time during the school year or ((~~up to twelve days per year~~)) may be used for the purpose of payments for unused sick leave in accordance with RCW 28A.400.210;

(vi) Sick leave heretofore accumulated under section 1, chapter 195, Laws of 1959 (former RCW 28.58.430) and sick leave accumulated under administrative practice of school districts prior to the effective date of section 1, chapter 195, Laws of 1959 (former RCW 28.58.430) is hereby declared valid, and shall be added to leave for illness or injury accumulated under this proviso;

(vii) Any leave for injury or illness accumulated up to a maximum of forty-five days shall be creditable as service rendered for the purpose of determining the time at which an employee is eligible to retire, if such leave is taken it may not be compensated under the provisions of RCW 28A.400.210 and 28A.310.490;

(viii) Accumulated leave under this proviso shall be transferred to and from one district to another, the office of superintendent of public instruction, offices of educational service district superintendents and boards, the state school for the blind, the Washington center for deaf and hard of hearing youth, institutions of higher education, and community and technical colleges, to and from such districts, schools, offices, institutions of higher education, and community and technical colleges;

(ix) Leave accumulated by a person in a district prior to leaving said district may, under rules of the board, be granted to such person when the person returns to the employment of the district.

(2) When any certificated or classified employee leaves one school district within the state and commences employment with another school district within the state, the employee shall retain the same seniority, leave benefits, and other benefits that the employee had in his or her previous position. However, classified employees who transfer between districts after July 28, 1985, shall not retain any seniority rights other than longevity when leaving one school district and beginning employment with another. If the school district to which the person transfers has a different system for computing seniority, leave benefits, and other benefits, then the employee shall be granted the same seniority, leave benefits, and other benefits as a person in that district who has similar occupational status and total years of service.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (1)(a) of this section, discharges of certificated and classified employees in school districts that are dissolved due to financial insolvency shall be conducted in accordance with RCW 28A.315.229.

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