

STRIDE ACADEMY BOARD POLICY

POLICY: 409

DATE EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2015

APPROVED: June 18, 2015

REVISED: June 10, 2025, Jan. 13, 2026

400-499 PERSONNEL POLICIES

409 EMPLOYEE LEAVE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to identify the Employee Leave at STRIDE Academy Charter School. It is the belief of the Administration at STRIDE Academy that employees will benefit mentally and physically by a period of rest and relaxation away from the duties and responsibilities of their jobs, at least for some period of time during the year. Paid Time Off is designed to be used for various personal reasons. It is the intent of STRIDE Academy to provide each employee with the Paid Time Off schedule they desire; however due to the nature of our business, this is not always possible.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. PTO encompasses personal leave time, including vacation time. PTO hours will not count as hours worked for the purposes of any overtime calculation.
- B. Earned Sick and Safe Time (E.S.S.T): Pursuant to MN ordinance, employees are entitled to earn sick and safe leave.
- C. Full-time Employee: An employee, exempt or non-exempt, who works at least 30 hours per week. Full time equivalent (FTE) employees of 1 are defined the same.
- D. Part-time Employee: An employee, exempt or non-exempt, who works less than 30 hours per week.
- E. Year: For the purposes of this policy, a year is defined as a school year, which is July 1 through June 30.
- F. Black Out Days: Days identified by School Administration in which an employee should not request leave time.
- G. Immediate family member: A parent, child, spouse or domestic partner, or legal dependents who live in the employee's household.

- H. Undue Hardship: An undue hardship is a significant difficulty or expense that would be imposed on the company's operations by granting the accommodation.

III. POLICY

A. Paid Time Off (PTO)

PTO will be frontloaded beginning on the first day of employment for the current school year. PTO hours will be prorated for employees hired mid-year.

1. Employees working 250 days per year and more than 36 hours per week are given 72 hours of PTO per year.
2. Employees working 230 days per year and more than 36 hours per week are given 68 hours of PTO per year.
3. Employees working 220 days per year and more than 36 hours per week are given 64 hours of PTO per year.
4. Employees working 210-215 days and more than 36 hours per week are given 56 hours of PTO per year.
5. Employees working 178-185 days and more than 36 hours per week are given 48 hours of PTO per year.
6. Employees working 169 days and/or between 30 and 35 hours per week are given 24 hours of PTO per year.
7. Temporary employees are not eligible for paid time off.
8. PTO for part time employees depends on hours worked, but will equate to 1 workday per month in available PTO hours.

B. Rollover of PTO

Up to 40 hours for regularly assigned employees working more than 36 hours per week, and up to 16 hours for regularly assigned employees working between 30 - 35 hours per week may be rolled over to the next school year. Employees working part time may roll up to 12 hours to the next school year.

Employees working 210 or more days and 36 or more hours per week, can save (or "bank") up to a maximum of 80 hours of PTO. Once the maximum of 80 hours has been reached, any additional rollover (up to 40 hours per year) will go into a separate sick leave bank. Up to 500 hours can be accumulated in this sick leave bank. Unused sick leave will not be paid out when employment ends.

At the end of a contract year, employees may elect to donate any unused and otherwise forfeitable PTO hours, including hours in excess of applicable rollover limits, in accordance with the PTO Donation section of this policy and subject to the eligibility requirements and administrative procedures established by the School. PTO hours not rolled over, banked, or donated by the end of the contract year will be forfeited.

C. Use of PTO:

1. The Executive Director of STRIDE Academy reserves the authority to decline PTO requests for vacations should such leave negatively impact the operations of the Academy. All leave should be requested in advance and must be approved by the employee's supervisor or designee. PTO will be granted on a first come, first serve basis, at the discretion of the School Administrator or Human Resources. Individual scheduling preferences will be considered in

view of each employee's total length of service with the Academy in relation to the availability of personnel to conduct business.

2. No more than 5 employees, including a maximum of 2 teachers and 1 para, may schedule Paid Time Off for one or more days at one time unless approved by the Executive Director. The 5 employee limit applies to each school building, totaling a maximum of 10 employees per day organization-wide.
3. Employee absences will be closely monitored. Misuse of paid time off (PTO) may result in disciplinary action. For example, if an employee calls out sick or claims an appointment on short notice for a day that was previously requested and denied, it may be considered an abuse of PTO.
4. It is mandatory to utilize PTO before proceeding to unpaid leave.
5. In special/emergency circumstances administration will be able determine and adjust needed emergency Paid Time Off already accrued by the employee. While every effort will be made to accommodate emergency leave, it is subject to approval based on the nature of the situation and the organization's operational requirements.
6. PTO may not be used during Black Out Days except as granted by the Executive Director or designee. All Paid Time Off requests for the first two weeks or the last two weeks of school must be approved at least one month in advance by the administration.
7. Paid Time Off of more than two days may be granted if approved one month in advance by the administration.
8. Upon resignation, employees are not eligible for paid time off during the resignation period.
9. Upon severing employment with STRIDE Academy, any *accrued* unused PTO will be paid out at the employee's hourly rate. A payout of their PTO will be calculated based on the number of actual days worked and PTO used.

Example:

60 days worked	x	# of hours accrued	= 15.6 hours accrued
185 contract days		48 hours of PTO	

D. Earned Sick and Safe Time (E.S.S.T)

Pursuant to MN ordinance, employees are entitled to earn sick and safe leave. All employees are provided with a front loaded bank of 48 ESST hours. Covered family members include immediate family and/or a member of the employee's household, in addition to themselves. Unused ESST hours will roll over to the next school year for all employees. Unused ESST leave will be paid out when employment is terminated at the employee's hourly rate.

Earned Sick and Safe Time may be used to provide paid time off for the following purposes:

1. An employee's:

- a. mental or physical illness, injury, or other health condition;
 - b. need for medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition; or
 - c. need for preventive medical or health care.
2. An employee's care of a family member:
 - a. with a mental or physical illness, injury, or other health condition;
 - b. who needs medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury, or other health condition; or
 - c. who needs preventive medical or health care.
3. An employee's absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking of the employee or employee's family member, provided the absence is to:
 - a. seek medical attention related to physical or psychological injury or disability caused by domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking;
 - b. obtain services from a victim services organization;
 - c. obtain psychological or other counseling;
 - d. seek relocation or take steps to secure an existing home due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking; or
 - e. seek legal advice or take legal action, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or resulting from domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.
4. If as a consequence of the School's announcement of a closure or reduced operations due to weather or other public emergency an employee is unable to work; or an employee's need to care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed due to weather or other public emergency.
5. An employee's inability to work during a declared public emergency because the employee is:
 - a. prohibited from working by the employer due to health concerns related to the potential transmission of a communicable illness related to the public emergency; or
 - b. seeking or awaiting the results of a diagnostic test for, or a medical diagnosis of, a communicable disease related to the public emergency, and such employee has been exposed to a communicable disease or the employee's employer has requested a test or diagnosis.
6. When health authorities having jurisdiction, or healthcare professionals, determine that the presence of an employee or their family member in the community would jeopardize the health of others, because of the exposure of the employee or their family member to a communicable disease.
7. An employee's absence due to the need to make funeral arrangements, attend a funeral service or memorial, or address financial or legal matters that arise after the death of a family member.

If an employee plans to use ESST for an appointment, preventive care or another permissible reason they know of in advance, inform their direct supervisor and Human Resources as far in advance as possible, but at least seven days in advance. In situations where an employee cannot provide advance notice, the employee should contact their direct supervisor and Human Resources as soon as they know they will be unable to work.

Employees will be required to provide certain documentation regarding the reason for their use of ESST if it is for more than three consecutive days. For earned sick and safe time, reasonable

documentation may include a signed statement by a health care professional indicating the need for use of earned sick and safe time. However, if the employee or employee's family member did not receive services from a health care professional, or if documentation cannot be obtained from a health care professional in a reasonable time or without added expense, then reasonable documentation may include a written statement from the employee indicating that the employee is using or used earned sick and safe time for a qualifying purpose.

E. Unpaid Leave

Unpaid leave will be granted in extenuating circumstances by the Executive Director or designee. Unpaid leave not required to comply with state statutes can be denied at the discretion of the Executive Director or designee.

F. Extended Leave

1. The Executive Director may grant an extended leave of absence without salary to any full- or part-time employee who has been employed by the school for at least five years and has at least ten years of allowable service, as defined in section 354.05, subdivision 13, or ten years of full-time teaching service in Minnesota public schools.
2. The duration of an extended leave of absence under this section must be determined by mutual agreement of the Executive Director and the staff member at the time the leave is granted. If the request is denied, the Executive Director must provide reasonable justification for the denial.
3. Extended Leave of Absence will comply with statute MN 122A.46 and all related school policies.

G. Flex time

The Executive Director may grant flex time to eligible employees. As it depends on the nature of the assigned position and the business needs of the school, not every job lends itself to flex time. Employees working in a position requiring extended work hours or additional days outside of the assigned reporting calendar and/or reporting hours, are eligible for flex time at the discretion of the Executive Director. Employees with an identified, documented performance problem will not be offered the flex time option. Also, the Executive Director may deny a flex time request for an employee whose presence is critical during standard work hours, or during a specific time frame or project in which the employee would be needed.

H. Religious Observance Leave

To accommodate religious observances, employees can request time off for religious holidays, services, or practices, with reasonable notice. STRIDE Academy will make reasonable efforts to accommodate these requests, unless it causes undue hardship. Employees wishing to take time off for a religious observance should provide their supervisor with as much advance notice as possible, ideally two weeks in advance, but not less than one week. The request should specify the dates and times needed, and the reason for the leave.

Potential accommodations may include:

1. Allowing the employee to take the time off, using either PTO or unpaid time.
2. Adjusting the employee's work schedule to allow for time off.
3. Allowing the employee to make up the time missed at a later date (Flex time to be approved only by the Executive Director.).

I. Holidays

1. Holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Friday, Winter Break, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Mid-Winter Break, Spring Break Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Fourth of July
2. All full-time employees will be provided a calendar of dates that they are expected to work with the work agreement each school year.
3. Holidays are not considered paid days.

J. Bereavement Leave

1. Full-time employees will be granted up to three workdays of leave with pay in the event of a death of a member of the immediate family or mother-in-law or father-in-law, sister, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild. Bereavement leave is also granted for mothers and fathers who suffer a miscarriage.
 - a. PTO may be used to cover non-eligible funerals, or to extend time off beyond 3 days.

K. Jury Duty

STRIDE Academy recognizes the responsibility of its employees to the community and urges all employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities. Jury duty is one such responsibility that all employees have. The STRIDE Academy shall assist the employee to fulfill this responsibility by granting them time off with pay for the period of 10 school days. Time off will be granted without pay beyond 10 school days. The employee shall inform the principal or supervisor of upcoming jury duty as soon as possible after receiving a summons.

L. Paid Time Off (PTO) Donation Program

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Paid Time Off (PTO) Donation Program is to provide a mechanism by which eligible employees may voluntarily donate accrued PTO to assist other eligible employees who are experiencing a serious personal or family hardship and who have exhausted, or are at risk of exhausting, their available PTO. This program is intended to support employee well-being while maintaining the operational needs of STRIDE Academy.

II. Eligibility to Donate PTO

- a. Employees eligible to donate PTO include full-time and part-time employees who accrue PTO under this policy, including licensed teachers and non-licensed support staff.
- b. Employees must retain a minimum PTO balance after donation, as determined by Administration, to ensure continued availability of leave for the donor's own needs.
- c. Donated PTO must be accrued, unused PTO at the time the donation is made.
- d. Temporary employees are not eligible to donate PTO.
- e. Participation in the PTO Donation Program is strictly voluntary and anonymous. Employees shall not be pressured, coerced, or solicited to donate PTO by supervisors, administrators, or coworkers.

III. Eligibility to Receive Donated PTO

- a. Employees eligible to receive donated PTO include full-time and part-time employees, including licensed teachers and non-licensed support staff, who are currently employed by STRIDE Academy and in good standing.

- b. An employee seeking to receive donated PTO must submit a formal written request to Human Resources in the form and manner prescribed by the School. Receipt of donated PTO shall not occur unless a request has been submitted by the employee in need.
- c. An employee may be approved to receive donated PTO if the employee is experiencing a qualifying hardship, which may include, but is not limited to:
 - A serious personal medical condition requiring minimal or intermittent absence for which applying for Short-Term Disability (STD), Long-Term Disability (LTD), or Minnesota Paid Family and Medical Leave (MN PFML) would not be reasonable or appropriate;
 - The need to care for an immediate family member, as defined in this policy, with a serious medical condition requiring minimal or intermittent absence for which applying for STD, LTD, or MN PFML would not be reasonable or appropriate; or
 - Other extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Executive Director or designee
- d. The employee must have exhausted all available PTO and applicable leave under this policy, including Earned Sick and Safe Time (E.S.S.T.), prior to accessing donated PTO, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director due to extenuating circumstances.
- e. Approval of donated PTO is not automatic and remains subject to review and authorization by the Executive Director or designee.

IV. Donation and Approval Process

- a. An employee in need must submit a PTO Donation Request Form to Human Resources identifying the qualifying hardship and the anticipated amount of PTO requested.
- b. Upon approval of eligibility, Human Resources may facilitate notice of the approved request in a manner that protects employee confidentiality and allows eligible employees to voluntarily donate PTO.
- c. Employees wishing to donate PTO must submit a PTO Donation Receipt Request Form to Human Resources.
- d. PTO donations must be made in whole-hour increments and must be accrued and unused at the time of donation. Prior to accepting the donation, Human Resources will calculate the amount of accrued PTO that the donating employee has earned to confirm the amount allowed.
- e. Once PTO has been donated, the donation is irrevocable and may not be returned to the donating employee under any circumstances.
- f. Administration reserves the right to limit the amount of PTO an employee may donate or receive in a school year to ensure equitable administration of the program and to protect school operations.

V. Use of Donated PTO

- a. Donated PTO may be used only for the approved hardship and must be used in accordance with the employee's regular work schedule and assigned calendar (teacher or support staff calendar, as applicable).
- b. Donated PTO will be paid at the recipient employee's regular rate of pay and does not count as hours worked for purposes of overtime or premium pay calculations.
- c. Donated PTO may not be used during Black Out Days, except as approved by the Executive Director or designee.
- d. Any donated PTO not used by the recipient employee will be forfeited and will not be returned to the donating employee. Unused donated PTO will be returned to the general pool of donated PTO hours for future eligible use.

VI. Confidentiality

All information related to PTO donations, including the identity of donors and recipients and the circumstances necessitating the request, will be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law and consistent with the administration of this policy.

VII. Non-Retaliation

STRIDE Academy strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee who chooses to donate or declines to donate PTO, or who applies to receive donated PTO under this program.

VIII. Administration of the Program

The Executive Director or designee retains full authority to administer, interpret, modify, suspend, or discontinue the PTO Donation Program at any time, consistent with applicable law and the operational needs of STRIDE Academy.

IX. Compliance with Law

This PTO Donation Program shall be administered in compliance with all applicable federal and Minnesota laws, including but not limited to Minn. Stat. §§ 122A.40–58 and 181.9446, and shall be interpreted consistently with the provisions of this Employee Leave Policy.

M. All leave outlined in this policy, as well as all other leave not outlined in this policy, will comply with the requirements of MN 122A.40-58 and MN 275-186.

Legal References

Minn. Stat. §122A.40-58 (Employment Contracts; Terms and Conditions)

Minn. Stat. §175-186 (Industry, Labor)

Minn. Stat. §181.9446 (Accrual Of Earned Sick And Safe Time)

STRIDE Academy

Paid Time Off (PTO) Donation Recipient Request Form

This form must be completed by an employee requesting to *receive* donated PTO in accordance with the PTO Donation Program outlined in Policy 409 (Employee Leave Policy).

Employee Information

Employee Name: _____

Position / Role: _____

Employment Type: ☐ Teacher ☐ Support Staff

Work Location / Building: _____

School Year: _____

Qualifying Hardship

Please briefly describe the qualifying hardship for which donated PTO is being requested. Medical information should be limited to what is necessary for review.

Leave Status Certification

I certify that I have exhausted, or will imminently exhaust, all available PTO and applicable leave under Policy 409, including Earned Sick and Safe Time (E.S.S.T.), unless otherwise approved due to extenuating circumstances.

Estimated number of PTO hours requested: _____ hours

Anticipated dates of use (if known): _____

Employee Acknowledgment

I acknowledge and understand that:

- Submission of this request does not guarantee approval or receipt of donated PTO.
- Donated PTO may only be used for the specific hardship approved under the PTO Donation Program.
- Approval and the amount of donated PTO granted are subject to review and authorization by the Executive Director or designee.
- Any donated PTO not used will be forfeited and returned to the general pool of donated PTO hours.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Administrative Review (For School Use Only)

☐ Approved ☐ Denied ☐ Approved with Conditions

Authorized Hours (if approved): _____ hours

Executive Director / Designee Signature: _____

Date: _____

STRIDE Academy
Paid Time Off (PTO) Donation Receipt Request Form

This form must be completed by employees voluntarily *donating* PTO in accordance with the PTO Donation Program outlined in Policy 409 (Employee Leave Policy).

Donor Information

Donor Employee Name: _____

Position / Role: _____

Employment Type: ☐ Teacher ☐ Support Staff

School Year: _____

PTO Donation Details

Number of PTO hours to be donated (whole-hour increments only): _____ hours

I certify that:

- The PTO hours being donated are accrued and unused at the time of donation.
- I will retain the required minimum PTO balance after donation, as determined by Administration.
- This donation is voluntary and irrevocable.

Donor Acknowledgment

I acknowledge and understand that:

- Donated PTO may not be returned to me under any circumstances.
- I will not receive financial compensation or any other consideration for this donation.
- The identity and circumstances of the recipient employee may remain confidential.
- Donated PTO may be returned to the general pool if not used by the recipient.

Donor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Human Resources Processing (For School Use Only)

PTO Balance Verified: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Hours Accepted and Deducted: _____ hours

Processed By: _____

Date: _____