

October 15, 2025 for PFT Site Reps. PFT sent to all unit members October 17.

This email is going to all PFT unit members,

PFT has been working with the District to improve the Catastrophic Leave Bank process for PFT unit members. Our goal is to allow as many people as possible to donate and join the Bank if desired. When a catastrophic illness strikes, we want to do what we can to ensure people have had the opportunity to be a member of the Bank. We have agreed upon two improvements, described below, to expand eligibility. Please read all the details about the Catastrophic Leave Bank in the attached MOU.

Next week, if you are eligible to donate in this year's Catastrophic Leave Drive, you will receive an email from payroll@powayusd.com that will allow you to donate and join. You will also receive reminders of this opportunity during the two-week drive. You will not be contacted if you do not meet eligibility requirements or if you donated last year (donating last year means you are already a member of the Bank).

1. The number of accrued sick leave days required to be eligible to donate and join the Bank has been lowered.
 - a. Previously, a unit member had to have 4 accrued/earned* sick days as of June 30 of the prior year to be eligible to donate and join the Bank.
 - b. Now, a unit member will need to have one (1) day of accrued/earned* sick leave as of October 1 of the current year to donate and join the Bank.
2. Opportunities to donate and join the Bank will be offered annually, rather than every three years.
 - a. The Catastrophic Leave Drive conducted during the 2024-25 school year, and every year thereafter, shall going forward be considered a "Primary Catastrophic Leave Drive." PFT unit members who donate a minimum of one day of sick leave during each Primary Catastrophic Leave Drive will be considered members of the Catastrophic Leave Bank **for a period of three years**. For example, those who donated in the fall 2024 drive shall remain members of the Bank for the 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27 school years. Primary Catastrophic Leave Drives will occur every third year (fall 2024, fall 2027, fall 2030, etc.).
 - b. During years in which there is not a Primary Catastrophic Leave Drive, unit members may wish to donate and join the Catastrophic Leave Bank. To give this opportunity to as many unit members as possible, a Secondary Catastrophic Leave Drive will occur during years in which there is not a Primary Catastrophic Leave Drive. PFT unit members who donate a minimum of one day of sick leave during a Secondary Catastrophic Leave Drive will be considered members of the Catastrophic Leave Bank **for the remaining years of the current three-year Primary Drive Cycle**. For example, those who donate in the fall 2025 Secondary Catastrophic Leave Drive, shall remain members of the Bank for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years. Those who donate in the fall 2026 Secondary

Catastrophic Leave Drive, shall remain members of the Bank for the 2026-27 school year only.

* The district only allows donations of “earned” sick leave to the Catastrophic Leave Bank. If you have plenty of sick leave from working in prior years, that sick leave has been earned and you can use it to join the Bank if desired. If you DON’T have sick leave from working in prior years, or if you have a LOW SICK LEAVE BALANCE, you will want to understand the definition of “earned” leave.

What is “earned” sick leave? Our full sick leave allotment for the school year is “frontloaded to us” and is accessible at the start of each school year. Even though we can access our entire annual allotment up front, we must work in paid status to earn each of our sick days over the course of the year. By October 1, PFT unit members working in paid status since the first workday will have earned at least one (1) day of sick leave that can be used to donate and join the Catastrophic Leave Bank. This applies even if an employee had a zero balance of accrued sick leave time on the first workday of the school year. As long as the employee has worked in paid status since the start of the work year, they will have earned at least one (1) day of leave by October 1. At least one (1) day of earned and unused leave is required to donate a day and join the Bank.

NOTE: In the rare case that a teacher takes an unpaid leave during the school year, the teacher will not earn sick leave days while on unpaid leave. If the teacher has accessed sick leave they have not earned, they will owe the district money. This is because they have been paid when accessing a sick day that they never earned.

Is it a good idea to donate and join the Catastrophic Leave Bank if I only have one earned day of sick leave or if I have a low earned sick leave balance?

This is a very personal decision. Being a member of the Bank is like insurance. It can provide up to 50 days at full pay to help you if you become catastrophically ill and you have exhausted all your leave options. It can also help you if you must care for a catastrophically ill family member after you’ve exhausted all applicable leave options. On the flip side, donating one day reduces your sick leave balance by one day and donations are irrevocable. You’ll want to be fully aware of any fiscal implications if all your fully paid accrued sick leave runs out. Below is a general summary of our leave provisions that apply when we, the employee, are sick, or when a family member is sick and requires your care.

If the **PFT unit member** is medically unable to work, the unit member can access the leave types below.

- Accrued Sick Leave: Fully paid.
- 3 Compelling Reasons Days: Fully paid and can be accessed at any time in this process at the discretion of the unit member but also must be exhausted to be considered for Catastrophic Leave.

- Extended Sick Leave: Differential pay. Up to 100 workdays at full salary, less half the daily rate on the lowest cell (B2) of salary schedule I, which is currently a deduction of \$158 per day.
- Catastrophic Leave: If the unit member remains medically unable to work, meets the definition of catastrophic illness or injury, and all qualifying leave options have been exhausted, the unit member can apply for up to 50 days of fully paid catastrophic leave, IF they donated to and are a member of the Bank.
- Unpaid Leave: No salary. The unit member pays the full cost of health and welfare benefits. Premiums are no longer subsidized by the district and become very expensive.

If a **family member of the PFT unit member** is sick or injured, and the unit member must care for the family member, the leave types below can be accessed.

- Personal Necessity Leave: Fully paid; comes from your accrued sick leave.
- 3 Compelling Reasons Days: Fully paid and can be accessed at any time in this process at the discretion of the unit member but also must be exhausted to be considered for Catastrophic Leave.
- Five Additional Personal Necessity Days: Differential pay. Up to 5 workdays at full salary, less half the daily rate on the lowest cell (B2) of salary schedule I, which is currently a deduction of \$158 per day.
- Catastrophic Leave: If the family of the unit member remains catastrophically ill and requires the unit member's care, and all qualifying leave options have been exhausted, the unit member can apply for up to 50 days of fully paid catastrophic leave, IF they donated to and are a member of the Bank.
- Unpaid Leave: No salary. The unit member pays the full cost of health and welfare benefits. Premiums are no longer subsidized by the district and become very expensive.

In Solidarity,

Kelly