CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE BANK HANDBOOK

Established November 1, 1990

REVISED 2017-2018
PURPOSE AND ELIGIBILITY

The purpose of the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank (CSLB) is to provide additional sick leave days to members of the CSLB in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury.

The Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank has strict criteria and is for such medical conditions that are usually considered life-threatening or with the threat of serious residual disability.

CSLB approved awards must meet all of the following eligibility criteria;
- Employee must be a member of the CSLB.
- Employee must make a three-day donation.
- The three-day donation must have been earned in accordance with leave guidelines.
- Employee must exhaust all accrued leave time available.
- Employee must be absent for five consecutive workdays.

Employee must also have one of the following listed eligibility criteria;
- Inpatient facility admission (room and board charges are required)
- Cancer with chemo therapy or radiation treatments
- High risk pregnancy with required bedrest
- Hospice admission
- Serious mental illness
  - As defined by the Texas Insurance code sec. 1355.001

The following is a list of exclusions that will not be approved for CSLB;
- Normal pregnancy
- Outpatient Admission
- Ambulatory Surgical Care Admission
- Observation Admission
- Emergency room admission without inpatient hospital admission
- Routine office care
- Elective cosmetic surgery
- Workers’ compensation claims
- Any other condition not meeting the above listed eligibility criteria.

Days may be granted from the CSLB only after the member has exhausted all accumulated state and local leave days. Employees that receive vacation days must also exhaust all those days. Sick leave days from the CSLB are those days granted to a member who, through a catastrophic illness or injury, is unable to perform the duties of his/her position. The CSLB does not cover all sick absences that an employee is unable to work as prescribed by a physician.

The CSLB is neither a replacement for nor equivalent with disability income replacement insurance. Disability income replacement insurance provides income replacement benefits when an employee is unable to work as prescribed by a doctor. The eligibility criteria for disability insurance is less restrictive and more conditions are covered. NEISD offers disability insurance to benefit eligible employees as a new hire and also during annual open enrollment.
MEMBERSHIP

All personnel of the North East Independent School District earning local sick leave benefits from the District shall be eligible for membership.

Any employee who is eligible to join the CSLB may do so by contributing three days of accrued or anticipated local sick leave. The enrollment period for current employees and new employees hired is during the first 31 days of employment or during the District’s annual open enrollment period.

New employees who join the CSLB as a new hire are effective the first of the month following their hire date. Employees who enroll during open enrollment are effective January 1st.

Employees desiring to join the CSLB shall select the benefit using online enrollment.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF DAYS

To become a member of the CSLB, an employee must contribute three days from his/her accrued or anticipated local sick leave for the current school year. These days will be subtracted from the member’s local sick leave. The three days donated become the property of the North East Independent School District CSLB and are non-refundable.

For CSLB purposes, the school year will be from August 1 through July 31. If a member uses three or more days from the CSLB during this period, he/she will be required to donate an additional three days the following school year (August through July) in order to have continuing membership in the CSLB. If the member uses fewer than three days, he/she will donate the number of days actually used. As with the member’s initial donation of days, the member will be ineligible for a new claim until the additional days donated have been earned in accordance with leave guidelines.

Each year if the CSLB balance falls below the number of members, the active members must contribute an additional two days for the current school year. Members who do not wish to contribute the additional two days will forfeit membership upon written notification to the Employee Benefits office.

If a member chooses to cancel his/her membership in the CSLB, the three days contributed for membership remain the property of the CSLB. If this individual wishes to rejoin the CSLB at a later date, he/she may do so during the open enrollment period by again donating three days.

Personnel who terminate their employment with the District forfeit membership in the CSLB at the effective date of termination. If the employee wishes to regain membership in the CSLB upon his/her return to the District, three days must again be donated. As with the member’s initial donation of days, the member will be ineligible for a claim until the additional days donated have been earned in accordance with leave guidelines.

Personnel on approved leave of absence will retain membership in the CSLB and are not required to donate additional days.
GRANTING OF SICK LEAVE DAYS FROM THE CSLB

Sick leave days from the CSLB are granted only after the member has exhausted all accumulated state and local leave days. Employees that receive vacation days must also exhaust all those days. Members may only receive days from the CSLB after they have worked enough days to earn their three-day donation.

Conditions known to exist by the employee that have been diagnosed or treated in the six-month period prior to enrollment in the CSLB, will not be covered under the provisions of the CSLB until 90 days following the enrollment date.

Days from the CSLB shall be granted only for catastrophic illness or injury, which necessitates an absence from work for five consecutive days or longer. The CSLB does not cover all sick absences that an employee is unable to work as prescribed by a physician. CSLB days shall be granted only for absences for working days and will not be granted for holidays, vacation days or other such days for which the member is not scheduled to work.

The CSLB will grant up to three days for bereavement due to the death of a member’s spouse, child, parent or parent-in-law.

The maximum number of CSLB days that may be granted to an employee during the year (August 1 through July 31) will be 45 days. If a member who has received less than 45 days from the CSLB returns to work and then is ill again with the same or different illness, he/she may re-apply to the CSLB for any additional days available, not to exceed 45 days per plan year. Each separate illness applied for must meet the CSLB criteria.

Approval of all sick leave days will be granted by the Employee Benefits office. The CSLB Board of Directors will audit CSLB usage and hear all appeals regarding CSLB denials. The District will reimburse the member in a regular payroll check, based on the actual days docked that are within the maximum number of days allowed by the CSLB. If approved, the CSLB days will be paid on the next available paycheck.

All unused sick leave days in the CSLB at the end of the plan year (July 31) shall be carried over to the next plan year (August 1 through July 31) if the employee is still on a leave of absence.

A contributor will lose the right to utilize the benefits of the CSLB by:
- Separation of employment from the North East Independent School District;
- cancellation of participation by the member in writing at any time;
- any illness or injury occurring while on an approved leave of absence.

USE OF CSLB FOR THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

The CSLB may be used to provide additional sick leave days for members whose immediate family has suffered catastrophic illness or injury.

Immediate family shall include and be limited to the member’s parent(s), spouse, and any children. Children include:
• The employee’s child under age 26.
• Children may remain covered after age 26 if they are physically or mentally handicapped and primarily dependent on the employee for support and maintenance.

Child means a natural child, a stepchild, an adopted child, a foster child, regardless of presence or absence of a child’s financial dependency, residency, student status, employment status, marital status, eligibility for other coverage or any combination of those factors.

To apply for sick leave days the member must follow the same procedures as set forth in illness for the employee. The use and issuing of sick leave days will also be applied to the illness or injury of the family member. The maximum number of days that may be granted to an employee for the illness or injury of a family member is 15 days per occurrence.

APPLYING FOR CSLB DAYS

A member may request days from the CSLB by submitting required forms no later than 30 work days after returning to duty. Forms include:

• A completed and signed Member’s Statement.
• A completed and signed Physician’s Statement.

The forms are available from the Employee Benefits office or on the webpage at www.neisd.net/page/434.

If a member is critically ill and unable to file an application for sick leave days from the CSLB, the school principal, immediate supervisor, or department head may initiate the application form at the request of the member or someone in the member’s family. When a member is applying for days for an eligible family member, additional documentation may be required to verify the relationship, i.e., birth certificate; baptismal record; hospital birth record.

When a member is applying for bereavement days, they must submit to the Employee Benefits office, no later than 30 work days after returning to work, the Member’s Statement and notice of the death or obituary indicating relationship.

CSLB GOVERNING COMMITTEE

The governing committee, which will audit CSLB usage and hear all appeals regarding the CSLB, shall be called the North East Independent School District Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Board of Directors.

Members of the CSLB who have been employed by the District for at least three consecutive years, at the time of election, may serve on the Board of Directors. Membership of the Board of Directors shall be composed of:

Voting Members - elected by the members of the CSLB
• Two representatives from elementary schools
• Two representatives from middle schools
• Two representatives from high schools
• One representative from administrative and instructional support
• One representative from School Nutrition Services
• One representative from maintenance personnel
• One representative from administration (central office or campus level)
• One representative from transportation personnel
• One representative from police, media, data processing, M.I.S, network services, document management and print services

Non-Voting Members
• Employee Benefits Specialist or designee shall serve as Executive Officer.
• The Board of Directors may elect a Chairman of the Board with non-voting status. If the board desires to exercise this option, the Chairman shall be an administrative staff member assigned to the central administrative complex.

A member of the Board of Directors shall, following the first year of the Board’s operation, serve for two years beginning August 1 and ending July 31. A member, if re-elected, may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

Terms expiring odd number years
• One elementary school representative
• One middle school representative
• One high school representative
• Maintenance representative
• Paraprofessional representative
• Police, Media, Data Processing, M.I.S, Network Services, Document Management and Print Services representative

Terms expiring even numbered years
• One elementary school representative
• One middle school representative
• One high school representative
• Administrative representative
• Transportation representative
• School Nutrition Services representative

Resident/itinerant professional personnel (counselors, librarians, teachers, nurses, special ed. coordinators, etc.) will be eligible as representatives per their home school assignments. Professional personnel, such as consultants, supervisors, diagnosticians, directors, principals, assistant principals, etc., will be eligible to vote and/or elected in the administrative group.

Elections will be held annually and completed by the end of the school year. Only members of the CSLB are eligible to vote. Members of each group named above may file as candidates from their group. A nomination form will be provided.
Voting will be by ballot. Ballots will be distributed electronically and returned to the Employee Benefits Office. The Executive Officer or designee will calculate the ballots. The results are presented to the CSLB Board of Directors for certification.

**Duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors**

At the first meeting of the year for the newly elected Board members, the Board shall select from the group a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. Also at the first meeting, the Board of Directors will review the annual audit of the CSLB usage.

A member may appeal the decision of the CSLB Executive Officer by writing a letter to the Executive Officer and/or requesting to appear in person before the Board of Directors.

After an appeal to the CSLB Board of Directors, the member will be eligible to appeal through the District’s grievance procedures DGBA (Local).

Vacancies on the Board of Directors that may arise during the school year will be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors. The selection will be made from the group which was represented by the member who resigned. The appointee will serve through the remainder of the original member's term if there is less than one year remaining. In the event one year or more remains, the position will be then refilled for the balance of the original unexpired term by regular election procedures during the annual balloting period.

The Employee Benefits Specialist or designee shall serve as the Executive Officer of the Board of Directors and process all approved sick leave days for members to the Payroll department.

**QUESTIONS**

Any questions regarding the CSLB should be directed to the Employee Benefits office.

**EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

An annual review of the program will be made by the Employee Benefits office. Notification of the changes will be made to the membership at the beginning of each school year the changes would be effective.