

## **EMPLOYEE'S GUIDE TO TRANSITIONAL RETURN TO WORK**

### **What is a “Transitional Return to Work” program?**

We recognize that being disabled from a work-related injury or a non-work related injury or illness could be unsettling. Often as a result of an injury or illness, an employee is unable to physically handle all aspects of their normal job. Recognizing that all employees provide valuable contribution to the District, we have established a program that enables you to return to work in a capacity that will be helpful to your recovery process, helpful to the District and benefit our school community.

### **What is a “Temporary Modified Job”?**

In partnership with your treating physician, a temporary job that provides a benefit to the District is identified that fits within your physical capabilities. The job is “temporary” to allow the District, and your treating physician, the flexibility to adapt to your physical needs as you recover.

### **How does a “Temporary Modified Job” help my recovery?**

Many times injured employees remain at home during part of their recovery process. The lack of physical activity and engagement with co-employees often delays the recovery process. Medical studies have shown that individuals who return to work recover quicker and return to their regular jobs sooner.

### **Who at the District do I send my Work Status note from my physician?**

Upon receipt of a Work Status by your treating physician, you are required to immediately, no later than the next working day, report to the Human Resource Office. It is the employee's responsibility and duty to keep the District informed of their work status.

### **If I cannot do an essential function of my job, what happens? What is the next step?**

If you are unable to do an essential function of your job, every effort will be made to find a temporary modified position that complies with the recommendations of your physician. If a temporary modified position is not available and your injury or illness is work related, you may be entitled to Industrial Accident Leave and other benefits under the Education Code and/or Temporary Disability until a temporary modified position is identified that fits within your work restrictions or until you are released by your treating physician.

### **Can I choose not to participate in a “Temporary Modified Job” program?**

If your treating physician feels it is medically appropriate for you to return to a modified position, and if the District has an appropriate position, you will be required to participate. If you choose not to participate, you may not be entitled to Industrial Accident leave and other benefits under the Education Code and/or Temporary Disability benefits.

### **How will I obtain medical treatment if I'm back at work in a "Temporary Modified Job"?**

Your medical treatment plan will continue as indicated by your treating physician. Participation in this program is not designed to interfere with your treatment but to be an added element in your recovery. We do ask that you arrange treatment before or after your work hours whenever possible. If a physician visit, physical therapy, or testing is required during regular work hours, please let your supervisor know.

### **How long can I participate in the "Temporary Modified Job"?**

Length of participation will vary based on individual needs as indicated by your treating physician and the District's availability of modified work. If you are unable to return to your regular job and if another appropriate temporary modified job is not available, you will be eligible for Industrial Accident Leave and other benefits under the Education Code and/or Temporary Disability, if the injury or illness is work related.

### **What if, during my participation, my medical condition changes or I feel unable to continue working the "Temporary Transitional Job"?**

As you recover, and your medical condition changes, we will be working closely with your treating physician to ensure the temporary transitional job is appropriate to aid in your recovery. If, at any time, you feel unable to continue the transitional job, please contact Human Resources or District designated individual.

### **I've had a work related injury, why am I receiving Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) / California Family Rights Act (CFRA) paperwork?**

An injury or illness that occurs at work may meet the definition of a qualifying medical condition under FMLA/CFRA. It is important that you know your rights and responsibility if your work-related injury/illness is covered by these two laws. Employees with questions about what illnesses are covered under this FMLA/CFRA policy or under the District's sick leave policy are encouraged to consult with Human Resources.

### **If I have sick time, am I required to take the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)/California Family Rights Act (CFRA) leave unpaid?**

No. FMLA/CFRA leave runs concurrently with your Industrial Accident leave and workers' compensation benefits. While disabled from a work related injury you will be eligible for all benefits under the Education Code and as provided statutorily by workers' compensation. If, however, all benefits are exhausted and you still have sick time available, that will be utilized.

### **What is disability retirement and where do I go to file for it?**

If you have a disabling injury or illness that prevents you from performing your job duties, you may be eligible for disability retirement through PERS or STRS. You would need to file a Disability Retirement Election Application with PERS or STRS. For more information, please contact Human Resources.