Sick leave policies for the teachers in the state of Montana

Errett Loren Moyer

The University of Montana
SICK LEAVE POLICIES FOR THE TEACHERS IN THE STATE OF MONTANA

by

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B. A. University of Washington, 1946

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Education

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Approved:

[Signatures and dates]

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

For the last several years some interest has been shown among teachers and superintendents regarding pay on those days they have to be absent because of sickness or important business. Many districts have sick leave policies already in force, but many discussions are conducted between the officials and teachers pertaining to the improvement of these policies. Merits of the different policies cannot be compared intelligently without some foundation. The majority of sick leave systems has been based on the limited observation of the school board or superintendent and seldom has experimental evidence entirely supported their contentions.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purposes of this study were (1) to examine the sick leave policies for the state of Montana; (2) to compare these policies and form an average state policy; and (3) to formulate a good sick leave system that would be usable for all interested schools.

Importance of the study. The general opinion has been that teachers get plenty of time to get sick and take time off during the summer vacation period. Interested people admit
that teachers should be entitled to benefits equal to workers in equivalent occupations. Some school districts have excellent sick leave benefits while others have no provisions at all. Teachers that have built up a high sick leave benefit in one system hesitate to move into another community that does not have a sick leave policy.

Superintendents and citizens who form school policies would appreciate information on other school plans on sick leave so as to form or improve a plan of their own. Educators of Montana might in the near future form a state-wide plan making use of the information gathered by this study.

Limitations of the study. When using a questionnaire, an investigator is limited as to the number of items he can ask. Sick leave is a broad subject and it is difficult to form a group of definite questions that would give an overall view of a specific policy. Also there is a difference between the theoretical policy in the school and the actual practice. Sometimes well-liked teachers are given three to four months sick leave with full pay while others will receive only a minimum amount.

Another limitation was that the questionnaire with its specific question and answer method, did not cover those systems that did not have a well defined plan; as some of the districts had an unwritten policy. Certainly, it is agreed with changes in school personnel, any good school
policy should be written to be retained; but if a study is to be authentic and complete, all phases must be considered. School officials are busy people and ordinarily will not go to any great length to explain an oral policy under their jurisdiction. The best method to secure this is by appointment and interview.

A small but important limitation was receiving a return from as high a percentage of districts as possible. The accuracy and dependability of the report depends upon the number of returns. This required as many as two and three followups. Many of the late returns were very detailed and filled out more completely than the earlier returns.

FORMING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Procedure. Since many points had to be considered before forming the questionnaire, a group of rules were formulated and referred to, as the questionnaire progressed.\(^1\) About fifty questions were constructed and then with the approval and help of advisors, ten questions for the actual construction were selected. While formulating the questionnaire, the following points were considered.

1. Questionnaires can be used most effectively on matters of fact; items involving opinion secure a lower percentage

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of answers, which tend to be hasty and ill-considered unless very carefully worded.

2. Define clearly the scope and objectives of the problem.

3. Ask only for data which respondents can and will give. Avoid asking questions that will embarrass the person, or questions compelling the educator to take a defensive attitude.

4. Plan procedures for insuring the largest honest returns, else validity is lost and bias enters. Unwillingness to answer is indicative of preference. Complete response reduces bias.

5. Use items that strike the right note of directness, dignity, and appeal to the respondent.

6. Use only items that pertain to the subject.

7. Secure all help available from competent personnel in designing items.

8. Formulate more items than needed and eliminate the ones that are weak and faulty.

Full cooperation was offered and given by Ralph C. Henry of the Montana Education Association. Members of the Education Department of the University Of Montana served as advisors; and some interest was shown by the National Education Association. A mailing list and tape with addresses were furnished by the state, and the University furnished a letter of introduction. Both, the questionnaire and the letter of introduction, can
be found in the last section of this study.

The letter of introduction was sent along with each form and this no doubt helped in many cases to get a fine response. Of the two-hundred-twenty-seven letters sent, two-hundred-seventy answers were received. Ninety-one percent of the questionnaires were filled out and returned. Of the twenty districts, from which returns were not obtained, some administrators had resigned during the term and several had passed away.
CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE ON SICK LEAVE

National Education Association recognition of sick leave. In a letter sent in December in 1953, Frank W. Hubbard, the National Education Director of Research, said there has been increased interest in all the states for state-wide sick leave policies. Many of the local organizations have advocated an over-all minimum policy put forth by the national organization. So far, the National Education Association has supported sick leave principles but has not made a direct statement. Some research papers are on file at our national headquarters, pertaining to sick leave, but none are available for the state of Montana. Most states that have a state sick leave policy have research material on sick leave, but those states with no policy have very little such material.

Sick leave policies in other states. Twenty-four state departments were asked for information on their methods used for sick leave. These were scattered throughout the United States so as to get the feeling in the different sections of the country. Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Nebraska had no state-wide policy on sick leave. Sick leave was left entirely to the local districts.

Farther west it was found that almost all the states have rather elaborate provisions for sick leave. Washington
was the only state that had no policy; although their state controlled contracts for teachers have printed on them material pertaining to sick leave with blanks for the days allowed. The following sick leave practices are in force in the state of Idaho.

Every teacher, supervisor, principal or superintendent employed by any school district in this state shall be entitled to a minimum sick leave with full pay to five days in each school year. 1

Actual illness prerequisite to sick leave. No absence from duty shall be classed allowed or excused as sick leave, nor any compensation be paid for any day of sick leave for absence from duty as part of any employee's allowable sick leave except absence by illness. 2

Accumulation of unused sick leave. Unused sick leave may be accumulated from year to year so long as the accumulation remains with one individual. It can be accumulated to a maximum of twenty days. 3

California has a large amount of research material on sick leave filed at the state department as well as at the state colleges. These laws are somewhat similar to Idaho.

Every person employed by a school district in a position requiring certification qualifications shall be entitled to 10 days leave of absence for illness or injury and such additional days in addition thereto as the governing board may allow for illness or injury, exclusive of all days he is not required to render service to the district, with full pay for a day when school is not in session. The ten days leave of absence need not be accrued by the employee before he may use it, such absence

2Ibid., Code No. 33-1205.
3Ibid., Code No. 33-1206.
may be taken at any time during the school year. If such employee does not take the full amount of leave allowed in any school year under this section the amount not taken shall be accumulative from year to year with such additional days as the governing board may allow.  

Frank W. Parr, the Director of Research in the California Teacher's Association, conducted a state survey on sick leave policies and practices in California. The following interesting facts were revealed.

1. "Sick Leave" is not considered a separate budget item in most California school districts.

2. The cost of sick leave tends to increase in proportion to the predominance of women employees.

3. The cost of sick leave tends to increase with the size of the school district.

4. California school personnel are not abusing their sick leave privileges, as indicated by the number of days of sick leave usage reported by the 428 school districts.

5. Sick leave costs can be predicted with a fair degree of accuracy when the prediction is based upon the past experience of the district.

Nevada and Oregon have sick leave benefits comparable to California and Idaho. Nevada teachers can accumulate up to a maximum of twenty days. Oregon's maximum is thirty days.

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6At this time, California was in the process of altering it's sick leave policy. An accumulation of three-hundred days possible sick leave was being considered.
Returns from the central part of the United States show that most states have a type of sick leave benefit. The Ohio's statement of sick leave policy serves as a good example for this section.

Each full-time employee of any board of education, shall be entitled for each completed month of service to sick leave of one and one-fourth days with pay. Employees, janitors, cafeteria workers and other full-time workers may use sick leave for absence due to illness, injury, exposure to contagious disease and to illness or death in the employee's immediate family. Unused sick leave shall be emulative up to ninety work days unless more than ninety days are approved by the responsible administrative officer. The previously accumulated sick leave of an employee who has been separated from public service may be placed to his credit upon the re-employment in the public service. An employee who transfers from one public agency to another shall be credited with the unused balance of his accumulated sick leave.

This policy has two unusual provisions that cannot be found in many states. Teachers are treated the same as all government employees, and the sick leave benefits follow the teacher from position to position and accumulate at the same time.

In this group of central states, Illinois has the simplest and easiest policy to understand. This policy defines sick leave rather definitely which was uncommon among the codes that were studied. The following passage shows the simple wording and a style that is easily understood.

---

7School Laws of the State of Ohio, Department of Education, Columbus, 1953, Sec. 143.29.
The school boards of all school districts, including special charter districts, shall grant their full-time teachers and other employees sick leave provisions not less in amount than five days at full pay during the school term in each year. If any such teacher or employee does not use the full amount of annual leave thus allowed, the unused amount shall accumulate to a minimum available leave of fifteen days at full pay, including the leave of the current year. In addition sick leave shall be interpreted to mean personal illness, quarantine at home, or serious illness or death in the immediate family or household. The school board may require a physician's certificate, or if the treatment is by prayer or spiritual means, that of a spiritual advisor or practitioner, as a basis of pay during leave after an absence of three days for personal illness, or when necessary in other cases.

Most of the states in the south did not have any provisions for sick leave on the state level, although the state departments reported that most of the larger school systems allow from five to ten days a year. Many of the smaller schools do not allow for sick leave. Alabama is one exception with a well-defined policy. Act No. 105 and Act No. 236 provide appropriation for sick leave for teachers and reimbursement for payments to substitutes. A report is sent to the state department each spring and the district is reimbursed.

The general plan of sick leave in Alabama was that nine days are allowed each year for each regular teacher.

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10 Ibid., 1947, Act No. 236.
and that sick leave unused by teachers may accumulate until a total of forty-five days are built up at the rate of nine days a year. The substitute teacher cannot get higher wages than the regular teacher.

Sick leave was defined as the absence from regular duty by a teacher because of:

a. Illness.
b. Bodily injury which incapacitates the employee.
c. Attendance upon a member of the family within the household of the teacher, where illness requires care of such teacher.
d. Death in immediate family of the teacher (husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, brother.).
e. Where unusually strong personal ties exist, due to a teacher's education and support being paid for by a person of some relationship other than those listed, this relationship may be recognized for leave purposes. In such cases the teacher concerned shall file with his local board of education a written statement of the circumstances which justify an exception to the general rule. 

Of the four New England states included in the survey, none had any sick leave policies, and the general attitude was that the communities could administer their own provisions for sick leave. The New York law states:

The granting of leaves of absence and sick leave is discretionary with the board of education but this power must be exercised in a reasonable manner.  

The only conclusions concerning the twenty-four states

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written to, were these five general statements: (1) Slightly less than half had a minimum sick leave law. (2) Most of the larger towns had sick leave benefits. A city within a state with a minimum sick leave law had the highest accumulative potential, at least in the most cases. (3) Women miss school more often than men. (4) Sick leave benefits do not place a hardship on the finances of a district. (5) Western states and central states are more conscious of the need for uniform sick leave policies. These statements cannot be applied to those states not contacted.

In Montana, very little has been done on research for a state-wide sick leave policy. In 1952 an education committee for the Montana Education Association drew up a sick leave policy, which was approved by the organization. This policy was patterned after the plan in use in Great Falls, Montana.

1. Any teacher who has been on sick leave during the school year may be required, at the request of the Superintendent of Schools, to present a doctor's certificate of health to the school district.

2. All sick leave provisions are applicable to all full time employees of the school district; certificated employees, nurses, and clerical employees—(custodians excepted).

3. The schedule of accumulated days allowable for sick leave with pay are five days in the first year of employment and ten days for each succeeding year up to ninety days.
The Montana Education Association's sick leave policy made no attempt to define sick leave.

In November of 1953, the Teacher's Welfare Committee of the Montana Education Association secured the following information by means of questionnaires sent to administrators.

**TABLE I**

DAYS GIVEN FOR ANNUAL SICK LEAVE IN MONTANA SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICTS</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>0-5 days</th>
<th>5-10 days</th>
<th>10-20 days</th>
<th>over 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Class</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County H. S.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This figure was compiled from material gathered by the Montana Education Association.*

The following conclusions can be drawn from Table I and II. (1) Most of the schools allow from five to ten days sick leave a year. (2) Most of the teachers in these schools can never accumulate over ten days sick leave. (3) Only twenty-four schools allow teachers to accumulate over twenty days sick leave. (4) Twenty-eight schools, including three
first class schools do not have any provisions for accumulating sick leave. (5) As this study only represented a little over one-half of the districts, it could not be considered a true picture of the sick leave policies in the state of Montana.

TABLE II

TOTAL DAYS ACCUMULATIVE FOR SICK LEAVE IN MONTANA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICTS</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Non-Acc.</th>
<th>0-5 days</th>
<th>5-10 days</th>
<th>10-20 days</th>
<th>over 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Class</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County H. S.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This figure was compiled from material gathered by the Montana Education Association.
CHAPTER III

REPORT OF THE RETURNS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

General trends. The questionnaires were prepared in October, 1953 and sent out before the end of the year. All answers were received before the first of April, 1954. Two-hundred-seven forms were received from the two-hundred-twenty-seven blanks sent out. In some cases the forms were not completely filled out and in other instances, questions were avoided. However, each questionnaire was considered on only the parts that were answered. This accounts for the fact that the totals in many instances do not add up to two-hundred-seven.

The first problem was to find out how many schools actually had sick leave policies and if these policies were written documents. Adequate comparison could not be made with states having no state-wide agreement on sick leave, therefore, facts were examined on their merit alone. The figures from Table III indicate that twenty schools, or one-ninth of all the schools did not have any type of sick leave. In twelve of these districts the teacher paid for a substitute out of her own salary, when a substitute was required. In each particular case, the school officials made the decisions in eight districts; quite often the teacher received her wages for the day of absence, if she was not absent too often.

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### TABLE III

**SCHOOLS IN MONTANA THAT HAD A SICK LEAVE POLICY IN THE SPRING OF 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Yes, we have a policy</th>
<th>No policy at all</th>
<th>Percent without policies</th>
<th>Schools not reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First class</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All schools</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This table includes senior high schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools with four teachers or more.

### TABLE IV

**SCHOOLS IN MONTANA THAT HAD A WRITTEN SICK LEAVE POLICY IN THE SPRING OF 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Yes, it is written</th>
<th>Oral agreement</th>
<th>Percent policies not written</th>
<th>Schools not reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First class</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All schools</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Explanation same as in Table III.*
The data in Table IV indicate that 47.5 percent of the total number of schools represented have unwritten policies. These unwritten provisions are oral understandings between the superintendents and the teachers. Four logical conclusions can be derived from the findings of Tables III and IV.

1. The general trend in Montana was for most of the schools to have a sick leave policy.

2. Larger schools were more likely to have a sick leave policy.

3. Almost all of the schools in the first class districts had written policies.

4. Over fifty percent of the third class districts had oral sick leave provisions.

Seventy-three schools (see Table V) had no definition of sick leave, while eighty defined sick leave as illness of self or immediate family. Twenty-five required a doctor's certificate and only twenty took the teacher's word entirely. In some instances, important business affairs were acceptable for securing leave; one school even allowed teachers several days hunting privileges with pay. Less than half the districts had a definite rule that explained sick leave. The second class districts led all the districts with seventy-two percent having a definite rule defining sick leave.
TABLE V

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH SICK LEAVE WAS PAID IN MONTANA SCHOOLS, (APRIL 1954)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Just teachers word</th>
<th>Illness of self alone</th>
<th>Requires doctor's signature</th>
<th>Illness of self or his family</th>
<th>No def. of sick leave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First class</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All schools</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An interesting but not important factor, was the information on substitute's pay that was put on the questionnaire as supplementary material. No direct question was asked, but over two-thirds of the superintendents added this information. The first class districts had wages for substitutes ranging from ten to sixteen dollars a day. Second class districts' wages for substitutes fell between nine and fourteen dollars a day; while third class districts paid from five to twelve dollars. In general, the higher the regular teachers' salaries, the higher the substitutes' pay, and in districts where the teachers paid their own substitutes, that pay was the lowest. Most of the schools required certified people for substituting.
Forty-three percent, or eighty-two schools, allowed sick leave benefits for all full-time workers in the system, including janitors and cafeteria workers. The other one-hundred-seven schools allowed just the teaching personnel these benefits. Thirty-four percent of the second class districts allowed all employees of their schools to have sick leave benefits.

In Table VI, the least number of days used by teachers for sick leave was zero, and the highest average in a school was ten days. The highest average was in a second class district with a rather poor sick leave policy. The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Least number of days used</th>
<th>Highest number of days used</th>
<th>Average number of days used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First class</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All schools</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

state average was 2.38 days per teacher. At the rate of ten dollars a day, which was the average pay of substitutes, the sick leave benefits for the whole state of Montana for the term of 1952-53, cost approximately fifty-thousand dollars.
The ten schools in Montana that allowed the most days accumulative sick leave and had well-defined policies, also had an average sick leave usage for the year 1952-53 lower than the state average.

Table VII indicates twenty schools allow no days sick leave, and two districts allow the employees to accumulate up to ninety days. The largest number was between five to ten days allowable. The actual average was 6.3 days of

**TABLE VII**

**NUMBER OF ACCUMULATIVE DAYS FOR EMPLOYEES OF SCHOOLS IN MONTANA, APRIL, 1954 FOR SICK LEAVE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>No days</th>
<th>1-5 days</th>
<th>5-10 days</th>
<th>11-20 days</th>
<th>21-60 days</th>
<th>61-90 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>47</td>
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</table>

accumulative sick leave, with most schools allowing five days a year. Only thirty-nine percent of the Montana schools allowed teachers to accumulate their sick leave benefits.

This chapter would not be complete without mentioning a few of the interesting items that were received on the questionnaire. They were isolated cases, but were related to any study of sick leave.
1. One school gave a bonus of five percent of the person's salary plus his wages for nine days sick leave, if he did not use any of the benefits at all during the term.

2. When teachers of three schools left their systems the school directors bought back their sick leave benefits at five dollars a day.

3. One school let the rent from teacherages take care of all sick leave benefits.

4. One large school of over five-hundred students had no provisions for sick leave.

5. Six administrators out of those who returned the questionnaire were not interested in the results.

General view of the study. Some important points were brought out by the supplementary information from the questionnaire. In some instanes workers such as janitors, cooks, and cafeteria help belong to the union, or some organization where sick leave benefits are available. These workers might not be interested in a sick leave policy, so the officials would leave them out of any school benefits.

Some of the smaller schools seldom have any teacher absences. Many superintendents admitted on the questionnaires that substitutes were used only in the extreme cases. Sick leave was counted only in the event a substitute was hired. If a teacher happened to be gone, a high school student or another teacher took care of her pupils. Sometimes
when the regular teacher was absent, her classes would be held in study hall that day. This factor would have a tendency to lower the rate of absences of teachers in third class districts.

Remarks were written in the questionnaires explaining that the school board left the sick leave benefits entirely to the superintendents. It would be to the educators advantage to hire very few substitutes and lower the cost of sick leave, if he happened to work for a conservative school board. If high school students are used in many instances, there would be a minimum of teacher absences. This might mislead the individual into thinking sick leave is unimportant.

Many teachers come to school with headaches, colds, and illness, making them unfit to teach, but they feel duty bound to the administration and pupils. Besides doing a poor job of teaching, the teacher would recover her health quicker if she would be able to remain at home.

The weaknesses of the Montana sick leave policies can be detected after an average policy has been formed from the information received on the questionnaires. This policy would be brief and quite likely written in the clerk of the board's minutes. It would be mentioned several times during the year, but would be rather vague to most of the teachers. Teachers would not be too sure of their sick leave pay until
their checks were received. The content would read as follows:

1. Each teacher will be allowed five days sick leave a year, non-accumulative. If the teacher uses her five days, further benefits may be given after due consideration of the circumstances by the school board and the superintendent.

2. These benefits will be available to certified personnel only.

3. Sick leave will mean sickness or death in the teacher's immediate family. The superintendent may ask for a doctor's certificate after an absence longer than three days.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary. The information about sick leave received from the twenty-four states supported these five statements:

1. Slightly less than one-half of the states have a minimum sick leave policy.
2. Western and central states are more conscious of the need for uniform sick leave policies.
3. Most of the larger cities have sick leave benefits.
4. Sick leave benefits do not place a hardship on school districts.
5. Women miss school more often than men.

Returns were received from all but twenty school districts in Montana. The questionnaires were tabulated and the results considered. The following statements seemed to stand out as the most important points:

1. Only twenty Montana districts did not have any type of sick leave. This amounted to about eleven percent.
2. Almost fifty percent of the policies in Montana were not written, but were just oral understandings.
3. In most cases larger schools had more liberal and better defined policies than smaller schools.
4. Ninety percent of the schools in Montana did not allow the teachers to miss school and get sick leave for anything other than sickness or death in the immediate family. Immediate family included father, mother, and persons who are partially supported by the teacher.
5. Twelve percent of the schools require a doctor's certificate as proof of sickness, before the teachers receive their sick leave.

6. Salaries for substitutes ranged from five dollars to sixteen dollars throughout the state.

7. Forty-three percent of the schools allowed sick leave benefits for all full-time workers in the system, including janitors and cafeteria workers.

8. The state average for the year 1952-53 was 2.38 days of sick leave used per teacher. At the rate of ten dollars a day, which was the average pay of substitutes, the sick leave benefits for the whole state cost slightly more than fifty-thousand dollars.

9. The ten schools in Montana, that allowed the most days accumulative sick leave and had well-defined policies, had an average lower than the state average.

10. The actual state average of allowable accumulative sick leave was 6.3 days.

11. Only thirty-nine percent of the Montana schools allowed teachers to accumulate sick leave from year to year.

12. Two-hundred-four superintendents were interested in improving or making a sick leave policy. They wanted to see the material gathered by the questionnaires.

13. One district with a high school of over five-hundred students had no provisions for sick leave.
Conclusions. The average sick leave policy of Montana was studied and compared with the better policies in the state, as well as the policies from other states. The following conclusions seemed apparent.

1. Sick leave should be accumulative from year to year up to at least thirty days.

2. Teachers did not abuse their sick leave benefits, when they had a good policy.

3. The sick leave policy should be written in the long form on a special bulletin, and in the short form on the teacher's contract.

4. All full-time employees should get the benefits, unless janitors or cafeteria workers have their own union and get benefits from another source.

5. A school law should be passed that would require a minimum sick leave policy.

6. Sick leave should be defined specifically.

7. Some arrangement should be made between the districts so teachers could take their accumulated sick leave along with them from school to school.

8. When teachers are sick they should not be encouraged to come to school, because of having to pay a substitute out of their own salary, or because of the attractiveness of a bonus at the end of the year.

9. After the teacher uses her full sick leave benefits, she should be paid the difference between her pay and
the substitute's salary for an additional period of thirty days or more.

With the above points in view an adequate minimum sick leave policy was devised that would not be a burden on any of the Montana schools. The questionnaire brought out the fact that in no case was the sick leave payments a financial difficulty. This minimum policy might read as follows:

1. All full-time employees of the ___________ school shall be allowed five working days sick leave per year, accumulative to a maximum of thirty days. Full-time employees are those persons that work at least six hours a day for the district.

2. Sick leave is interpreted as an absence from school caused by personal illness or illness in the immediate family (husband, wife, father, mother, daughter, brother, sister, son).

3. After the teacher has used her sick leave benefits, she shall be paid the difference between her salary and the substitute's wages; this will continue for a minimum period of thirty days.

4. Only qualified substitutes will be used if they are available. The minimum wage will be twelve dollars a day.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX
Dear Mr.__________:

I am interested in improving the sick leave policy for my school system and would like to make a survey of different policies throughout the state.

Being an administrator myself, I know how busy you are, but it would be appreciated if you could give me the following information. I have tried to be as brief as possible for your convenience.

1. Do you have a sick leave policy for your teachers?____

2. Is the policy a written document?______________________

3. Is the policy included in the teacher's contract?____

4. Does the school have a definition of "sick leave"?____

5. If so what is the definition of "sick leave"?____________________

6. Are both certified and non-certified personnel included in the benefits?____________________

7. What was the average number of absences per teacher in your system last year? (total teacher days absent divided by the number of teachers)____________________

8. How does the school budget handle the extra expense of sick leave benefits?____________________

9. Would you be interested in receiving the results of this study in brief form?____________________
10. I would appreciate a copy of your sick leave benefit policy enclosed with this questionnaire. If you have an unwritten policy please state it briefly in the following space.

I appreciate the time you have devoted and apologize for any inconvenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Errett L. Moyer
September 25, 1953

Dear Administrator:

The way to improve our position in the education field is to take an inventory of our present situation and act on the suggestions of the people in the field.

The enclosed questionnaire has been designed to take an inventory of the sick leave benefits and the policies in our school systems of Montana, and to encourage your suggestions for improvement.

The enclosed research is being sent to you with the approval and cooperation of the School of Education at Montana State University.

You play a vital part in the gathering of this information and your support and advice will be very much appreciated.

Cordially yours,

Linus J. Carleton

Acting Dean

School of Education

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