

**RCW 28B.50.553 Attendance incentive program.** (1) Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section.

(a) "Employer" means the board of trustees for each college district or the state board for community and technical colleges.

(b) "Eligible employee" means an employee of a college district or the state board for community and technical colleges who belongs to one of the following classifications:

(i) Academic employees as defined in RCW 28B.52.020;

(ii) Classified employees of technical colleges whose employment is governed under chapter 41.56 RCW;

(iii) Professional, paraprofessional, and administrative employees exempt from chapter 41.06 RCW; and

(iv) Employees of the state board for community and technical colleges who are exempt from chapter 41.06 RCW.

(2) An attendance incentive program is established for all eligible employees of a college district or the state board for community and technical colleges entitled to accumulate sick leave and for whom accurate sick leave records have been maintained. An eligible employee may not receive compensation under this section for a portion of sick leave accumulated at a rate in excess of one day per month.

(3) In January of the year following a year in which a minimum of sixty days of sick leave is accrued, and each following January, an eligible employee may exercise an option to receive remuneration for unused sick leave accumulated in the previous year at a rate equal to one day's monetary compensation of the employee for each four full days of accrued sick leave in excess of sixty days. Sick leave for which compensation has been received shall be deducted from accrued sick leave at the rate of four days for every one day's monetary compensation.

(4) At the time of separation from employment with a college district or the state board for community and technical colleges due to retirement or death, an eligible employee or the employee's estate may receive remuneration at a rate equal to one day's current monetary compensation of the employee for each four full days' accrued sick leave.

(5) In lieu of remuneration for unused sick leave at retirement as provided in subsection (4) of this section, an employer may, with equivalent funds, provide eligible employees with a benefit plan that provides reimbursement for medical expenses. For employees whose conditions of employment are governed by chapter 28B.52 or 41.56 RCW, such benefit plans shall be instituted only by agreement applicable to the members of a bargaining unit. A benefit plan adopted must require, as a condition of participation under the plan, that the employee sign an agreement with the employer. The agreement must include a provision to hold the employer harmless should the United States government find that the employer or the employee is in debt to the United States as a result of the employee not paying income taxes due on the equivalent funds placed into the plan, or as a result of the employer not withholding or deducting a tax, assessment, or other payment on the funds as required under federal law. The agreement must also include a provision that requires an eligible employee to forfeit remuneration under subsection (4) of this section if the employee belongs to a unit that has been designated to participate in the benefit plan permitted under this subsection and the employee refuses to execute the required agreement.

(6) Remuneration or benefits received under this section are not included for the purposes of computing a retirement allowance under a public retirement system in this state.

(7) The state board for community and technical colleges shall adopt uniform rules to carry out the purposes of this section. The rules shall define categories of eligible employees. The categories of eligible employees are subject to approval by the office of financial management. The rules shall also require that each employer maintain complete and accurate sick leave records for all eligible employees.

(8) Should the legislature revoke a remuneration or benefit granted under this section, an affected employee is not then entitled to receive the benefits as a matter of contractual right. [1997 c 232 s 1.]

**Conflict with federal requirements—1997 c 232:** "If any part of section 1(5) of this act is found to be in conflict with federal tax laws or rulings or regulations of the federal internal revenue service, the conflicting part of section 1(5) of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and such finding shall not affect the remainder of this act." [1997 c 232 s 3.]