

Good Parent Bill

Governor Bill Ritter signed a bill into law requiring covered employers to revise their policies and procedures to provide unpaid parental leave in compliance with the Colorado “Parental Involvement in K-12 Education Act” (the Act). Covered employers (which are all employees covered by the Family Medical Leave Act, i.e. those employers with 50 or more employees or all public employers) must allow their full-time “non-supervisory” and/or “non-executive” employees up to 6 hours per month (to a maximum of 18 hours in an academic year) of unpaid leave to participate in academic activities.

Alternatively, employers and employees may agree to allow the employee to take paid leave to attend the academic activity and require the employee to work the amount of hours of paid leave taken within the same work week. Part-time employees are also eligible for leave in an amount pro-rated to the number of hours worked.

Employers may deny leave requests in cases of emergency or other situations that may endanger a persons health, safety or in a situation where the absence of the employee would result in a halt of service or production. Employers may require that the leave be taken in no longer that three-hour increments and that the employee provide at least one week advance notice of the activity.

Employers may also require that the notice be accompanied by written verification from the school of the academic activity. However, exceptions exist for situations where the employee is not aware of

the need for leave in advance. In such cases, the employee should provide notice as soon as he/she is aware of the need, and provide the necessary written verification upon return to work.

The Act does not require that such leave be paid. An employee or employer may elect to substitute accrued paid vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave or other paid leave for the unpaid leave required under the Act. Employers that provide little or no leave must note their obligations under the statute.

As simply stated in section 1 of the Act “the involvement of parents and legal guardians in school-sponsored academic activities is critical to the successful education of Colorado’s children”.

What This Means For Counties

Counties will want to revise their procedures and policies to be in compliance with the Colorado Parental Involvement in K-12 Education Act.

For more information this topic, please call Cynthia Barnes at 303-861-0507, ext. 122, or email cbarnes@ctsi.org.