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**Geary County USD 475** **COVID Premium Retention and Recruitment Pay Information**

**Justification for COVID Premium Retention and Recruitment Pay**

District-wide in USD 475, approximately 9% of our positions remain unfilled. The number of vacancies in a non-COVID year/teacher shortage year is typically well under 5%. We have the following unfilled positions currently: 31 teachers, 5 special education teachers, 14 para educators, 15 foodservice positions, and 18 support staff positions such as aides, tutors, hall monitors, and office staff. We are currently using 7 substitute teachers in long-term substitute roles. Approximately 15 substitute assignments go unfilled each day and must be covered internally by existing teachers, administrators, and other support staff.

To meet the needs of our students by retaining and recruiting staff members, Geary County Schools will offer staff retention and recruitment pay for maintaining employment for the duration of the school year. Quarterly retention pay will be tied to attendance. Staff members must have 95% attendance to receive this additional pay. Quarterly Retention Pay of $1000 will be awarded to all full-time staff members who meet the employment and attendance criteria in 2 installments, following the 3rd, and 4th quarters of the school year. Returning certified staff who sign a contract for the 2022-23 school year will receive an additional $1000 in retention pay to be paid in the first pay period of the 2022-23 school year. Certified Staff new to the district for the spring semester of 2022 or the 2022-23 school year will receive recruitment pay of $750. All employees who are assigned to a school building directly will have the opportunity to earn an additional $250 payment 3rd and 4th quarters. These employees are referred to as “Direct Contact School Building Employees.”

**Direct Contact School Building Employees are defined as**: any administrative, certified, or classified staff member who is significantly impacted by Covid-19 due to their proximity to students and school building staff: building principals, any certified staff member working directly with students, any classified staff member working directly with students, food service workers, school building secretaries, administrative assistants, instructional coaches, consulting teachers, and related service providers.

These incentives are designed to encourage people to use fewer leave days which will allow the substitute pool to be better prepared to have enough coverage for Covid related absences and illness.

**Notes of Interest**

* Spring 2022 3rd and 4th $1000 Premium Retention Pay is for full-time “Notification of Wage” employees (except sub. teacher category). Part-time KPERS (Kansas Public Employees Retirement System) eligible employees working 17.5 to less than 30 hours/week “Notification of Wage” employees will receive $750 of the $1000, and part-time less than 17.5 hours/week would receive $500 of the $1000 providing they meet the 95% attendance requirement.
* Attendance waivers to the 95% criteria will be granted for documented, unpreventable leave, such as jury duty, court subpoena, and required military assignment. Waivers for other documented medical needs, bereavement, and other extenuating circumstances may be requested from the Executive Director of Personnel Services for approval by the USD 475 Board of Education.
* All COVID Recruitment and Retention Pay expenditures will be budgeted to COVID Relief ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) Funds, USD 475 BOE approved 11/1/21, KSDE (Kansas State Department of Education) BOE approved 12/8/21.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

1. Is the Quarterly Retention Incentive available for all staff?

A. Yes, all active staff are eligible for this incentive: Certified, Classified, Administrative, Substitutes, Service Providers. It includes Full-Time and Part-Time (prorated), Salary and Hourly staff.

2. Will the Incentive be added to a regular payroll or paid out separately?

A. The incentives will be paid on a separate payroll. These incentives are subject to taxes.

3. How many absences will be allowed per quarter and still meet the 95% attendance rate?

A. Three absences each quarter will be allowed to remain at 95% attendance or greater.

4. What if I am absent for two hours, does that count as an entire day absent regarding the incentive?

A. No, the absence would not count as an entire day. An entire day is the regular hours you are scheduled to work. The absence would be applied towards your total hours absent.

5. Do bereavement absences count towards attendance rates?

A. Since bereavement leave comes from paid sick leave, yes, it will count against attendance. A waiver to this absence may be requested for immediate family bereavement. All waivers are to be submitted to the personnel service department.

6. Does vacation use count against attendance?

A. Yes; however, for employee groups who are allotted vacation time, 2 vacations days each quarter will be allowed without penalizing the employee and counting against the 95% attendance rate. Vacation time used beyond 2 days will count against the attendance rate.

7. Will my leave of absence count against my attendance for the quarter?

A. Yes, all leaves of absence, including Family and Medical Leave, will count towards the 95% attendance rate. Waivers submitted for medical leave with an official note from a care provider will be considered.

8. If school is canceled due to inclement weather, will that day count as an absence?

A. No, days canceled by the district for inclement weather will not count towards the 95% attendance rate.

9. I started my employment with the district on December 16, 2021. Am I eligible for the retention incentive?

A. Yes, all staff who are employed the entire payment quarter qualify for the premium pay. Employees employed for an entire quarter will qualify for the quarterly premium pay, provided they meet the 95% attendance requirements.

10. If I am quarantined due to a COVID-19 exposure, does that count against my attendance?

A. Yes, however, waivers submitted for medical leave with an official note from a care provider will be considered.

11. I am a substitute that is available to work any day of the week and at any building. Are substitutes that only work specific days of the week, or specific locations eligible for the same incentive I am?

A. Substitutes teachers who work 30 or more days in any assignment in any school will receive the substitute premium pay.

12. I am resigning effective March 10. Will I still receive the 3rd quarter incentive?

A. No, this is a Retention Incentive. You must be an active employee at the time of payout to receive it.

13. When can I expect to receive my incentive payment?

A. Incentives will be paid out approximately on or before April 1 and July 1.

15. Will professional leave count against my attendance?

A. Approved professional leave will not count against the 95% rule.

16. Does personal leave count against my attendance?

A. Yes

17. Does the incentive count as salary for KPERS?

A. Yes, all incentives will count towards your salary for KPERS purposes.

18. Who can I address questions to if they are not answered on this FAQ?

A. You may send your questions to Executive Director of Personnel Services, Tim Winter.

19. Who could I appeal to in the event I become ineligible for the incentive due to extenuating circumstances?

A. While the district understands that situations may arise in life that are unavoidable, incentive eligibility expectations will be applied equally to all staff and will not be weighted differently due to the cause. These situations may be appealed to the Executive Director of Personnel Services.

20. If a teacher is approved to teach classes from home while in COVID quarantine (remote teaching), will this count against the attendance rate?

A. No, if a teacher is out for COVID reasons and able to teach from home, per admin/HR approval, this would not count against the attendance rate.

21. What are the scheduled quarters and payment dates for the quarterly retention pay?

A. 3rd Quarter- January 3 to March 1, Retention Pay on or before April 1. 4th Quarter- March 2 to June 3 (or when your active employment period ends due to school schedules), Retention Pay on or before July 1.

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**Geary County Schools USD 475**

**COVID Retention Pay Attendance Waiver Request**

**Waiver Requests: All requests for any applicable absence; medical, jury duty, bereavement, etc. must be submitted to personnel services within one week of the end of the respective quarter, March 1, and June 1. Appropriate documentation must be attached to the request.**

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**Waiver Request Form:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School/Department: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Absence(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation of Absence(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Attach Appropriate Documentation**

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Approved Denied

Tim Winter

Executive Director of Personnel Services: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**COVID Premium Retention and Recruitment Pay**

All installments paid on or before the 1st day of month following the specified quarter.

**$2000**

**Quarterly Premium Retention Incentive for All Staff Members**

**To be eligible, staff member must be actively employed at the time of payment and have 95% attendance**

Actively employed 1/3/22 to 3/1/22 $1000

Actively employed 3/1/22 to 6/4/22 $1000

\*Part-time, less than 30 hours per week employees will be paid as described in the Notes of Interest.

**$500**

**Direct Contact School Building Employee Premium Incentive**

**To be eligible, staff member must be actively employed and have 95% attendance**

Actively employed 1/3/22 to 3/1/22 $250

Actively employed 3/1/22 to 6/4/22 $250

**Frontline staff are defined as**: any administrative, certified, or classified staff member who was or is significantly impacted by Covid-19 due to their proximity to students and school building staff: building principals, any certified staff member working directly with students, any classified staff member working directly with students, food service workers, school building secretaries and administrative assistants, instructional coaches, consulting teachers, related service providers.

**Premium Retention and Recruitment Pay For, Returning and New Certified Teaching Staff**

* **$1000 Retention Pay** to 2021-22 Certified Teaching Staff returning to USD 475 in 2022-23 to be paid on first pay period of 2022-23
* **$750 Recruitment Pay** to new Certified Teaching Staff, 2nd semester of 2021-22, or new to USD 475 in 2022-23 to be paid on the first pay period of the appropriate school year

**$500**

**Substitute Teacher Premium Incentive**

**Substitute Teachers who complete 30 days of substitute assignments during a Time Period**

1/3/22 to 3/1/22 $250

3/1/22 to 5/19/22 $250