

New Law Gives Colorado Employees Leave for Parent-Teacher Conferences

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Governor Bill Ritter (D) signed on June 1 H.B 1057, the Parental Involvement in K-12 Education Act, which requires employers of 50 or more employees to grant leave to employees to attend their children's academic activities. The new law takes effect August 4, 2009.

Under the Act, nonsupervisory employees are granted up to 18 hours of unpaid leave each school year to attend a defined list of K-12 school-related activities, such as parent-teacher conferences and meetings related to special education services, dropout prevention, attendance, truancy and discipline. Leave is limited to six hours per month, and employers may require that leave may be taken in no longer than three-hour increments. Part-time nonsupervisory employees are also eligible for academic activities leave, although on a prorated basis.

Employees are required to give at least one week's advance notice of the need for academic activities leave, except in cases of emergency, and to provide written verification of attendance at the school meeting upon return from leave. Additionally, an employer may limit or deny the employee leave if the employee's absence would endanger a person's health or safety or the employee's presence at work at the time of the leave is necessary. Employees are also required to make reasonable efforts to schedule academic activities outside of regular working hours.

While academic activities leave under the new law is unpaid, an employee may request, or the employer can require, that accrued vacation, sick leave, personal leave or other paid leave be substituted for unpaid leave.

Colorado employers need to add this new leave to their handbooks and policies which describe other mandatory employee leave rights.

If you have additional questions concerning the Parental Involvement in K-12 Education Act, please contact Tobie Hazard at (303) 295-8280 or tehazard@hollandhart.com.

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