

CHESTER COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

PROJECT, TECHNICAL, SPECIALIST STAFF HANDBOOK

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2028

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Approved:

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SECTION I

Introduction

“Meet and Discuss” means the obligation of the employer upon request to meet at reasonable times and discuss recommendations submitted by representatives of public employees: Provided, that any decisions or determinations on matters so discussed shall remain with the public employer and be deemed final on any issue or issues raised.

This handbook describes the general terms and conditions of employment for staff members who function in technical, specialist, or project staff positions. This handbook will be in effect July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2028.

SECTION II

Employee Classifications

Staff members in the above categories may be hired full-time or part-time. Staff members in federal, state or locally funded projects, will be hired for no longer than the term of the project.

Full-time employees shall be those who work a minimum of seven and one half (7.5) hours per day, five (5) days per week, thirty seven and one half (37.5) hours per week, and one hundred eighty-five (185) days per year. Any staff member working fewer hours shall be considered a part-time employee.

For the purpose of this handbook, the following definitions (or classifications) are applied:

1. Full time employees:
 - a. Fulltime 12 month – work 12 months or 260 days per year
 - b. Fulltime 11 month – work 11 months or 221-259 days per year
 - c. Fulltime 10 month – work 10 months or 180-220 days per year
2. Part time employees:

The full time equivalent, or FTE, of a part time employee is equal to the percentage of time the part time employee is hired to work as compared to a full time employee in the same position.
3. Provisional employees:

New hires will be considered provisional employees for the first 90 days; after the first 90 days a new employee will receive a performance evaluation, an unsatisfactory in any one category will lead to termination.
4. The Head Start employee salary & hours shall be governed by the terms of the Head Start Grant. Other benefits are defined in this agreement.

SECTION III

Fringe Benefits

A. Medical Insurance

1. The board will provide health and hospitalization benefits each year of the agreement. Benefits will be equivalent to the health and hospitalization benefits defined in the most current collective bargaining agreement between the Chester County Intermediate Unit Education Association and the Chester County Intermediate Unit Board of School Directors.
2. If an employee's spouse is employed and their employer pays more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the cost of the employers premium cost for individual coverage, the spouse shall not be eligible to participate in the CCIU's medical benefits.

B. Excise Tax

If at any time during this agreement, it becomes known by the board that any of the healthcare plans provided by the board to the project staff will incur excise tax imposed on employers by the federal government through the Affordable Care Act, then the board will no longer offer that medical plan to the project staff and will instead offer a plan that will not incur excise tax.

C. Prescription Drug Insurance

The board will provide prescription drug insurance equivalent to the prescription coverage defined in the most current collective bargaining agreement between the Chester County Intermediate Unit Education Association and the Chester County Intermediate Unit Board of School Directors.

D. Medical and Prescription Drug Benefits for Part-Time Employees

Each part-time employee with a full-time equivalent (FTE) percentage greater than 0.5 (50%) shall be entitled to select medical and prescription drug coverage. Those employees will be responsible for any monthly costs for medical and prescription drug coverage in excess of the pro-rated board share based on the employee's FTE. Part-time employees are not eligible for a cash payment in lieu of benefits.

E. Payroll Deductions for Health Benefits

Section 125 of the IRS Code allows payroll deductions for health benefits to be excluded from FICA, Medicare, federal and Pennsylvania state taxable wages. Deductions will be withheld on a pre-tax basis. This provides a tax savings to the individual.

F. Cash Payment in Lieu of Benefit

All full-time employees may elect to opt out of the medical program in order to receive 50% of the premium paid by the Board for medical coverage as cash under the following conditions:

1. The payment will be based upon the Boards contribution towards that employee's medical.
2. The employee provides proof that he/she has medical coverage under another plan and agrees to retain the alternative coverage for the year.
3. The amount of the premium is provided to the extent that the employee is eligible for the benefit, i.e. single employees receive 50% of the premium for single coverage and married

employees receive either husband/wife or family coverage depending on their family status.

4. Employees may opt back into the program on the first day of the next month after their alternative coverage is terminated.
5. All full-time employees may also elect to opt out of the vision and/or dental plans in order to receive 50% of the premium paid by the Board for those plans as cash under the following conditions:
6. An employee has not previously opted out of that plan and received a cash payment for doing so.
7. The employee has been in the plan for a minimum of two years.
8. Employees whose spouses are employed by the CCIU will not receive opt out payments in lieu of medical, prescription, dental and vision coverage.

G. Flexible Benefit Plan (Full-time Employees Only)

Each full-time employee shall receive 1.5% of annual salary (to a maximum of \$1,000) as part of a flexible benefit plan. The flexible funds may be used for unreimbursed medical expenses and/or child care expenses according to the Internal Revenue Service Code, or as a cash payment. The cash payment option is subject to all taxes. In the event the employee leaves the employment of the IU during the year, this benefit will be pro-rated. The employee will be responsible for the repayment of any money received, but not earned.

H. Life Insurance (Full-time Employees Only)

The Board agrees to pay the premium for term life insurance for each full-time employee covered under this plan. The policy shall be valued at 2.5 times the annual salary of the employee rounded to the closest \$1,000. The policy includes accidental death and dismemberment. The selection of the carrier will be the prerogative of the Board.

The employee will have the opportunity to purchase optional insurance coverage as provided by the insurance carrier.

I. Disability Insurance (Full-time Employees Only)

The Board agrees to provide long-term disability insurance to all full-time employees, beginning on the thirty-first (31st) day of sickness and/or accident or when the employee exhausts all accumulated sick leave, whichever occurs later. This insurance pays up to 66 2/3% of the employee's salary to a maximum of twenty-eight hundred dollars (\$2,800) per month. The employee's salary for this benefit is calculated by dividing the employee's annual salary by twelve (12) months. The selection of the carrier will be the prerogative of the Board. The Board reserves the right to change the coverage in order to achieve cost savings as long as there is no reduction in benefits to the employee.

J. Dental Insurance (Full-time Employees Only)

The Board will provide a basic dental plan for each full-time employee and his/her eligible dependents. In addition to the Basic Program, additional coverage may be available - Supplementary and Orthodontic Coverage. The employee and the Board will share the cost of this additional dental coverage. The Board will pay ninety percent (90%) of this cost, with the remainder paid by the employee. The selection of the carrier for this coverage will be the

prerogative of the Board.

It is understood that the insurance underwriter's requirements regarding percentage of participation by members of the group must be met.

K. Vision Insurance (Full-time Employees Only)

The Board agrees to pay the premium for staff members who elect to be enrolled in an individual basic vision plan. Employees may purchase a vision plan covering their immediate family. Immediate family will mean the employee's spouse and dependent children to age 19, or to age 23 if the dependent child is a full-time student. An employee opting to purchase the vision plan covering their family must do so for a minimum of two years.

L. Insurance Coverage for Members Retiring Under PSERS

Employees who retire under PSERS and who have 20 or more years of service with CCIU shall be eligible to purchase health and hospitalization insurance and prescription drug insurance from the CCIU plan for retired employees. An employee purchasing coverage under this section may purchase coverage for his or her spouse provided the spouse was covered under the CCIU health and hospitalization plan at the time the employee retired. Coverage may be purchased until Medicare eligible or until the annuitant is covered by another employer paid plan of health and hospitalization insurance.

M. Tax Sheltered Annuity-Investments Plans

Federal Income tax law makes it possible for an employee of a public school system to divert a portion of salary into a retirement annuity, deferring payment of tax on this portion of income.

Employees may participate in this plan through payroll deductions.

N. Savings Bond

Payroll deductions for savings bonds shall be made upon receipt of an employee's signed authorization.

O. Tuition Reimbursement (Full-time Employees Only)

Reimbursement for tuition costs will be in accordance with the provisions of the Tuition Reimbursement Policy attached as Appendix A.

P. General Information

For Project Staff, fringe benefits will be terminated on the last day of the month that the project is funded.

SECTION IV

Paid Holidays and Vacations

- A. The following holidays shall be granted to all full-time twelve (12) month employees only with pay:

Independence Day.....	1 day
(Plus day preceding if Independence Day is on Tuesday or Day following if Independence Day is on Thursday)	
Labor Day.....	1 day
Thanksgiving Day and day following	2 days
Christmas	2 days
New Years Day.....	1 day
Martin Luther King's Birthday	1 day
Mid-Winter Break	1 day
Good Friday.....	1 day
Memorial Day.....	1 day
Juneteenth	1 day

- B. Full-time (12-month) salaried project, technical, specialist staff members are eligible to accrue vacation days to a maximum number as shown below. Accrued vacation days may be utilized by the employee as they are earned.

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Approx. Amount</u>	<u>Monthly Accrual</u>
Date of Hire	1st Anniversary	10 Days	.84
1st Anniversary	2nd Anniversary	11 Days	.92
2nd Anniversary	3rd Anniversary	12 Days	1.00
3rd Anniversary	4th Anniversary	13 Days	1.09
4th Anniversary	5th Anniversary	14 Days	1.17
5th Anniversary	6th Anniversary	15 Days	1.25
6th Anniversary	7th Anniversary	16 Days	1.34
7th Anniversary	8th Anniversary	17 Days	1.42
8th Anniversary	9th Anniversary	18 Days	1.50
9th Anniversary	10th Anniversary	19 Days	1.59
10th Anniversary and Above		20 Days	1.67

Monthly accruals will be adjusted effective the first day of the month of the anniversary date. Special requests for an exception to the established policy will be considered on an individual basis. Due to the unique circumstances resulting for full-time (12-month) employees on federal projects, i.e., the possibility of hiring and termination within the same fiscal year, employees of federal projects may request the borrowing of accrued vacation days before they are actually earned in order to use vacation time prior to the end of the fiscal year. These requests are subject to the approval of the immediate supervisor and Executive Director. All accrued vacation leave must be utilized prior to the expiration of any project. Payment for unused vacation leave may not be granted after the project ends.

Employees may accumulate up to two times their annual vacation allotment. Employees whose accrued vacation days exceed twice their annual allotment will no longer accrue vacation time until their total vacation days go below double their annual allotment.

- C. Individuals who are employed less than twelve (12) months, 260 days, do not accrue vacation leave, nor do they receive the paid holiday benefit. Employees hired on a less than 12 month, 260 day basis, are required to work the specific number of days, for which they are employed,

between July 1 and June 30.

- D. With the approval of the employee's immediate supervisor and the Executive Director, 12-month employees may opt to be paid for a maximum of ten (10) days per year from his/her accumulated vacation.

SECTION V

Absences - Leaves

A. Reporting Procedure

If an employee is absent from work for any reason, he/she must report this information according to procedures established by the administration. All employees are required to report absences through the absence management system at least one hour before their scheduled start time.

B. Sick Leave

All full-time employees shall accumulate sick leave at the rate of one day per month of employment. Newly-hired employees earn sick leave on a pro-rated basis.

260 days (12 months)	--	12 days per year
221-259 (11 months)	--	11 days per year
180-220 (10 months)	--	10 days per year

Employees may use up to five (5) of their accrued sick days per year for illness of a member of their immediate family.

C. Personal Leave

Full-time employees receive two (2) personal days annually which may accumulate to five (5). Each part-time employee with a FTE greater than .5 may be granted one (1) day of personal leave with prior approval of the executive director or his designee. The one (1) day will be equal to the regular day of the employee. If, on July 1, an employee has more than five (5) personal days accumulated, any days over five (5) will be converted to sick leave. Though no reason for the leave is required, the Board assumes the staff member needs time for a legitimate personal use (religious holiday, family illness, or necessary business transaction). All personal leaves must be arranged two (2) weeks in advance except in emergency situations, which may be approved at the discretion of the administration.

Personal leave may not be taken on any day that would extend a vacation or holiday. Leaves will be granted to those first applying up to a five percent (5%) per site limit. If five percent (5%) of the staff members constitutes one person, the limit is one (1) person. Any exceptional request may be submitted in writing to the Executive Director for consideration.

D. Bereavement Leave

1. Employees will be granted leave due to death in the immediate family. Members of the immediate family shall be defined as father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, husband, wife, parent-in-law or near relative who resides in the same household or any person with whom the employee has made his/her home. This leave shall not exceed three (3) days.

2. Employees shall be granted leave on the day of the funeral of a near relative. A near relative shall be defined as first cousin, grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law.

E. Jury Duty

An employee will be granted leave from his/her normal work schedule and will receive the difference between salary earned on jury duty and salary earned through employment with the Intermediate Unit.

A copy of the summons/subpoena must be submitted to the Human Resources Department as well as a copy of the check received as reimbursement for having served on jury duty.

F. Leave Without Pay

An employee who is unable to work due to personal illness or disability shall have the responsibility of requesting an unpaid leave of absence upon the exhaustion of all accrued leave (sick, personal, vacation).

The failure to submit such a request in a proper and timely manner shall be grounds for dismissal.

When an unpaid leave is requested and granted, the employee may elect to remain a member of the Intermediate Unit group insurance plans at his/her own expense, subject to the approval of the carrier(s).

Upon return to active duty, it shall be the responsibility of the employee to initiate reinstatement of benefits through the Human Resources Department.

G. Child-Rearing Leave (See Appendix B)

H. Family and Medical Leave

All employees are eligible for unpaid leave in accordance with Board Policy and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 for family or personal illness, or for the birth or adoption of a child.

SECTION VI

Staff Travel

- A. Reimbursement for official staff travel will be at the prevailing IRS rate.

SECTION VII

Compensation

A. Group A (Project, Technical, Specialists)

1. All project, technical, specialist staff, with the exception of Head Start and behind-the-wheel instructors, will have their positions evaluated and placed onto the salary scale.

2. For the 2023-24 through 2027-28 school years, salaries shall be in accordance with the compensation plan set forth below:

2023-24 - 1% base salary increase

2024-25 - Combine 2023-24 base salary and merit for new base, +3.5% base salary increase if meeting expectations

2025-26 - 3.5% base salary increase if meeting expectations

2026-27 - 3.5% base salary increase if meeting expectations

2027-28 - 3.5% base salary increase if meeting expectations

Each year, 15% of total merit earned will be added to the base pay.

Project staff whose salary is below midpoint may move an additional 2% on the salary scale in order to achieve midpoint faster provided they receive at minimum a meets expectations overall evaluation.

3. The salary range for employees will be from 80% to 120% of the position rate.
4. Employees will progress on the salary scale based on their performance.
5. Individuals who receive an unsatisfactory rating will not receive an increase for the next school year.
6. Position content will be reviewed annually and revised, if warranted.
7. New employees who have worked less than one-half (1/2) of their work year shall remain at the same compensation rate until July 1 of the following school year.
8. Employees must have worked at least one-half of the year in their current position in order to be eligible for performance incentive and/or merit.
9. Any increase or decrease in position content equal to or greater than 15% will result in a proportionate increase or decrease in the position rate.
10. Employees may submit a request to review the job content of their position if they believe their duties and responsibilities have increased by 15% or more. The employee must submit a revised job description to the division director to verify changes in job responsibilities. The revised job description is to be submitted to the Director of Human Resources, including the incumbent's and the division director's signatures, with a written justification indicating the changes in job responsibilities which account for a 15%, or more, increase. The Director of Human Resources and Executive Director will conduct an analysis of the revised job description and respond to the employee, in writing, within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the appeal, regarding the outcome of their analysis.
11. At the completion of a project year, all staff on expiring projects will receive a lump-sum payment for any salary which is due to them. This payment will be made on the last pay date during the last month of the project.
12. Merit computation for Non-Exempt project, specialist and technical staff will be set using a performance factor up to 3% of salary based on the performance evaluation tool. Non-Exempt employees who receive a performance rating of "Exceeds Expectations" will receive merit pay of 1.5%; non-exempt employees who receive a performance rating of "Distinguished" will receive merit pay of 3%. Merit computation for Exempt project,

specialist and technical staff will be set using a performance factor up to 5% of salary based on the performance evaluation tool. Exempt employees who receive a performance rating of “Exceeds Expectations” will receive merit pay of 1.5%; exempt employees who receive a performance rating of “Distinguished” will receive merit pay of 3%. Exempt employees who achieve their stated goals will receive merit pay of up to 2%.

13. All employees who work more than 975 hours per year shall be eligible for a prorated performance factor.

2023-24 Scale Levels*			
Level	2023-24 Min Level	2023-24 Target Level	2023-24 Max Level
8	\$34,118	\$42,647	\$51,176
9	\$36,846	\$46,057	\$55,268
10	\$40,148	\$50,185	\$60,222
11	\$44,312	\$55,390	\$66,468
12	\$49,660	\$62,075	\$74,490
13	\$55,962	\$69,952	\$83,943
14	\$62,217	\$77,772	\$93,326
15	\$70,339	\$87,924	\$105,509
16	\$81,250	\$101,562	\$121,874
* Salary ranges are based on a 260 day, 7.5 hour per day schedule; salaries will be prorated based on the total number of days for all other schedules (e.g. 190, 200, 210, etc.)			

2024-25 Scale Levels*			
Level	2024-25 Min Level	2024-25 Target Level	2024-25 Max Level
8	\$35,312	\$44,140	\$52,967
9	\$38,135	\$47,669	\$57,203
10	\$41,553	\$51,941	\$62,330
11	\$45,863	\$57,329	\$68,794
12	\$51,398	\$64,247	\$77,097
13	\$57,920	\$72,400	\$86,881
14	\$64,395	\$80,494	\$96,592
15	\$72,801	\$91,002	\$109,202
16	\$84,093	\$105,117	\$126,140
* Salary ranges are based on a 260 day, 7.5 hour per day schedule; salaries will be prorated based on the total number of days for all other schedules (e.g. 190, 200, 210, etc.)			

2025-26 Scale Levels*			
Level	2025-26 Min Level	2025-26 Target Level	2025-26 Max Level
8	\$36,548	\$45,684	\$54,821
9	\$39,470	\$49,337	\$59,205
10	\$43,008	\$53,759	\$64,511

11	\$47,468	\$59,335	\$71,202
12	\$53,197	\$66,496	\$79,795
13	\$59,948	\$74,934	\$89,921
14	\$66,649	\$83,311	\$99,973
15	\$75,349	\$94,187	\$113,024
16	\$87,037	\$108,796	\$130,555
* Salary ranges are based on a 260 day, 7.5 hour per day schedule; salaries will be prorated based on the total number of days for all other schedules (e.g. 190, 200, 210, etc.)			

2026-27 Scale Levels*			
Level	2026-27 Min Level	2026-27 Target Level	2026-27 Max Level
8	\$37,827	\$47,283	\$56,740
9	\$40,851	\$51,064	\$61,277
10	\$44,513	\$55,641	\$66,769
11	\$49,129	\$61,412	\$73,694
12	\$55,059	\$68,823	\$82,588
13	\$62,046	\$77,557	\$93,069
14	\$68,981	\$86,227	\$103,472
15	\$77,987	\$97,483	\$116,980
16	\$90,083	\$112,604	\$135,124
* Salary ranges are based on a 260 day, 7.5 hour per day schedule; salaries will be prorated based on the total number of days for all other schedules (e.g. 190, 200, 210, etc.)			

2027-28 Scale Levels*			
Level	2027-28 Min Level	2027-28 Target Level	2027-28 Max Level
8	\$39,151	\$48,938	\$58,726
9	\$42,281	\$52,851	\$63,422
10	\$46,071	\$57,588	\$69,106
11	\$50,849	\$63,561	\$76,273
12	\$56,986	\$71,232	\$85,478
13	\$64,217	\$80,272	\$96,326
14	\$71,396	\$89,245	\$107,094
15	\$80,716	\$100,895	\$121,074
16	\$93,236	\$116,545	\$139,854
* Salary ranges are based on a 260 day, 7.5 hour per day schedule; salaries will be prorated based on the total number of days for all other schedules (e.g. 190, 200, 210, etc.)			

B. Group B (Head Start Staff)

1. Head Start Project Staff includes all Child Development Assistants (CDA), Child Development Specialist/Family Service Worker (CDS/FSW).
2. All newly hired Head Start Project Staff shall be placed on the appropriate percentage of position rate based upon their education and experience.
3. The salary year for Head Start will be from December 1 to November 30. Salary increases will be effective at the time when the federal government issues the COLA for that particular program year. All COLA increases will be retroactive to December 1 if the federal government notifies the intermediate unit of the COLA subsequent to the beginning of the program year.
4. All increases in salary in a program year are dependent on the allocation of funds from the federal government. Increases in salary will not be given without appropriate funding from the federal government in the form of COLA specifications.
5. Head Start employees do not have the opportunity to earn merit because of grant funding of program.

C. Group C (Behind-the-Wheel Instructors)

1. Hourly rates for behind-the-wheel instructors will be established by the Board.
2. Behind-the-wheel instructors are eligible to receive a bonus based on student completion as defined by the Board.

D. Overtime and Compensatory Time

1. Each full-time employee included in this handbook, is required to work at least 37.5 hours per week, five (5) days per week, 7.5 hours per day.
2. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) will be used to determine the status of each employee in this group as an “exempt” or “non-exempt” employee.
3. Employees who are determined to be “non-exempt” and “exempt” will adhere to the guidelines established by the FLSA to determine overtime and compensatory time eligibility.

SECTION VIII

Severance/Retirement Benefits and Notice Requirements

Retirement Severance Benefits

All full-time project, technical, specialists who retire from the Intermediate Unit after ten consecutive years of service with this organization shall receive a one-time cash payment equal to 50% of their per

diem rate for each day of unused sick leave on their last day of employment to a maximum of \$10,000. This amount will be deposited into a 403(b) of the employee's choosing. There will be no cash option.

Eligibility for severance is determined by discontinuing employment in the public schools of Pennsylvania under the conditions set forth by the Public School Employees Retirement board and submission of intent to retire from service at least 120 calendar days prior to the retirement date.

Resignation Notice

Employees who resign from employment will be eligible for payment of accrued vacation time at the per diem rate and earned merit provided the employee submits the intent to resign from service and provides at least 60 calendar days notice prior to separation.

Any exceptions to these notice requirements will be the sole discretion of the executive director.

APPENDIX A
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

1. All project staff employees with an FTE of .8 or greater will be eligible for a pro-rated amount of tuition reimbursement based on their FTE. Employees may be reimbursed for undergraduate or graduate courses up to 100% of the actual cost of credit to a maximum of 15 credits per year. Courses must be approved in advance by the supervisor and the division director and be related to the employee's assignment or needed to fulfill certification requirements.
2. The operational year for tuition reimbursement will be from July 1 to June 30 of the following year.
3. Courses must be completed with a grade of "B-" or better, or "pass" in a pass/fail system.
4. Reimbursement for completed courses will be made upon receipt of the official transcript or grade report and a copy of the receipt indicating payment in the Human Resources Department.
5. There will be no reimbursement for credits earned under any grant or subsidy arrangement. The intent of this provision is to eliminate duplicate reimbursement.
6. The employee receiving tuition reimbursement must continue in service for one (1) year after receiving reimbursement for the preceding semester or pay back the final year reimbursement amount.
7. All courses must be taken in institutions whose credits are recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as accrediting agencies, as listed in the current edition of Higher Education Directory. Credit-bearing traditional classroom courses, satellite courses and Internet courses with accredited higher education institutions are eligible for reimbursement consideration. No reimbursement will be approved for videotape courses or other non-interactive formats without specific written pre-approval of the supervisor and division director.
8. Tuition reimbursement payments are subject to the availability of funds for each specific project. The administration reserves the right to deny or limit reimbursement if funds are not available to support the request.
9. Employees must complete and submit a Request for Tuition Reimbursement in the *Professional Growth* system prior to the start of all courses.
10. Special Provision: An employee may elect to contract with the IU Board for 100% payment of tuition for an advanced graduate degree. In return, the employee would agree to remain in the service of the IU for a specified period of time after earning the degree as a repayment for the tuition support.

The IU Executive Director will be responsible for developing a contract with the employee. The administration and Board reserve the right to approve, or disapprove, such requests based upon the value to the organization. Advanced graduate study must be relevant to one's area of assignment.

APPENDIX B
CHILD-REARING LEAVE

A staff member who expects to give birth, or whose spouse will give birth, or who expects to adopt a pre-school child, may take child-rearing leave of absence, without pay, and return to employment at the end of the leave period.

To request child-rearing leave, the staff members must write to the Director of Human Resources at least 30 days before the proposed date of the leave except in emergency situations. The request must contain the expected date of birth or adoption and cite the proposed beginning and ending dates of the leave.

Staff members on child-rearing leave are not considered active Chester County Intermediate Unit employees and are not entitled to any Board-paid benefits granted active employees except as provided under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Staff members will not lose salary step entitlement upon their return to work if they have worked at least half of the work year in which the leave is granted.

Time limits in this policy may be waived by written approval of the School Director.

A. Duration of Leave

Leaves must be for at least one quarter of the school year (usually 45 days). Staff members may request unpaid child-rearing leaves for less than 45 days subject to the approval of the School Director. Child rearing leave cannot exceed one year.

B. Retaining Insurance

Staff members granted child-rearing leave may retain their membership in the Intermediate Unit's group insurance plans at their own expense, subject to the approval by the carrier(s), if they so request before the leave begins or before the Family Leave is exhausted. Staff members must submit payments for insurance premiums at least one (1) month in advance to the administration. For ten-month employees, if child-rearing leave begins on, or after, the start of the fourth quarter of the school year (April 1, for eleven and twelve month employees), the Board will maintain medical insurance benefits until September 1. If the leave extends beyond September 1, the employee may elect to retain the insurance at their expense.

C. Ending the Leave Early

Staff members may request to have the child-rearing leave end at an earlier date by writing to the Director of Human Resources at least thirty (30) days before the new requested ending date. Reinstatement at the earlier date is contingent on the existence of a vacancy for which the employee is qualified.

D. Extending the Leave

Staff members may request to have the leave extended by writing to the Director of Human Resources.

E. Intention to Return

A staff member preparing to return to work at the scheduled conclusion of his/her leave must give written notice to the Director of Human Resources at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return.