



ROSENSTEIN, FIST & RINGOLD

RED BANNER UPDATE

Date: May 13th, 2022

Re: SB 1579

Signed: April 22nd, 2022

Effective: 90 Days from the Date the Legislature Adjourns

Topic: **Leaves of Absence for School District Employees**

Summary: Senate Bill 1579 (the “Bill”) creates new law to be codified at OKLA. STAT. tit. 70, § 509.12 and allows a school employee to request a leave of absence to hold office in a national, statewide, or school district employee association under certain circumstances.

Requirements for an Employee to Receive the Leave of Absence

The Bill requires an employee requesting leave to provide the superintendent with proof they were elected and the term of office; the proof must include certification by the relevant association of the date and results of the election. The school board’s approval of leave must have definitive beginning and end dates.

After an Employee’s Request for Leave of Absence Is Granted

Leave granted under the statute will be leave without pay and without benefits granted by the school district (regardless of whether paid by the employee or the association for which the employee is serving as an officer). While on leave, the employee’s position must be maintained without advancement on the minimum salary schedule; the employee will not be permitted to accrue sick leave, personal business leave, personal leave, or service credit within the Teachers’ Retirement System. After the leave ends, the employee may return to their former or a comparable position. While on leave, an employee must be prohibited from accessing the school district’s office space.

Lastly, the Bill provides that an association that serves as a school district employee organization, and fails to adhere to the provisions of the statute, must



no longer be recognized by the school district's board of education as an organization representative of employees.

For More Information

Please visit the firm's website to view the signed Act.

RFR attorneys are reviewing this legislation and will be advising clients as to any recommended changes to existing district policies.