



## HR Committee Agenda

Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 2pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://blueskyschool-org.zoom.us/j/94539287046?pwd=bf7uRbH7un7xtwTRi8rJoCQAwxDAgo.1>

Meeting ID: 945 3928 7046

Passcode: 698984

Committee Charge: Creating practices to recruit highly qualified staff and retain staff. Review and update the staff handbook to reflect best practices within BlueSky regarding employment issues.

Attendance: Gabra Lokken, Amy Larsen, Dawn Mensing, Julie Johnson., Danielle Sanders, Mandy Kasowicz, Molly Kinnamon, April Scharnberg, Heidi Housh, Danielle Fackler, Jodi Helder, John Mizeur, and Leslie Egner

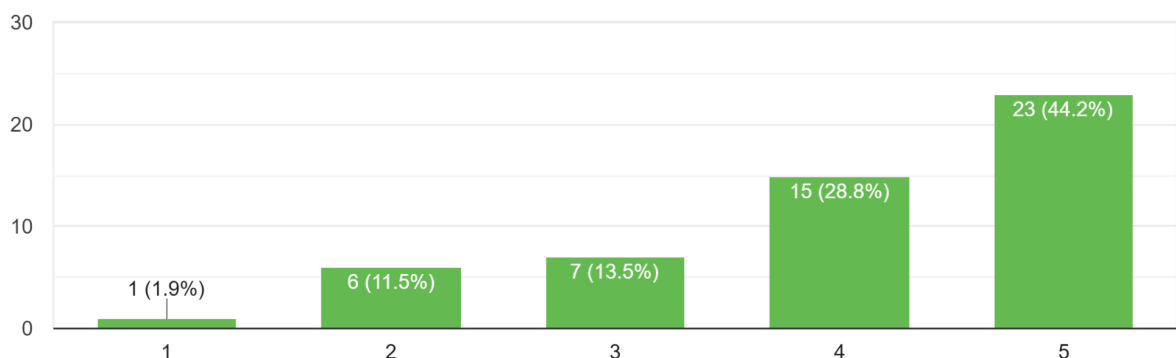
Agenda:

### 1) Review Staff Feedback from Time Off Survey

- Total Staff to Respond: 52
- [Comments from Survey](#)

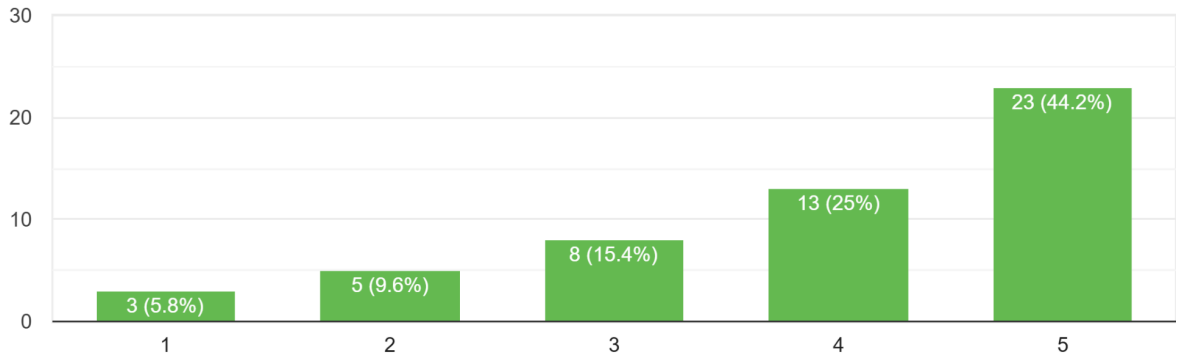
How do you feel about moving to a single PTO bank?

52 responses



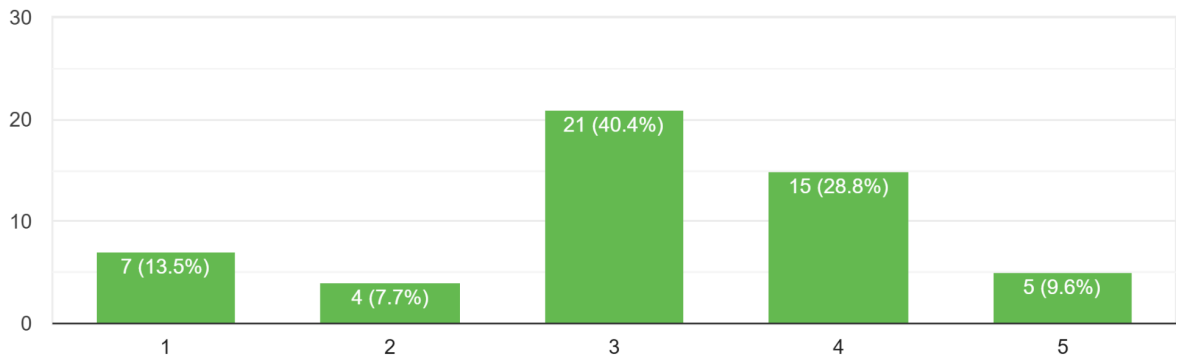
How valuable is having one combined PTO bank (instead of separate categories)?

52 responses



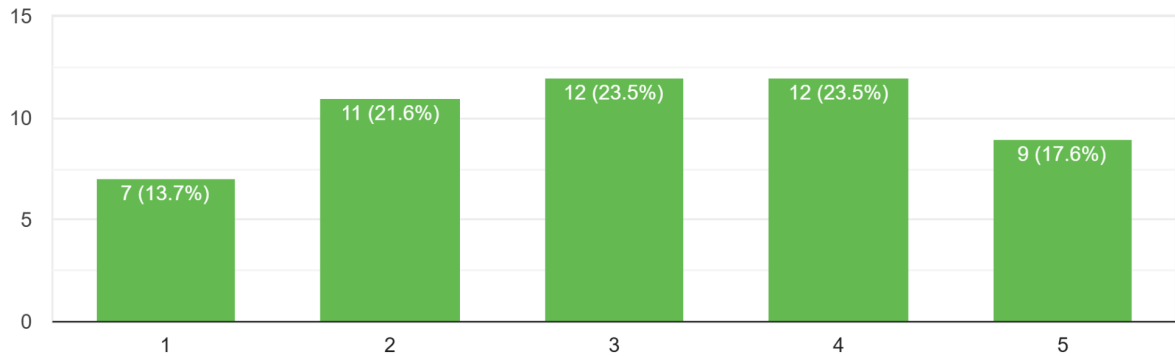
How do you feel about the proposed accrual rates?

52 responses



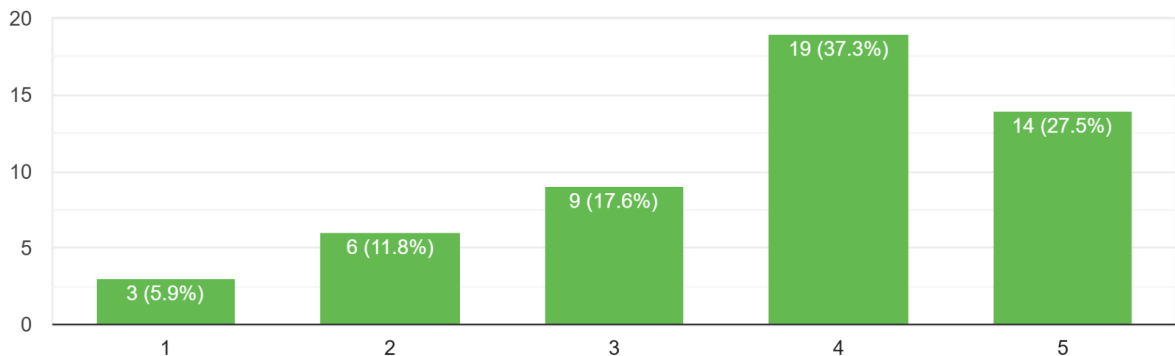
How do you feel about the proposed PTO cap limits?

51 responses



Overall, how do you feel about the proposed PTO plan options?

51 responses



## 2) Department Discussions

- Common Themes and Patterns from Department Discussions:

### a. Strong Support for Flexibility

#### i. What People like:

- “One bucket” simplifies things
- Freedom to use time without explaining why
- Easier tracking and documentation
- Ability to use time for personal needs, travel, or illness interchangeably

People want autonomy over time.

### b. Preference for Option 2 (Higher Accrual)

**c. Concern About Reduced Total Time Off**

i. Specific Concerns:

- Lower accrual rates
- Reduced maximum cap
- Not enough time for: extended illness, family needs, emergencies

**d. Payouts**

i. Want higher payout percentages

ii. Desire for:

- Full or near 100% payout
- Wanting a clear and transparent payout structure
- Lower accrual rates

iii. Frustrations around:

- Losing earned time

iv. Ideas Suggested:

- Annual payouts over cap
- Retirement payouts
- Gradual payout transition
- Converting PTO into financial benefits (i.e. salary or retirement)

**e. Equity Concerns Across Employee Groups**

i. Year-round staff feel disadvantaged by this new plan

ii. MN specific benefits that don't apply to out-of-state employees

**f. Operational & Staffing Concerns**

i. Concerns about more staff taking time off at once

ii. Increased need for substitutes

iii. Impact on:

- Student support
- Tech Team workload
- Admin process

iv. Questions raised:

- Will there be limits on how many people can be out?
- Will sub pools need expansion?
- Will workload pile up after returning?

**g. Approval Process and "True Flexibility"**

i. Unsure whether flexibility will actually exist

ii. Key Questions:

- Will there be blackout days?
- Do staff need to explain absences?

- Will it be micromanaged
  - If approval rules stay strict then it doesn't seem like true flexibility

**h. Alternative Options:**

- i. Front-loading PTO
- ii. Longevity-based accrual increases
- iii. Donating PTO to emergency pool
- iv. Buying out sick time
- v. Adding mental health days
- vi. Keeping separate categories (or hybrid model)

**3) Next Steps**

- Time Off Sub Committee was formed
  - Members include: Amy Larsen, Molly Kinnamon, Darren Sonenstahl, Dawn Mensing, Julie Johnson, and Leslie Egner
  - Committee's first meeting is on Monday, May 11th
  - Committee will meet to develop more detailed guidelines and specifics for the new PTO plan, including cap, payout options, and approval processes
  - Will present to HR Committee what was discussed at the meeting
- Additional Things to clarify:
  - Blackout Days - Review and clarify this process and definition around blackout days in the employee handbook
  - Ask finance to clarify the tax implications of different payout structures (single payout vs split/annual payouts) for PTO transition
  - Potentially relook at sub expectations and when staff are required to have a sub.
  - Leslie will present to staff about different benefits like MN Paid Leave, STD, and LTD so that staff have a better understanding of their options when they have to take a leave and what that all means (i.e. when are they qualified to use the benefit, what the compensation is like, using accrued time off to supplement pay, etc). Present at the August retreat?
  - Make sure the PTO plan is equitable for all staff types. For instance those who work 220 days or over took a big hit on how much time off they can accrue with the new suggested plan. So relook at those caps and accruals.

Upcoming Meeting Dates/Times

Thursday, May 21st at 2pm