



Governor Sonny Perdue recently recommended that teachers and other state employees be furloughed three days this year to offset decreases in state funding. Superintendent Cindy Loe has recommended to the School Board that teachers take the furlough days during preplanning week, August 3-7, 2009. The School Board is expected to take formal action on July 31, 2009.

What exactly is a furlough?

A furlough is an unpaid absence. Simply put, it means that employees will not work this day, or get paid for it, even though it is part of their normally scheduled work calendar.

Who will the three furlough days affect?

Basically, if your workday calendar was not already reduced for 2009-10, then you are affected by this furlough. Therefore, the furlough days primarily affect classroom teachers, instructional support teachers, media specialists, 190-day professional assistants, school technology specialists, school nutrition program managers, cluster school nurses, high school head counselors, educational interpreters and bus drivers.

If my workday calendar already was reduced this year, will I be expected to take an additional three furlough days?

Generally, no. The school system's 2009-10 budget already has reduced many employees' workday calendars by up to 20 days as a cost-saving measure. If you were already affected at least three days in the workday calendar reduction announced last spring, then you are not impacted by this new furlough.

Are federally-funded employees affected by the furlough?

Yes. Positions that are funded through federal dollars are affected by the furlough.

When will the furlough days take place?

After consulting key system staff, Superintendent Cindy Loe has recommended to the School Board that teachers take these three furlough days during preplanning week, August 3-7. The specific furlough days will be decided by each school's principal to allow flexibility for the activities already scheduled. While this is not a perfect solution, it is the one that has the smallest impact on classroom instruction. Non-teaching staff affected by the three-day furlough need to take the days within the first semester, as directed by their principal or supervisor, with the exception of bus drivers who will receive direction from the Transportation Department.

Why can't the furlough days occur during postplanning or perhaps during a holiday?

State funding reductions must occur by the end of the calendar year, December 31, 2009. Also, the days must occur on contracted work days when students are not in school. This limits the opportunities that the furloughs can occur. The teacher work day in October was scheduled to coincide with midterm grading, so it was not an optimal time for a furlough day. Also, the three days of Thanksgiving break are not contracted work days for teachers; therefore they are not eligible for furloughing.

How will I know which days are furloughed?

Your principal or another school administrator will contact you directly to share the week's new schedule and start dates. Non-teaching staff who are impacted will have their furlough days decided by their principal or supervisor, which may not necessarily be during preplanning week.

Does this mean that my contract has changed?

No. The three furlough days are unpaid work days. Your work calendar (for example, 190 days) is still the same even though you will not work, or be paid, for three days of it.

Will my salary change?

If affected by the furlough, your salary will be reduced by the amount earned during three work days. The Human Resources Division has created a chart to estimate the impact of this reduction in salary. These charts can be viewed on the school system's web site, www.fultonschools.org, under the 'FYI' section.

Will the reduction come out of one paycheck?

No. Generally, the reduction will be split evenly over three pay periods to limit the financial impact on employees. One day of pay will be deducted from the September 2009, October 2009 and November 2009 paychecks. The December 2009 paycheck will contain your "regular" monthly salary. Note: Transportation will be notified separately of the dates of their pay reduction.

Will there be budget cuts in addition to the furlough?

Governor Perdue has further plans to cut funding to school systems by an additional 3 percent to Quality Basic Education (QBE) appropriation as well as 5 percent to various categorical grants such as transportation and nursing. It is estimated that these additional cuts will total approximately \$8 million to Fulton County Schools. This requires that the school system again examine its spending and allocation of resources. Superintendent Loe will work with the School Board and system leaders as to how this reduction will be addressed in the current budget.

July 2009

