



# **Alachua County Public Schools**

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## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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## **Purpose of Handbook**

Human Resources has developed this Employee Handbook as a guide to help you during the course of your employment with Alachua County Public Schools. This handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive or address every situation that may arise during the course of your employment, nor is it a substitute for Board policies or official statements. If there is any conflict between this handbook and a Board Policy, the policy takes precedence. For more information, please contact your worksite supervisor or the Division of Human Resources at (352) 955-7727, or visit the District's website at: [www.sbac.edu](http://www.sbac.edu). Board policies are shown at the link under "School Board".

The Superintendent of Alachua County Public Schools is responsible for administering the Board's policies, procedures and the provisions of applicable collective bargaining or employment agreements. The Superintendent reserves the right to alter the content or application of this Employee Handbook. While reasonable effort will be made to inform you of changes as they occur, it is your responsibility to review District guidelines and seek clarification as needed.

This Employee Handbook supersedes all other personnel handbooks or employee manuals for Alachua County Public Schools as of August 10, 2022.

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## **Mission and Vision of The District**

### Mission

The District is committed to the success of every student.

### Vision

We will graduate students who have the knowledge, skills and personal characteristics to be lifelong learners and independent thinkers. Our graduates will excel in their chosen careers and be productive and contributing members of the global community.

**REF: Policy 2105, *Mission and Vision of the District*  
F.S. 1000.03, 1001.41**

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## **Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace**

To ensure your work environment is free from the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs, the District prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance or alcohol in the workplace. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal and referral for prosecution.

You must notify the Superintendent or designee of any arrest or conviction under a criminal drugs statute no later than 48 hours after such arrest or conviction. For safety-sensitive positions, criminal action resulting from excessive alcohol or illegal drug use may serve as the basis for disciplinary action.

As a condition of employment, job applicants who are considered final candidates for employment will be screened for the presence of drugs. An applicant or employee may be tested for: alcohol, amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines,

cannabinoids, cocaine, designer drugs, hallucinogens, methaqualone, synthetic narcotics, opiates and phencyclidine.

The District will pay for any initial tests it requires. As an employee or applicant, you may request additional testing at your own expense.

If you, as an applicant, refuse to consent to screening or have a confirmed positive test result, you will be ineligible for hire and eliminated from further consideration.

As an employee, you will be subject to drug and alcohol testing throughout the term of your employment under the following circumstances:

- Routine Fitness For Duty: Drug and alcohol screening performed as part of an annual or routine medical exam;
- Reasonable Suspicion: When there is a reasonable suspicion that job performance is or has been impaired by the use of drugs or alcohol arising from observable behavior.
- Follow-up: After participation in a drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, follow-up testing shall be conducted without advance notice.

If, as an employee, you seek voluntary assistance for substance abuse, you may not be disciplined for seeking assistance. You shall be subject to all District rules, regulations, and performance standards with the understanding that enrollment in a rehabilitation program qualifies as treatment for an illness. Upon returning to work following completion of rehabilitation program, you shall be subject to follow-up testing.

If you refuse to submit to required drug and alcohol testing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Additional provisions apply if you are required to possess a commercial driver's license (CDL) or hold another safety-sensitive position.

**REF: Policy 1124, 3124, 4124 Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace; 4162, Drug and Alcohol Testing of CDL License Holders F.S. 440.102, 1012.45**

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## **Annual/Vacation Leave**

If you are an employee in a twelve (12) month position, you are eligible to earn vacation leave.

Annual/vacation leave is subject to the following provisions:

- A maximum of 700 hours may be accrued.
- Annual/vacation leave can only be taken with the advanced approval of the supervising administrator.
- Non-scheduled vacation leave may not be taken during the first six (6) months of your employment. You may be required to encumber enough vacation days to cover a scheduled vacation. If a sufficient number of vacations days have not been accrued when a scheduled vacation must be taken, you shall take leave without pay.
- Vacation leave shall be scheduled to minimize the disruption to District operations.

If you are an eligible employee who terminates employment, you will be paid for unused vacation leave accumulated through the last full month worked in accordance with Board policy.

**REF: Policy 1430.06/3430.06/4430.06, Annual Vacation Leave**

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## **Attendance**

The quality of education provided by the District depends upon each employee promptly and reliably carrying out his or her job duties. Therefore, it is important for you to report to work as scheduled.

Occasionally, illness or other special circumstance may arise. To address these contingencies, if you are an eligible active duty employee, you may accrue or be granted leave time in accordance with Board policy. Requests for anticipated leave must be submitted with sufficient advance notice and in accordance with District procedures.

A willful absence from duty without leave shall result in the loss of compensation for the time of the absence and a break in the continuity of service. Such an absence may also result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or cancellation of the employment contract.

**REF: Policy 1430.03/3430.03/4430.03, Approval of Leaves; 1431.01/3431.01/4431.01 Absence Without Leave**

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## **Compensation**

As a District employee, you shall be paid in accordance with state and federal requirements, Board policies and, if applicable, your collective bargaining agreement. Paychecks are generally issued on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Your compensation is based on an annual salary schedule adopted by the Board. The salary schedule provides pay differentials based on performance, professional certification, advanced degrees, supplemental duties and/or periods, and other factors determined by the District in accordance with applicable law.

If you were hired after September 1, 2005, you shall be paid promptly by direct deposit in accordance with the payroll schedule and statutory requirements.

If you are a qualified employee, you may elect to receive your salary and supplemental wages in 20 or 21 installments.

## **On-Call**

You may occasionally be required to work or be on-call beyond the normal schedule.

If you are a non-exempt employee who is officially on-call during non-working hours or holidays, you shall be paid in accordance with applicable wage and hour regulations. To determine what compensation, if any, you are entitled to receive for on-call time, the Division of Human Resources will consider a number of factors such as: the on-call duties and time periods covered; required response time; and any physical or geographic restrictions placed on you while on call.

## Overtime

If you are a covered non-exempt employee, you shall receive an overtime premium of one and one-half (1½) times your regular hourly rate of pay for time worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a work week in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. For purposes of determining overtime, each work week begins on Sunday morning (12:01 a.m.) and runs through Saturday midnight (12:00 a.m.). Except under emergency conditions to protect District property, all overtime work must be authorized in advance and in writing by the appropriate Assistant Superintendent or designee.

## Overpayments/Underpayments

Every effort is made to ensure that you are accurately paid for your services. Any error or concern regarding payroll calculations, specific deductions or other concerns shall be brought to the immediate attention of the Board.

It is the intent of the Board that all payroll check stubs accurately reflect the correct information. If it is discovered that you received an overpayment or underpayment, the Board will notify you immediately, in writing, of such overpayment or underpayment. Should you discover an overpayment, you must notify the Board in writing. The Board shall respond to such notice within five workdays.

Underpayments will be corrected no later than your next regular pay period, and the Board will reimburse bank fees incurred as a result of a contract salary underpayment error. A reasonable schedule will be established for the reimbursement of overpayments.

**REF: Policy 1410/3410/4410, Compensation; 1430/3430/4430, Leaves of Absence; 4250, On-Call Time; 6510, Payroll Authorization; 6520, Payroll Deductions; 6700, Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA)**

*Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 C.F.R. Part 541*

**F.S. 448.110**

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## **Confidentiality**

A number of state and federal laws prevent the unauthorized disclosure of confidential and protected information. To comply with these laws and avoid invasions of privacy and breaches of confidentiality, you are prohibited from releasing, disclosing or otherwise disseminating confidential information except as authorized by Board policies and procedures. The obligation to maintain confidentiality extends beyond the term of your employment.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Student records, including health information;
- Medical records;
- Personal information that identifies children with disabilities and their parents and families;
- Social security numbers;
- Trial preparation records;
- Confidential law enforcement investigatory records;

- Confidential information received from another public agency; and
- Other information that is statutorily exempt from public disclosure or protected under confidentiality laws.

The District has adopted the following procedures to maintain security of confidential information:

- Upon receiving a request for unauthorized release of confidential information, you shall refuse to release the information and notify your supervisor as soon as practicable.
- Student education records shall not be released to the public without the written authorization of the parent or eligible student.
- Before producing any record for public inspection or copying, any confidential information exempt from public disclosure must be redacted. However, if an entire record is exempt from disclosure, it shall be withheld and not redacted.
- You are prohibited from removing records from Board property unless you have permission from the building principal or the supervisor. If such permission is given, you are responsible for the safety and security of the records and must return them intact.

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**REF: Policy 2460, Exceptional Student Education; 8310, Public Records; 8350, Confidentiality; 8453.01, Control of Blood-borne Pathogens**

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## **Conflicts of Interest**

To foster public trust and support effective operations, you are expected to maintain high standards of professionalism, honesty, integrity, and impartiality in your dealings, both on and off the job. State law prohibits you, your spouse, or minor child from soliciting or accepting any gift, compensation, payment or anything of value that is given to influence your judgment, vote, decision or official action. Furthermore, no gift, compensation, payment or other thing of value shall be accepted from a vendor after the decision has been made to purchase equipment, supplies or services from the vendor.

You should avoid any personal interests, activities, associations and conduct that are or have the appearance of conflicting with the interests of the School District or could have an adverse or harmful effect on the school community.

Some examples of prohibited conflicts of interest include:

- Accepting a fee for remedial tutoring of any student currently enrolled in one (1) or more of your classes for which a grade is given;
- Recommending or purchasing a good or service from a vendor in which your spouse or child has a material interest;
- Having a financial interest in any activity that conflicts with your job duties and responsibilities with the school system, even if you do not personally or directly benefit from such interest;
- Using District materials, equipment, or facilities in private practice;



- Dedicating school time to an outside interest, activity or association;
- Soliciting or accepting customers for private enterprises while on District property or during work time;
- Engaging in a business transaction on behalf of a private enterprise that may profit you by virtue of your official position or authority;
- Benefiting financially or otherwise from confidential information that is obtained or obtainable by reason of your position or authority; and/or,
- Engaging in political activity on school property during school hours. A violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**REF: Policy 1129/3129/4129, Conflict of Interest; 1231/3231/4231, Outside Activities; 1232/3232/4232, Political Activities; 3129.01/4129.01, Tutoring; 3310/4310,**

**Freedom of Speech in Non-instructional Settings; 6460, Vendor Relations**

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## **Deductions**

The District is required to withhold applicable income and payroll taxes from employee paychecks. Any court-mandated deductions such as garnishments for child support plus applicable administrative fees may be withheld from your paycheck as well.

The District prohibits illegal deductions in pay. To the extent permitted by law and consistent with applicable agreements, payroll deductions shall be approved by the Board and must be authorized by you in writing. The cost of tax-sheltered annuities, dependent health premiums, membership dues and other programs may be payroll deducted with your authorization. Payroll deductions shall be divided into equal payments and shall continue for the duration of the payroll request. You may cancel noncompulsory deductions by providing written notice to the vendor. Payroll deductions for exclusive bargaining agents shall be made in accordance with state statutes and negotiated agreements.

## **Social Security**

Social Security and Medicare taxes are paid by the District and you in accordance with federal regulations. Your portion of the taxes is payroll deducted.

If you are a part-time, seasonal, or temporary employee, a retirement benefit plan will be provided by the District as an alternative to Social Security.

**REF: Policy 1420/3420/4420, Benefits; 1420.01/ 3420.01/4420.01, Health, Life and 125/Cafeteria Plan; 6520, Payroll Deductions**

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## **Domestic/Sexual Violence Leave**

Up to three (3) days of unpaid leave will be granted during any twelve (12) month period to you if you or your or household member is the victim of domestic or sexual violence. You must have exhausted all accrued vacation, personal and sick leave prior to utilizing this leave.

As an employee seeking domestic/sexual violence leave, you must provide advance notice and sufficient documentation of the act of domestic or sexual violence, except

where there is imminent danger to the health or safety of you or your family or household member. In accordance with state law, all information concerning domestic or sexual violence shall be confidential and is exempt from disclosure.

You may not be discharged, demoted, suspended, retaliated or discriminated against for exercising your rights under the Florida Domestic Violence Leave Act. However, nothing in the law limits the Board's right to discipline or terminate you for any legitimate reason including, but not limited to, reductions in the workforce or termination for cause.

**REF: Policy 1430.02/3430.02,/4430.02, Domestic/Sexual Violence Leave  
F.S. 741.28, 741,313, 784.046**

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## **Electronic Resources**

As a District employee, you may have access to computers, software, Internet access, networks, network devices, fax machines, telephones, voice mail, electronic mail and other systems provided by the District for business purposes. In accordance with its mission and goals, District resources shall be used in the performance of job duties and for school-related purposes. The use of electronic resources must comply with state and federal laws, the Code of Ethics, Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in the State of Florida, District policies and administrative procedures.

The District retains control, custody and supervision over all electronic resources (including but not limited to, computers, software, Internet access, networks, network devices, fax machines, telephones, voice mail, and electronic mail) that it owns or leases. Any information generated, stored or transmitted through electronic resources is the same as any written document and may be subject to Florida's Public Records Act. The District retains the right to monitor employee use of its equipment and systems.

## **Guidelines**

While these guidelines are not all-inclusive, your use of District electronic resources is subject to the following provisions:

- There shall be no expectation of privacy with respect to business or personal communications generated, stored or transmitted using the District's electronic, business or communications systems.
- Incidental personal use is permitted as long as it does not interfere with your job duties or performance, system operations, or other users or increase costs to the District.
- Unauthorized disclosure of any confidential information regarding students or employees is strictly prohibited. You must comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- Passwords and accounts must be confidentially and securely maintained. The use of another's password without explicit permission is prohibited.
- Instant messaging systems are not secure and shall not be used to transmit student or employee information.

- Downloading music, videos and other Internet broadcasts is prohibited unless specifically authorized for short-term work- or school-related purposes.
- Use of District systems must not involve any prohibited activity including, but not limited to:
  - Harassment, threats, or other illegal or prohibited activity;
  - Obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit or sexually suggestive material or activity;
  - Inappropriate communications with students or minors;
  - Private commercial, advertising or business solicitation or for fund-raising for any non-school purpose, unless authorized by the Superintendent;
  - Soliciting or communicating personal, political or religious views or representing such views as those of the District;
  - Dissemination of false information;
  - Intentional or unintentional misuse or damage to the District's electronic resources;
  - An unauthorized attempt to gain or deny access to, disrupt, alter, or destroy data or service of the computer or network system;
  - Attempting to access unauthorized sites by bypassing the District's Internet filtering system;
  - Using District resources for recreational games, unless for instructional purposes;
  - Unauthorized installation, connection or alteration to the Board's networking devices.
  - Downloading or installing software from any source without prior written approval from the Superintendent.
  - Unauthorized copying, transferring, removing, altering or communicating any District record or software for personal use or for the use of others.

You are encouraged to keep your personal business and records at home. All District communications devices including computers, telephones, voice mail and electronic mail systems are subject to the provisions of Florida's Sunshine Law.

The District is not responsible for unauthorized charges made by you, the illegal use of its computers, or for any damages suffered. The District makes no warranty of any kind and denies responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services or the Internet.

### E-mail

Since the District does not maintain central or distributed archives of e-mail messages, e-mail retention is your responsibility. Upon request by the District, you must provide copies of e-mail records in your possession, whether or not such records are on a District computer. To preserve the confidentiality of protected

information, all information exempt from disclosure must be deleted prior to release of electronic mail.

- When available, the District's e-mail system must be used to send official District e-mail communications.
- Precautions should be taken when opening or forwarding e-mail attachments from unknown sources or which may contain viruses.
- Personal e-mail may be blocked at any time to ensure network security and prevent viruses and spam.
- Permission must be obtained from the site administrator prior to sending or forwarding mass e-mails or chain letters for District or non-District purposes.
- Participation in work-related news groups and mail lists is permissible provided they do not create an excessive amount of e-mail.

A violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**REF: Policy 7540, *Computer Technology and Networks*; 7540.01, *Technology Privacy*; 7540.04, *Staff Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety*; 7540.05, *Electronic Mail***

## **Emergency Closure and Evacuation of Schools**

The Superintendent or, in the event of an extreme emergency, the Principal, may close or dismiss school prior to the regular daily dismissal hour. In the event of an emergency closure, school personnel shall maintain control over students until they are released from school or depart from the school bus.

In accordance with the emergency preparedness plan, appropriate personnel shall identify and promptly respond to all threats to the safety of District facilities.

At least two (2) emergency evacuation drills shall be held during the first month of school and one (1) evacuation drill each month during the remainder of the school year. The drills shall cover emergencies such as fire, bomb threat, foul weather, and regional or national emergencies and shall be designed to familiarize occupants with all means of exit, including special emergency exits, and appropriate emergency cover areas. Staff members shall be assigned responsibility for the prompt and orderly evacuation of school buildings.

**REF: Policy 8420, *Emergency Closing and Evacuation of Schools*; 8421, *Emergency Evacuation Drills***

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## **Employee Communications**

To maintain open channels of communication, all District-related communications between employees and the Board shall be submitted through the Superintendent or as directed by the Superintendent.

When responding to the Board in writing or through e-mail, you shall send a copy of the communication and the original inquiry to all other Board members and the Superintendent. Official Board communications, policies and directives of interest to employees will generally be communicated by the Superintendent.

While interacting at social or other functions, Board members and you are likely to informally discuss educational trends, issues and other matters of interest. Board members cannot act on behalf of the Board unless in open public session or specifically authorized. Therefore, you should avoid discussing with Board members individual personalities, personnel grievances, complaints, or other issues subject to Board action, and such matters should be addressed in accordance with established procedures.

Nothing in this guideline is intended to deny you of your right to free speech or the right to appeal to the Board on important matters. You have the right to speak out on issues of public concern. However, in situations where personal interests conflict with those of the District, you should:

- Clearly state that the views are your own and not necessarily those of the School District;
- Refrain from expressions that may disrupt harmony among co-workers or interfere with the maintenance of discipline by school officials;
- Avoid making threatening, abusive or personally defamatory comments about District employees, administrators or officials; and
- Refrain from public expressions that you know to be false or that are made without regard to truth or accuracy. **REF: Policy 1112/3112/4112, *Board-Staff Communications*; 3310/4310, *Freedom of Speech in Non-Instructional Settings***

## **Employment Procedures**

All Administrator, Instructional and Support Staff positions are created and filled with the Superintendent's recommendation and the Board's approval. Substitute Teacher candidates are approved by the Division of Human Resources.

As a job applicant, you must be of good moral character, meet the qualifications for the position, and submit all required documents on a timely basis to be considered for employment or re-employment. After receiving a conditional offer of employment, you will be subject to additional screening to determine employability. Such screening may include, but is not limited to: drug screening, criminal background check, and verification of educational qualifications and employment history. You may be tested for: alcohol, amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, cocaine, designer drugs, hallucinogens, methaqualone, synthetic narcotics, opiates and phencyclidine.

It is the policy of the Board to only hire U.S. citizens and those who are lawfully authorized to work in the United States. In accordance with federal law, you must provide proof of eligibility to work in the United States upon employment. Any false or misleading statement or omission to obtain employment may result in ineligibility for employment or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**REF: Policy 1121/3121/4121, *Conditions for Employment and Re-Employment*; 3120.04, *Substitute Teachers*  
Immigration and Control Act of 1986 F.S. 440.102.**

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## **Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination**

The Alachua County Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability (Section 504/DA), sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status, genetics or legally-protected characteristics in its educational programs, services or activities, or in its hiring or employment practices. The district also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other patriotic youth groups, as required by the Boy Scout of America Equal Access Act.

To ensure your right to equal employment opportunity and a nondiscriminatory workplace, the Board strictly prohibits any form of discrimination against applicants or employees on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, gender, marital status, disability (Section 504/ADA), genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other legally-protected characteristic in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities. This policy applies to recruitment, selection, placement, compensation, benefits, training, promotion, discipline and all other terms and conditions of employment.

It is the policy and practice of the District to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, to provide equal employment opportunity, and to ensure its facilities, programs and activities are accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are an employee with a disability, the District will make reasonable accommodation provided you are otherwise qualified to perform the essential functions of the job and the accommodation does not create an undue hardship on the operation of the Board's programs and/or activities.

For further information, please contact the District's EEOC Compliance Officer, Alisha Williams at 955-7713. For student EEOC concerns, please contact, Dr. Toni Griffin at 955-7671.

Allegations of discrimination may be pursued using established grievance procedures. You will not be retaliated against as a result of filing a complaint. All issues will be promptly handled in accordance with District policies and established procedures.

**REF: Policy 1122/3122/4122, Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity; 1470/3470/4470, Grievance Procedure; 2260.01, Section 504/ADA Prohibition of Discrimination Based on Disability**

## **Ethics**

The Board has established standards of ethical conduct for all employees, based on the *Code of Ethics* and the *Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida*. See Board Policy for specific information. [Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida](#)

The *Code of Ethics for the Education Profession in Florida* states:

- (1) The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.
- (2) The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
- (3) Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community, the educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

## **Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida**

The School Board of Alachua County has adopted the following standards for all employees.

- 1) The following disciplinary rule shall constitute the principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.
- 2) Violation of any of these principles shall subject the individual to revocation or suspension of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law.
- 3) Obligation to the student requires that the individual:
  - a) Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.

- b) Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
  - c) Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
  - d) Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
  - e) Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
  - f) Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
  - g) Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
  - h) Shall not explain a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
  - i) Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional services, unless disclosure served professional purposes or is required by law.
- 4) Obligations to the public require that the individual:
- a) Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.
  - b) Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
  - c) Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.
  - d) Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.
  - e) Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.
- 5) Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:
- a) Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
  - b) Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
  - c) Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
  - d) Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
  - e) Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.
  - f) Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgment of colleagues.
  - g) Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.



- h) Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
- i) Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.
- j) Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an application or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
- k) Shall provide upon the request of the certificated individual, a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
- l) Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.
- m) Shall self-report within 48 hours to appropriate authorities any arrests/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within 48 hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, school districts shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), Florida Statutes.
- n) Shall report to appropriate authorities any known allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or the State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 231.28(1), Florida Statutes.
- o) Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported any allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 231.28(1), Florida Statutes.
- p) Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission imposing probation, imposing a fine, or restricting the authorized scope of practice.
- q) Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

**REF.: Policy 1210/ 3210/4210, Standards of Ethical Conduct  
State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.081**

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## **Family, Medical, and Service Member Leave**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides employees **Temporary Job Security** when faced with certain health-related concerns that prevent them from working. In accordance with FMLA, if you meet the eligibility requirements, you may take up to twelve (12) work weeks of unpaid FMLA leave during any school year (July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>) or up to twenty-six (26) work weeks of unpaid Qualifying

Exigency Leave during a single twelve (12) month period. This policy does not increase paid leave as provided for under Florida law or Board policies. If you are an eligible employee, you shall be entitled to take a combined total of twenty-six (26) weeks of FMLA and Qualifying Exigency Leave provisions during a twelve (12) month period.

To be eligible for FMLA and Qualifying Exigency Leave, you must have worked for the Board for at least twelve (12) months and a minimum of 1,250 hours over the twelve (12) months prior to the leave request. If you are a full-time teacher who has worked for the District for twelve (12) months, you are deemed to have met the 1250 hour requirement. If you are a member of the Reserves or National Guard, the time you would have worked had you not been called for military service counts toward your eligibility for FMLA-Qualifying Exigency Leave.

If you are an eligible employee, you are entitled to take FMLA or Qualifying Exigency Leave as follows:

#### Family Leave

- For the birth of a child and/or care of a newborn child within one (1) year of the child's birth; or,
- For the placement of a child with you by way of adoption or foster care and/or to care for the child within one (1) year of the child's arrival.

#### Medical Leave

- For the care of your spouse, child or parent, if such individual has a serious health condition; or,
- For your own serious health condition that prevents you from performing your job functions.

#### Qualifying Exigency Leave

- For any exigency, as defined by federal regulations, arising out of your spouse, son, daughter or parent being on covered active duty or being notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation; or,
- For the care of a covered service member who is your spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin (i.e., nearest blood relative).

Unless complications arise, the common cold, flu, upset stomachs, earaches, headaches other than migraines, minor ulcers, routine dental or orthodontia problems, periodontal disease, and similar conditions do not qualify for FMLA leave. FMLA and Qualifying Exigency Leave are provided as a supplement to other leave provisions provided by the Board, and are intended to assist employees who do not have other forms of leave available.

The staff member may request to "substitute" (i.e. run concurrently) any of his/her earned or accrued paid leave (e.g. sick leave, personal leave, vacation leave, compensatory leave) for unpaid FMLA leave. An employee's ability to substitute accrued paid leave is determined by the terms and conditions of the District's normal leave policy. A staff member electing to use any type of paid leave concurrently with

FMLA leave must follow the same terms and conditions of the Board's policy that apply to other employees for use of such leave. The staff member is always entitled to unpaid FMLA leave if s/he does not meet the Board's conditions for taking paid leave. On occasion, the Board may waive any procedural requirements for the taking of any type of paid leave.

If the staff member has not earned or accrued adequate paid leave to encompass the entire twelve (12) work week period of FMLA leave or twenty-six (26) work week period of Military Caregiver Leave, the additional weeks of leave to obtain the twelve (12) work weeks of FMLA leave or twenty-six (26) work weeks of Military Caregiver Leave, the staff member is entitled to shall be unpaid.

Whenever a staff member uses paid leave in substitution for unpaid FMLA leave/Military Caregiver Leave, such leave counts toward the twelve (12) work week/twenty-six (26) work week maximum leave allowance provided by this policy and Federal law.

With the exception of unexpected situations, you must submit an application for FMLA or Qualifying Exigency leave at least thirty (30) days before leave is expected to begin. If the leave is to begin prior to the thirty (30) days, you must give notice to your worksite supervisor as soon as the necessity for leave arises. Failure to provide proper notice, except in unanticipated situations, may result in the denial of the FMLA or Service Member leave request.

Upon returning from an FMLA or Qualifying Exigency Leave, you will be returned to your former position or a position with equivalent pay, benefits and conditions of employment.

While on family or medical leave, you will not lose any seniority or employment benefits that accrued prior to the beginning of leave. However, seniority and employment benefits will not be accrued during the leave period.

If you fraudulently obtain FMLA leave, you shall not be entitled to protection of job restoration and maintenance of health benefits provisions.

**REF: Policy 1430.01/3430.01/4430.01, *Family and Medical Leaves of Absence Family and Medical Leave Act, 29 U.S.C 2601 et seq.***

***National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, Pub. L. 111-84***

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## **Financial Responsibility**

While you will not be held financially liable for textbooks, supplies, equipment, materials or funds which have been stolen or lost by other persons, you are expected to exercise reasonable control over these assets under the direction of the worksite supervisor. You are required to comply with local and District audits. Audit materials are available upon request, and compliance with audit requirements will fulfill your responsibility regarding collected funds.

The misappropriation of funds, supplies or other assets, and the improper handling of money or financial transactions are strictly prohibited. Fraudulent activity may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and possible prosecution.

**REF: Policy 8700, *Anti-Fraud*, CBA-T Art. IX, Sec. 6; CBA-ESP Art. IX, Sec. 6 (G)**

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## **Grievance Procedures**

The following grievance procedures are designed to resolve grievances promptly and at the lowest level.

“Grievance” means any dispute or disagreement involving the interpretation or application of any Board rule or practice as it is applied to you. “Grievance” also includes complaints of discrimination and harassment.

Except under extenuating circumstances or upon the mutual agreement of both parties, a grievance shall be resolved within forty-five (45) working days of its filing. If you are a bargaining unit member, you shall use the grievance procedures set forth in your collective bargaining agreement. The grievances of all other employees, including reports of harassment or discrimination and any dispute or disagreement regarding the interpretation or application of a District rule or practice, shall be handled in the following manner:

### Informal

If you believe there is a basis for a grievance:

- You shall initiate an informal discussion with the building principal or immediate supervisor within five (5) work days of becoming aware of the grievance. If the grievance involves harassment or discrimination, you shall have sixty (60) days to initiate a discussion with the worksite supervisor. Allegations of harassment or discrimination may be made directly to the building principal or immediate supervisor or using the grievance procedure or complaint procedures outlined in the Board’s Policy 1550/3550/4550 *Complaints Against Employees*.
  - All reports of alleged misconduct by instructional personnel that affect the safety, health or welfare of a student shall be handled by the Superintendent in accordance with Florida statutes and the Board’s policy 8141, *Mandatory Reporting of Misconduct*.
  - If the allegation involves the direct administrator or supervisor, you shall make the report to the next higher level of administration or supervision. Filing a grievance or reporting harassment will not affect your status, future employment or work assignments.
  - Level One - Written Grievance

If the grievance is not resolved within five (5) days of the informal discussion (Step 1):

- You may file a written and signed grievance form with the Superintendent.
- The grievance shall include name the person(s) affected; the facts regarding the grievance; the specific action being grieved; and the specific relief requested.
- The Superintendent will communicate with you within ten (10) work days of receiving the written grievance.
- An investigation will be conducted and confidentiality will be maintained to the degree possible. The investigation should be completed within twenty (20) work days.

- The Superintendent will make a good faith effort to resolve the grievance through mutual agreement.
- You will not be retaliated against as a result of filing a grievance.
  - Level Two - Grievance Conference

If the grievance has not been resolved:

- The Superintendent or designee will hold a conference with you. You will be afforded a full and fair opportunity to present evidence related to the facts and issues raised by the grievance.
- You may not be represented by counsel at the grievance conference.
- The Superintendent will render a decision in writing within ten (10) business days of the conference. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.
- A copy of the determination will be sent to you.

**REF: Policy 1470/3470/4470, Grievance Procedure; 1550/3550/4550, Complaints F.S. 447.401, 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43, 1012.23, 1012.795, 1012.796**

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## **Harassment**

To maintain an environment free from unlawful harassment, the Board strictly prohibits any form of harassment or intimidation based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other protected characteristic.

This policy applies to all forms of illegal harassment by any person during District operations, activities and programs held on or off District premises and to all persons subject to the control and supervision of the Board including, but not limited to, students, employees, Board members, volunteers, agents, and contractors.

A violation of this policy may result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, or dismissal.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Illegal harassment takes many forms including: jokes, verbal abuse, epithets, degrading comments, display of objects or pictures, or other unwelcome and offensive conduct based on protected status.

The prohibition of harassment includes sexual harassment, which is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either implicitly or explicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, or status in a class, educational program or activity;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting the individual; or,
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive

working, and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to: unwanted sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes; innuendoes; propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic language; improper touching, pinching or assault; coerced sexual acts; suggestive, insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display of suggestive objects or pictures; and other offensive, unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

### Reporting Harassment

You must promptly report any incident of harassing conduct to an administrator, supervisor, or other Board official. Reports of harassment may be made in good faith without fear of retaliation. Allegations of illegal harassment may be pursued using the grievance procedures established by the Board or, if applicable, your collective bargaining agreement. Allegations of harassment will be promptly investigated with reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality. If the allegation is substantiated, appropriate corrective action will be taken in accordance with District policies and established procedures.

**REF: Policy 1362/3362/4362, *Anti-Harassment*; 2260, *Nondiscrimination and Equal Educational Opportunity***

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## **Holidays**

Holidays will be designated by the Board when it adopts or amends the school calendar and employee salary schedules.

**REF: Policy 1420/3420/4420, *Benefits***

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## **Insurance**

### Health, Life and 125 Plans

A health, life and 125 plan is made available to you if you are an employee who is appointed to one-half (1/2) time or more, a retiree, employee on a leave of absence, or terminated employee. If you are a casual laborer, student employee, work-study employee, temporary instructional personnel, substitute teacher, consultant, contractor, person on call, temporary replacement or other temporary employee, you are ineligible for insurance benefits.

An employee going on unpaid leave of absence due to illness, maternity, or professional leave may remain under the group coverage if s/he makes premium payments for the coverage. Payments may be continued as long as the leave remains in effect.

### Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is available every October. Employees will be notified via email when the exact dates are determined.

### More Information

Please contact our Benefits Department at (352) 955-7579, for more information.

**REF: Policy 1419.02/3419.02/4419.02, Privacy Protections of Fully Insured Group Health Plans; 1420/3420/4420, Benefits; 1420.01/3420.01/4420.01, Health, Life and 125/Cafeteria Plans**

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### **Job-Related Expenses**

You may receive payment for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the course of performing services for the District. Job-related expenses shall be paid in accordance with Board policy and administrative procedures.

**REF: Policy 1440/3440/4440, Job-Related Expenses; 6550, Travel and Per Diem**

### **Jury/Witness Duty**

If you are an eligible employee who is summoned for jury duty, you may be granted temporary leave with pay. You may retain any jury fees you receive, but will not be reimbursed for meals, lodging or travel expenses incurred while serving as a juror. If you are an eligible employee who is subpoenaed as a witness, you may be provided temporary leave with pay for a case that does not involve your personal litigation. Any witness fees may be retained, but you will not receive reimbursement for meals, lodging or travel expenses incurred while serving as a witness. A maximum of fifteen (15) days will be granted for jury or witness duty leave, but additional leave may be approved at the Board's discretion.

Temporary duty leave may be granted if you are subpoenaed in the line of duty to represent the Board as a witness since your appearance in such cases is considered a part of the job assignment. You may retain any fees received from the court. If no fees are received from the court, you may be paid a per diem and travel expenses. Temporary duty leave with pay will not be granted for court attendance when you are engaged in your personal litigation. You may, however, request personal leave without pay.

**REF: Policy 1430.09/3430.09/4430.09, Jury/Witness Duty**

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### **Leaves of Absence**

A leave of absence is permission granted by the Board for an absence from duty for a specified period of time with the right to return to employment upon expiration of the leave.

Unless authorized by the Superintendent or designated representative, you shall not be absent from your assigned duties. If you are willfully absent from duty without leave, you shall be subject to forfeiture of compensation for the time of the absence, cancellation of contract or appointment, and dismissal.

Except in the case of an emergency, the request for a leave of absence must be filed at least ten (10) days before the effective date of the proposed leave. Leave shall be used only for the purposes set forth in the leave application.

**REF: Policy 1430/3430/4430, Leave of Absence; 1430.03/3430.03/4430.03, Approval of Leaves**

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## **Legal Services**

Legal services may be provided to you if you are charged in a civil or criminal proceeding for an action arising out of and in the course of employment with the District, provided the Superintendent determines you were at the assigned place of duty and are not guilty of willful neglect of duty, gross negligence or improper conduct.

**REF: Policy 1420.02/3420.02/4420.02, Legal Services**

## **Liability Insurance**

As a District employee, you are provided liability insurance to protect against injury and property damage, including liability for negligent acts, arising from the performance of assigned job duties.

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## **Military Leave**

Military leave will be granted to you if you are required to serve in the armed forces of the United States or the State of Florida in fulfillment of obligations incurred under the Selective Service Laws or due to membership in the National Guard or reserves of the armed forces. In accordance with Florida Statutes, the first thirty (30) days of such leave will be granted with pay.

As an employee, you are entitled to military leave for required reserve or National Guard training. However, your compensation for such leave shall not exceed 240 hours.

Upon your return from military leave for extended active duty, you shall be returned to employment without prejudice provided an application for re-employment is filed within six (6) months following your discharge date or release from active military duty. The Board shall have up to six (6) months following the receipt of the application for re-employment to assign you to the same or a similar position you held with the District.

The granting of military leave for voluntary service shall be at the Board's discretion. Except under unusual circumstances, the Board shall deny a request for military leave if you voluntarily enter a branch of the armed forces for temporary or an extended period of service and your absence will interfere with the orderly operations of the school program.

**REF: Policy 1430.07/3430.07/4430.07, Military Leave**

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## **Nursing Mothers**

In accordance with federal law, if you are an employee who is eligible for overtime pay and choose to breastfeed your infant within the first year of birth, you shall be provided a suitable place and additional unpaid break time to express breast milk for your infant on District premises.

Prior to returning to work from maternity leave, you shall notify your supervisor of your intent to continue breastfeeding and your need to express milk during working hours. It is your responsibility to keep the supervisor informed of your needs throughout the period of lactation.



The building administrator shall designate a private area, other than a restroom, where you can express breast milk without intrusion from others.

You can express milk during regularly scheduled break periods. The Principal or supervisor shall make accommodations if changes in the schedule, duration or number of breaks are needed. In the event that more breaks are needed or the break needs to be longer than legally required, the additional break time shall be unpaid and your work day or schedule shall be modified accordingly. The Principal or supervisor shall work with you to make necessary modifications.

**REF: Policy 4425, Nursing Mothers F.S.383.015**

## **Outside Employment**

As a District officer or employee, you are prohibited from having any employment or contractual relationship:

- With any business entity or agency doing business with the District, excluding organizations and their officers who enter into or negotiate a collective bargaining contract with the District;
- That will create any conflict between your interests and the performance of your District job duties; or,
- That would impede the full and faithful discharge of your duties with the District.

**REF: Policy 1113/3113/4113, Conflicting of Employment or Contractual Relationship**

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## **Performance Evaluations**

In accordance with state statutes and established procedures, you will be evaluated at least annually to determine how well you are meeting job expectations.

Performance evaluations shall be completed and filed within the time schedule established by the Superintendent.

As required by state statutes, School Administrators and Instructional Personnel shall be evaluated by a performance evaluation system approved by the state Department of Education and adopted by the Board.

In accordance with Board policy and established procedures, if you fail to meet the performance standards for your job, you may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**REF: Policy 1220/3220/4220, Evaluation**

**F.S. 1012.34**

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## **Personal Appearance**

To promote professionalism and respect for authority, you are expected to adhere to the following standards regarding attire and grooming. While on duty, you shall:

- Be physically clean, neat and well-groomed;
- Dress in a manner consistent with your job duties;
- Dress in a manner that communicates pride in personal appearance; and

Be groomed in such a way that your hairstyle or dress does not disrupt the educational process or cause a health or safety hazard.

**REF: Policy 1216/3216/4216, Staff Dress and Grooming**

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## **Personal Leave**

You may be allowed to charge up to six (6) days of paid leave for personal reasons each year to your accrued sick leave. Personal leave is non-cumulative and any such leave must be approved in advance by the Superintendent.

Requests for unpaid personal leave shall be in writing in accordance with Board policy. Personal leave shall terminate no later than June 30th. Personal leave typically shall not be for more than one (1) school year, but may be extended one (1) more year with Board approval. Personal leave shall not be used for the purpose of accepting employment of a permanent nature. At the Board's discretion, unpaid personal leave may be granted as provided below.

### **Maternity or Paternity Leave**

Up to six (6) weeks of maternity/paternity leave may be granted for the birth or adoption of a baby. Such leave will be with pay if accrued sick leave is available. Unpaid personal leave may not exceed the balance of the school fiscal year in which the child is born or adopted. Additional sick leave may be granted if the application for leave is accompanied by a physician's statement verifying the medical necessity of such leave.

### **Parental Leave**

Up to one (1) year of unpaid personal leave may be granted for child-rearing purposes as follows:

- The period of parental leave may not exceed the balance of the school fiscal year in which the child is born.
- In the event of the adoption of a child, you may apply for a leave of absence, provided the leave does not exceed the balance of the school fiscal year in which the adoption shall occur and the written application for leave is submitted to your immediate supervisor within two (2) calendar weeks after the approval for adoption by the recognized agency or source.
- To extend a leave of absence beyond one (1) school fiscal year, you shall reapply for leave in accordance with Board policy.

### **Personal Leave For Health Reasons**

Personal leave without pay may be granted for health reasons. Such leave typically does not exceed one (1) year, but may be extended upon request. Requests for extension will generally be on a six (6)-month basis. A physician's statement may be required to verify the medical necessity for the leave.

### **Political Leave**

If you are an eligible employee who has filed for election to a political office, you may apply for personal leave for political reasons in accordance with Board policy. The

Board may grant political leave without pay for a period not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days prior to the election.

Unpaid personal leave may be granted during your first term as an elected government official.

### Extended Personal Leave Without Pay

Requests for extended personal leave without pay will be considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis. Except under extenuating circumstances that are acceptable to the Board, requests for extended personal leave to take another position for salary shall be denied. However, if you are an eligible employee, your request for leave to teach in a charter school may be approved by the Board for one (1) school year and extended with Board approval. When possible, requests for such leave shall be initiated no later than July 1<sup>st</sup>.

At the end of the approved leave period, you will be given a position at the same location to which you were previously assigned if a position is available for which you are qualified. If no vacancy exists, you will be assigned to a comparable position in the District. Failure to return to work at the end of the approved leave period may result in a cancellation of your contract and dismissal.

**REF: Policy 1430.04/3430.04/4430.04, *Personal Leave***

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## **Personal Relationships**

Personal relationships in the workplace can result in claims of sexual harassment, favoritism, and other issues that can lead to discord among employees. Therefore, you shall not be permitted to work in the same school or department with a close relative except by permission of the Superintendent. Under no circumstance shall an employee supervise the work of a relative.

A "close relative" means a: parent; spouse; child; sibling; grandparent, uncle, aunt, or first cousin; nephew or niece; father- or mother-in-law; son- or daughter-in-law; brother- or sister-in-law; step parent, stepchild, stepbrother or stepsister; half-brother or half-sister; and a certified domestic partner or his or her children.

Reassignment may be recommended if you become related to another employee after hiring.

You shall not inappropriately associate with a student at any time or in any manner that may give the appearance of impropriety including, but not limited to: any situation or activity which could be considered abusive or sexually suggestive or involve illegal substances such as drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Such inappropriate conduct may result in criminal liability and/or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**REF: Policy 1130/3130/4130, *Assignments*; 1213/3213/4213, *Student/Staff Supervision and Welfare***

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## **Personnel Files**

The District maintains a personnel file for each employee. Your personnel file includes all records, information, data and materials maintained by the District regarding you and your employment. The personnel file may be maintained in any form or retrieval system by administrative staff at one or more locations.

Your personnel file is property of the District. Only authorized personnel are permitted to enter information pertaining to your professional role with the District, including materials pertaining to work performance or other matters that may be cause for disciplinary action under state law. A copy of such entries shall be provided to you.

You have the right to access your own personnel file upon request with reasonable advance notice and in the presence of a designated administrative representative. Removal or alteration of any document is prohibited. You may submit a written statement to correct or challenge any information in the personnel file.

Please note: Pursuant to FS: 1012.31 Subsection (1) (f)  
An Employee's Personnel File is Public Record and can be reviewed by the Public upon request.  
Contact 352-955-7727 for questions.

**REF: Policy 1590/3590/4590, Personnel File, FS: 1012.335**

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## **Probationary Period**

The District strives to hire individuals who are the most qualified and suitable for the position. However, actual job performance is the best indicator of job suitability. The initial year of your employment will include a probationary period during which the District and you will have the opportunity to evaluate the employment relationship and determine your suitability for continued employment. You may be dismissed without cause or may resign without breach of contract any time during the initial probationary period. As a probationary employee, if you are recommended for dismissal during or at the end of the probationary period, you shall have no rights of appeal or written explanation.

In accordance with state statutes, the probationary period varies with the position as follows:

- **Instructional Personnel:** If you are a member of the Instructional staff hired after July 1, 2011, you shall have a probationary contract for one (1) school year upon initial employment with the District. After successfully completing the probationary contract, you may be recommended for an annual contract not to exceed one (1) school year.
- **Educational Support Personnel:** If you are a member of the Educational Support Personnel covered by the collective bargaining agreement, the probationary period is six (6) months of continuous employment. If you are a member of the Educational Support Personnel not covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, your probationary period is one (1) calendar year.
- If you are a member of the Professional Technical staff, you have a probationary period of one (1) calendar year.

Following successful completion of the probationary period, you may be suspended or dismissed at any time for just cause.

**REF: Policy 1120/3120/4120, Employment**

**F.S. 443.131, 1012.335**

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## **Professional Leave**

Professional leave may be granted in accordance with the terms of the Board's policies and collective bargaining agreement.

## **Purchases**

The Superintendent, Principals and others responsible for budget administration have the authority to initiate requisitions for the purchase of materials, equipment and services within approved budget limits.

Purchases, other than capital projects, are subject to the following provisions:

- All purchases must be made in accordance with applicable state statutes, Florida Board of Education rules, Board policies and administrative procedures.
- If you are an employee with purchasing authority, you shall adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Florida Association of Public Purchasing Officers, Inc.
- Except as directed by the Superintendent, the purchasing department is responsible for procuring supplies, materials, equipment and services paid for from the District budget or from school internal funds when the purchase is subject to the formal bid or request for quotation procedures.
- Goods or services shall not be purchased prior to a requisition or purchase order, except in the case of an emergency. Unauthorized purchases are the sole responsibility of the person placing the order.
- With limited exclusions, the purchase of supplies, materials, equipment or services costing \$25,000 or more must follow sealed bid procedures. Awards shall be based on the lowest and best quote meeting bid specifications, and the Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

## **Purchasing/Credit Card Use**

The use of credit or purchasing cards:

- May be authorized for Board-approved or school-related functions, and expenses that are for the benefit for the District and serve a valid proper public purpose;
- Shall not circumvent purchasing rules established by Florida Administrative Code and Board policy; and,
- Is prohibited for personal purchases or the purchase of an alcoholic beverage, or any other good or service prohibited by state statute, Florida Administrative Code or Board policy.

## **Violations**

Any purchasing or credit card use that violates Board policy or procedures or State statute shall result in:

- A loss of purchasing card and/or credit card privilege;
- Disciplinary action up to and including dismissal;
- Personal responsibility for any and all charges, including finance charges, late fees and other assessments; and/or,
- Possible prosecution.

## Cone Of Silence

When the Purchasing Department issues a bid document (e.g., Invitation for Bid, Request for Proposal, Invitation to Negotiate), a "Cone of Silence" goes into effect to protect the public purchasing process from unfair outside influence. The "Cone of Silence" begins at the time the bid is advertised on the Purchasing Department's web page and prohibits communication between District staff and a potential vendor about the bid. The "Cone of Silence" ends at the time the School Board acts on a written recommendation from the Purchasing Department or Planning and Construction Department regarding bid award. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from service.

**REF: Policy 6320, Purchasing; 6324, Cone of Silence; 6423, Use of Purchasing Cards and Credit Cards**

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## **Reporting Misconduct**

In accordance with the principles of professional conduct, you are required to self-report to the Division of Human Resources at (352) 955-7713 or (352) 955-7729 within 48 hours:

- Any arrest or charge involving child abuse or the sale or possession of a controlled substance; and,
- Any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation.

You are also required to promptly report to the Superintendent:

- Any misconduct by an employee that affects the health, safety or welfare of a student;
- Any complaint against a district employee that includes grounds for the revocation or suspension of a teaching certificate; or,
- Any fraud or suspected fraud involving elected officials, employees, consultants, vendors, contactors, outside agencies and their employees, and any other parties doing business with the Board;

Any allegation involving the Superintendent shall be made to the Board Attorney. Failure to report such misconduct, complaint or fraud may result in disciplinary action.

## Child Abuse

If you know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a child or student has been abused, abandoned or neglected by a parent or other person who is responsible for the child, you shall report the matter to the Department of Children and Families, at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

**REF: Policy 1139/3139, Educator Misconduct; 1550/3550/4550, Complaints Against Employees; 3139.01, Staff Discipline; 4139.02, Violation of Local, State and/or Federal Law; 8141, Mandatory Reporting of Misconduct; 8462, Student Abuse and Neglect**

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## **Retirement**

If you are an eligible employee, retirement options including, but not limited to regular, disability, In-Line-of-Duty Disability, and the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) are available to you, as set forth in Policy.

For more information, please contact our Retirement Department (352) 955-7705.

**REF: Policy 1420/3420/4420, *Benefits*; 1420.05/3420.05/4420.05, *Retirement of Support Staff* F.S. 1012.685**

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## **Sabbatical Leave**

Sabbatical leave may be granted in accordance with the terms of the Board's policies and collective bargaining agreement.

**REF: Policy 1434/3434, *Sabbatical Leave*  
CBA-T Art. X, Sec. 13; CBA-ESP Art. XIV, Sec. 14**

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## **School Safety and Security**

The Board is committed to providing a safe environment in all of its schools and facilities. To support this objective, the District has developed and implemented a comprehensive safety program in compliance with applicable local, state and federal rules, regulations and procedures pertaining to the safety and health of students and employees. Strict adherence to these provisions is required.

A copy of the District's safety program is available upon request or on-line at:  
<https://fl02219191.schoolwires.net/Page/417>

As required by state and federal law, the District reports all violent criminal offenses including violations of the Gun-Free Schools Act that occur at its facilities, property, conveyances, and events. If a school is designated as "persistently dangerous" by the Department of Education, parents and eligible students shall be provided the opportunity to transfer to another school in the District, if available, that serves the same grades.

If an individual student becomes a victim of a violent crime in school, on District property or conveyance, or at a school-sponsored activity, the parents or eligible student shall also be offered the opportunity to transfer to another school in the District.

**REF: Policy 8405, *School Safety and Security***

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## **Sick Leave**

### Accrual

If you are an employee who works half-time or more, you shall earn one (1) day of sick leave for each full month of employment. Earned sick leave shall be pro-rated in proportion to the number of hours employed each day. Sick leave cannot be used before it is earned and credited.

Sick leave shall be accrued on the following basis:

- If you are a teacher employed on a full-time basis, you shall be entitled to four (4) days of sick leave as of the first day of employment each contract year.

- If you are an Educational Support Professional, you shall be advanced four (4) days of sick leave at the end of the first month of employment during each contract year, and one (1) day will be advanced at the end of each successive month of employment. Including advanced days, you may not accrue or earn more than one (1) day of sick leave for each month of employment during the year.
- Unused sick leave may be accumulated from year to year with no limit on the number of days that can be accrued.

### Use

If you are an eligible employee, you may use accumulated sick leave:

- When you are unable to perform your job duties due to personal sickness, accident, disability or extended personal illness and as a result have to be absent from work;
- For the illness or death of your spouse, child, father, mother, sister, or other close relative or member of your household; and,
- As personal leave with pay for up to six (6) days per fiscal year, in accordance with Board policy.

### Transfer

The transfer of sick leave is subject to the following provisions:

- Sick leave funded through the Florida Education Finance Program may be transferred from other public schools in the state. The District the number of transferred days credited shall be equal to the number of days earned in the District.
- As an employee, you may authorize the transfer of accrued sick leave to your spouse, child, parent, or sibling who is also a District employee, provided the transfer relates to an illness or injury of the employee to whom the leave is transferred. An employee receiving a sick leave transfer may not use the donated leave until (s) he exhausts all of his or her accrued leave. You may donate sick leave in amounts of five (5) or more days, or the remainder of your sick leave balance if less than five (5) days. Donated leave shall not be covered by terminal leave payouts.

### Terminal Pay

In accordance with the salary schedule adopted by the Board, if you are an eligible employee, you shall receive pay for unused sick leave accumulated through the end of the last full month of employment prior to your retirement or death. Terminal sick leave pay does not include the last partial month work.

**REF: Policy 1432/3432/4432, Sick Leave CBA-T Art. X. Sec. 1; CBA-ESP Art. XIX, Sec. 5**

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## **Social Media**

The Board has provided staff with the means to communicate electronically with students concerning school matters. These means currently include the District website, student information system with parent portal, and District email. The District will approve the use of other instructional communication technology (e.g., wikis, blogs, protected social media sites) for school use through an approval process established by the Superintendent.

Social media shall be defined as internet-based applications (such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter, wikis, blogs, et cetera) that turn communication into interactive dialogue between users.

The Board believes that the personal use of social networking sites or blogs by District staff has the potential of creating risks that could affect their professional career. It is important that District staff conduct themselves in such a way that the use of such sites does not adversely affect their position with the District.

Staff who choose to use social media networking sites for personal reasons are cautioned not to post:

- A. information that is considered proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene (as defined by the courts) as it may be a violation of State and/or District rules and policies;
- B. information about District students;

Most information concerning a child in school is confidential under Federal and State laws. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning assessments, grades, behavior, family background, and alleged child abuse.

- C. any picture, video or comment pertaining to any student(s).

The Board encourages positive and professional communication between staff and students. Regardless of the reason, it is not advisable for staff to communicate with current students enrolled in the District on any public social networking web site. This includes becoming "friends" or allowing students access to staff member's personal web pages for communications reasons. Such communication could cause the appearance of inappropriate association with the student(s).

Pursuant to the laws of the State and Board Policy 8141, *Mandatory Reporting of Misconduct*, and Policy 8462, *Student Abuse and Neglect*, each administrator shall report alleged misconduct by District employees which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student and shall report immediately any sign of suspected child abuse or neglect.

**REF: Policy 1213.01/3213.01/4213.01 Use of Social Networking Web Sites or Blogs**

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## **Solicitation**

As a District employee, you are prohibited from soliciting or accepting anything of value that would influence your judgment, vote or official action.

Students, employees and District facilities shall not be used for commercial advertising or to promote the interests of any non-school organization—public or

private—without the Superintendent’s approval. If such approval is granted, it shall not be construed as the District’s endorsement of the cause or group.

- The Principal shall review all materials or activities proposed by outside political or commercial sources to determine their educational contribution and benefit to students. Approval will not be given for any proposal that has the primary purpose of advancing the name, product or special interest of an outside group.
- No literature on behalf of an outside organization shall be posted or distributed on District property without the prior review and authorization by the Principal and/or site Administrator. Such posting must comply with the following:
  - Distribution or posting of materials by employees must comply with the terms of the negotiated collective bargaining agreements.
  - Any materials posted or distributed by students must meet the criteria established in the Board’s policy regarding Student Publications and Productions.
  - The District’s truck mail system shall not be used to distribute non-school related materials.
  - No materials from profit-making organizations shall be distributed for students to take home to their parents.
  - The time, place and manner of distribution of all non-school related materials will be clearly established and communicated.
- No student is allowed to participate in the solicitation of funds for outside organizations without the Superintendent’s approval. Furthermore, there shall be no solicitation of funds on school property by outside organizations or employees representing outside organizations without the Superintendent’s approval. Fundraisers must comply with administrative procedures regarding the time, place and manner in which such solicitations can occur.
- The District prohibits the release of personal or academic information from a student’s record for the purpose of selecting a scholarship or prizewinner without the permission of the student (if 18) or parents (if the student is under the age of 18).
- The Superintendent must approve in advance any survey or questionnaire administered to students. Except as required by law, no student shall be required to provide personal information to vendors or complete a survey that provides marketing information to vendors.

**REF: Policy 1214/3214/4214, *Solicitation of Acceptance of Gifts or Unauthorized Compensation*; 9700, *Relations with Special Interest Groups*, F.S. 112.312, 112.313, 1006.32 2 C.F.R.200.318**

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## **Surveillance**

The Board authorizes the use of video surveillance cameras on District property to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all staff, students, and visitors to District property and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Areas subject to video surveillance include:

- Outdoor facilities such as parking lots, walkways, picnic areas, athletic fields, stadiums, entrances and exits;
- Indoor facilities such as foyers, lobbies, hallways and other common areas; and,
- School buses (regular and activity buses).

**REF: Policy 8311, School Bus Video Systems; 8312, Use of Cameras and Recording Devices  
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 34 C.F.R Part 99  
F.S 1002.22**

## **Tax-Sheltered Plans**

If you are an eligible employee, the District offers you the opportunity to invest in tax-sheltered annuities or participate in a deferred compensation plan to help you achieve your retirement goals. The tax-sheltered annuity and deferred compensation programs must be approved by the Board and shall comply with Sections 403(b) and 457, respectively, of the Internal Revenue Code.

Under either plan, your salary is reduced by an agreed upon amount and allowed to grow on a tax-deferred basis until the money is withdrawn as income from the plan.

**REF: Policy 6520.01, Tax Shelter Annuities**

## **Threatening Behavior**

The Board strictly prohibits any threatening conduct that causes anxiety regarding an individual's physical well-being. This policy applies to parents, visitors, District employees, volunteers, and agents of the Board. Any person who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and/or reported to local authorities.

You are expected to treat all persons with respect and courtesy.

Examples of unacceptable conduct include:

- Swearing, cursing, profanity, or other loud, offensive or demeaning language or disruptive conduct;
- A threat of bodily or physical harm, whether a criminal violation or not;
- Damage or destruction of school or District property;
- Any behavior that disrupts the orderly operation of a school, classroom or other District facility; or,
- An e-mail, voice mail, facsimile, or other message that is abusive, threatening, demeaning or obscene.

As a District employee, you are not obligated to respond to any abusive, threatening, or obscene message. You may save the message and contact the Division of Human Resources at (352) 955-7713 or (352) 955-7729. If the message threatens personal harm, you may contact law enforcement.

**REF: Policy 1380/3380/4380, Threatening Behavior Toward Staff Members; 9380, Civility –  
Conduct of District Employees  
F.S. 1001.41 (1) (3), F.S. 1001.43 (5) (11)**

## **Tobacco Policy**

To maintain a safe and healthy environment, the District prohibits the use of tobacco and related products in its facilities, vehicles and grounds.

**REF: Policy 1215/3215/4215, Tobacco-Free Environment F.S. 386.212**

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## **Travel and Per Diem**

You may be reimbursed for authorized travel expenses incurred in conducting business on behalf of the District.

A request for reimbursement of travel expenses must be submitted with required documentation in accordance with state law and District procedures. Allowable travel expenses are reimbursable subject to the following limits:

- Breakfast: \$8.00
- Lunch: \$12.00
- Dinner: \$20.00
- Lodging: the single occupancy rate or, if applicable, the conference rate, whichever is less;
- Mileage: the standard per mile rate published each January by the Internal Revenue Service for computing the cost of operating of a vehicle for business purposes.

You shall not receive reimbursement from the Board and another source for the same travel expense.

A violation of this policy or falsification of required records may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**REF: Policy 6550, Travel and Per Diem**

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## **Visitors**

To ensure the safety and security of students, employees and District properties, all visitors must check in and obtain an identification badge prior to entering the facility. Parents are encouraged to schedule teacher conferences after school hours or during the teacher's conference period.

With the exception of authorized law enforcement and security officers, no person is allowed to possess a weapon, illegal substance or other unauthorized dangerous substance while on District property or at a school-sponsored event.

To prevent interference with job performance, you shall discourage friends and family members from visiting during work hours.

Any person who enters or remains on District property without a legitimate purpose may be trespassing and subject to arrest and prosecution under the law.

**REF: Policy 9150, School Visitors F.S. 810.097**

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## **Weapons**

Under Florida law, it is a felony to possess a weapon while on school premises, in a school vehicle, or on property being used by the District for school purposes. The prohibition of weapons extends to individuals who are licensed to possess firearms, unless serving as an authorized security officer.

The District prohibits possessing, storing, making or using a weapon—including a concealed weapon—in parking lots, District premises, and any other setting that is under the control and supervision of the Board for approved activities

You must immediately report any dangerous weapon and/or threat of violence to the building principal or site administrator. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Possession of a weapon will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency, even if the individual possesses a valid concealed weapons permit. A violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and/or prosecution under state law. **REF: Policy 1217/3217/4217, Weapons F.S. 790.001, 790.115**

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## **Whistleblower Protection**

Every employee is expected to be honest, ethical and comply with all applicable laws, regulations, policies and administrative procedures. To preserve workplace integrity and public trust, you are required to report any conduct or activity that is or appears to be:

- A violation of a law, policy or regulation that presents a substantial or significant danger to public health, safety or welfare; and/or,
- Fraud, gross mismanagement, malfeasance, misfeasance, gross waste of public funds, abuse or gross neglect of duty.

Such reports shall be made to your immediate supervisor or other appropriate personnel. If the activity involves a Board member or the Superintendent, the report shall be made to the Board Attorney. This obligation to report fraud includes an instance where you knew or should have known that fraud occurred.

You will not be retaliated against as a result of making a report in good faith.

However, disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, may be taken if you:

- Purposely, knowingly or recklessly make a false report under this policy; or,
- Are aware of and fail to report or confirm in writing a violation of a federal, state or local law that the Board has the authority to correct.

**REF: Policy 1211/3211/4211, Whistleblower Protection; 8700, Anti-Fraud**

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## **Wireless Communication Devices (WCDs)**

District-issued wireless communications devices (WCDs) are tools for the conduct of Board business, and are not intended to be used for personal business. Wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to: cellular and wireless telephones; pagers; beepers; personal digital assistants (PDA's); Smartphones; Wi-Fi-enabled or broadband access devices; two-way radios or video broadcasting devices, laptops; and other devices that allow a person to record and/or transmit on either a real time or delayed basis sound, video or still images, text or other information.

District WCD use is subject to the following provisions:

- Use of District WCDs will be monitored.
- District WCDs must be used appropriately and responsibly. To avoid unnecessary charges, landlines shall be used when available and appropriate. You are prohibited from using a WCD for any purpose that violates law or Board policy.
- To avoid dangerous distractions that may lead to accidents, you are prohibited from using Board-owned or personal WCDs while operating a vehicle or other hazardous equipment on Board time or anytime while operating a District vehicle. You are prohibited from using any WCD (even if equipped with earpieces, ear buds, headsets, and/or Bluetooth) while driving a District school bus, whether or not students are on board.
- Since WCDs are not secure, discretion shall be used in relaying confidential information.
- You shall not conduct Board business through text messaging, private email accounts or non-approved social media networking sites using a WCD.
- You must safeguard any District-owned equipment in your possession and take reasonable precautions to prevent loss, damage, theft and vandalism. You may not use a personal WCD excessively for personal business during work hours.

#### **Use of Personal Cell Phones:**

Teachers may use personal cell phones during non-instructional time or in an emergency situation. Other employees may use personal cell phones during scheduled rest and/or lunch breaks, or in an emergency situation.

A violation of this policy may result in revocation of WCD privileges or other disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**REF:** *Policy 7530.01, Staff Use of Board-owned Wireless Communication Devices (WCDs); 8606, Use of Personal Wireless Communication Devices by District School Bus Drivers; 8651, Employees' Use of District Vehicles; 7542, Use of Personally-Owned Wireless Communication Devices (WCDs); CBA-T Art. VI, Sec. 28; CBA-ESP Art. X, Sec. 7.*

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### **Worker's Compensation**

As a District employee or volunteer, you are insured by the District against work-related illnesses and injuries. If you sustain a work-related illness or injury, you may receive benefits consistent with the law for that injury until you are able to return to work.

Work-related injuries, no matter how insignificant, must be immediately reported to your worksite supervisor. To ensure coverage, a Notice of Injury report must be filed on a timely basis for each injury.

If you are eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits, you may receive additional income from earned sick leave as follows: the amount of sick leave will be reduced by the amount of the Workers' Compensation benefit. Under no circumstance will total pay exceed your regular at-work salary.

You are required to comply with the District's Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace Policy and safety rules. A violation of a safety rule or the District's Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace Policy may result in the loss of Worker's Compensation medical and/or indemnity benefits and lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### Illness/Injury In The Line Of Duty Leave

If, as an employee, you suffer an injury in the discharge of duties or an illness from a contagious or infectious disease contracted in the performance of duties, excluding colds and influenza, you shall be eligible for up to ten (10) days of illness-or-injury in the-line-of-duty leave. This leave is non-cumulative and is provided through the Worker's Compensation plan.

To receive this leave, the following conditions must be met:

- You must provide written testimony or evidence that the illness or injury was received in the line of duty. In the event of an illness, the medical doctor who treated you must provide a written opinion that there is a strong probability that the illness was contracted at the work site.
- You must provide a letter from the doctor excusing you from all work—including light duty.
- You must file a written claim within five (5) working days following your return from the absence, or as soon as possible following the illness or injury in the line of duty. The Board may approve such claims and authorize payment in accordance with the provisions of the law.

As prescribed by law, your leave shall be authorized at full pay status for a total not to exceed ten (10) work days for the same illness or injury. If you are absent beyond ten (10) days due to an injury or illness-in-the-line-of-duty and are receiving Worker's Compensation at the rate of two-thirds (2/3's) of your salary, the Board may approve illness/injury-in-the-line-of-duty days to expand your net pay to 100% for a period not to exceed one (1) year per illness or injury.

**REF: Policy 1430.05, 3430.05, 4430.05 Illness-or-Injury-in-Line-of-Duty Leave; 1420/3420/4420, Benefits CBA-T Art. X, Sec. 6; CBA-ESP Art. XIV, Sec. 6, Policy 8442, Reporting Accidents**

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## **Work Schedule**

The Superintendent shall determine your work duties, days and hours, and your supervisor may make other reasonable assignments in accordance with state statutes, applicable official agreements and your job description.

### Instructional

If you are a teacher, your normal instructional day is seven and one-half (7½) hours. You shall exercise professional judgment in determining the length of the workday exceeding the normal instructional day.

As a teacher, your work schedule shall include non-student contact time for preparation and planning and a thirty (30) minute duty free lunch period during the

normal instructional day. If you volunteer for lunchroom duty, you may receive a pay supplement if the Superintendent determines that severely handicapped students of pre-kindergarten through primary age require supervision during lunch periods. The supplement will not be paid unless the Superintendent determines such supervision is necessary.

### Non-Instructional

If you are a Non-Instructional Employee, your normal work day generally does not exceed eight (8) hours per day, except during summer months. As a Non-Instructional Employee, you are generally entitled to take a 15-minute paid rest period if assigned to a worksite for four (4) hours. If assigned for more than four (4) hours, but less than seven (7) hours, you are entitled to one (1) 15-minute paid rest period and an uninterrupted unpaid meal period of at least 30 minutes. If you work seven (7) hours or more, you are generally entitled to two (2) 15-minute paid rest periods and an unpaid uninterrupted meal period of at least 30 minutes. The worksite supervisor and you may agree in writing to schedule rest and meal breaks at other than regularly scheduled times. Paid rest breaks shall not be added to the uninterrupted unpaid meal break.

As a non-exempt employee, you must be relieved of all work duties including the supervision of students while on unpaid breaks, except in emergency situations.

**REF: Policy 1130/3130/4130, *Assignments*  
CBA-T Art. IX, Sec. 12; CBA- ESP Art. X, Sec.1**