

Board of Education Regular  
Meeting/Business  
Monday, July 28, 2025 6:00 PM

Virginia Moon Administrative Center  
8545 Park Drive  
Ralston, NE 68127

## **Agenda**

1. Call To Order  
**Speaker(s):** Board President
2. Pledge of Allegiance  
**Speaker(s):** Board President
  - 2.1. Roll Call - Excuse Board Members not in attendance  
**Speaker(s):** Board President
3. Public Comment Sign In Procedure
  - 3.1. Public Comment
4. Consent Agenda (Action)  
**Speaker(s):** Board President
5. Board Development and Communication
  - 5.1. Board Members' Update
6. Superintendent's Report  
**Speaker(s):** Superintendent
  - 6.1. Government Relations Update  
**Speaker(s):** Mr. Jason Buckingham
  - 6.2. NASB Updates and Information  
**Speaker(s):** Mrs. Elizabeth Kumru
  - 6.3. Enrollment Update  
**Speaker(s):** Sara Zabrowski-Gates
  - 6.4. Meadows School Improvement Plan Overview  
**Speaker(s):** Lisa Schroeder
  - 6.5. Summer School Presentation  
**Speaker(s):** Melanie Reeves
  - 6.6. Multi-Cultural Education Review  
**Speaker(s):** Sara Zabrowski-Gates, Megan Orchard, Jim Frederick, Casey Knight
  - 6.7. Update from the Communications Department  
**Speaker(s):** Jim Frederick
  - 6.8. Depreciation Fund Transfer Discussion  
**Speaker(s):** Aaron Bredenkamp
7. Board Action Items
  - 7.1. Approval of Policies reviewed and updated on 7/14, including policies 5002 and 5003 (Action)  
**Speaker(s):** Jason Buckingham
  - 7.2. Removal of Policy 6005 Academic Credit Requirements-COVID 19 Adjustments (Action)  
**Speaker(s):** Jason Buckingham
  - 7.3. Legislative Services Contract (Action)  
**Speaker(s):** Jason Buckingham

7.4. 2025-2026 Staff Handbook (Action)

**Speaker(s):** Ryan Pivonka

8. Policy Review
9. Pre-Adjournment Information and Activities
  - 9.1. Announcements
  - 9.2. Board of Education Supplemental Meeting Information
  - 9.3. Future Board Calendar
10. Adjourn

**2009**  
**Public Participation at Board Meetings**

The board of education shall conduct its meetings in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

The board shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the public's right to hear the discussions and testimony presented at its meetings. The board shall make available at the meeting, for examination and copying by members of the public, at least one copy of all reproducible written material to be discussed in open session of the meeting.

Except for closed sessions, the board will allow members of the public an opportunity to speak at each meeting. The board may make and enforce reasonable rules and regulations regarding the conduct of persons attending, speaking at, videotaping, photographing, or recording its meetings.

The board shall not require members of the public to identify themselves as a condition for admission to the meeting, nor shall such body require that the name of any member of the public be placed on the agenda prior to such meeting in order to speak about items on the agenda. However, the board shall require members of the public desiring to address the board to identify themselves, including an address and the name of any organization represented by such person unless the address requirement is waived to protect the security of the individual.

Adopted on: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised on: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ralston Public Schools  
Board of Education Regular Meeting**

**Monday, July 14, 2025**

The Ralston Public Schools Board of Education met in open, public session on Monday, July 14, 2025. The meeting took place at the Virginia Moon Administration Center, 8545 Park Drive, Ralston, NE. The District provided advance notice by publication in *The Omaha Daily Record* and on the District's website, [www.ralstonschools.org](http://www.ralstonschools.org).

**Call to Order**

Board President, Mrs. Robin Richards, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**Roll Call**

In addition to the Board members, those in attendance included Mr. Jason Buckingham, Dr. Aaron Bredenkamp, Dr. Sara Zabrowski-Gates, Dr. Ryan Pivonka, and Mrs. Jen Pollock, and Mrs. Angie Murphy.

**Consent Agenda**

Consent agenda items include minutes from the June 23rd meeting, and subcommittee agendas for the month of June. June Financial Report, June bills in the amount of \$793,011.80 for the General Fund, and \$3,256,591.89 for the Special Building Fund.

Prior to the meeting, Ms. Mary Roarty and Mrs. Samantha Willey reviewed the bills.

Recommend the following teachers to be hired for the 2025-2026 school year.

- **Jeanne Lackore:** Sixth Grade (KW). BA from University of Phoenix. Jeanne is currently a Special Ed Para at Westmont Elementary.
- **Kelley Ryan:** Third Grade (KW). BA from Wayne and MA from UNO. Kelley is currently a substitute with Papillion La Vista Schools.

Changing Rayden Delawter (Fourth Grade at BF) contract from Step 7, MA to Step 7, MA +9. The contract was originally approved on April 28th.

Motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Mrs. Elizabeth Kumru and seconded by Mrs. Katie Krause.

Mrs. Richards:	Yes
Mrs. Hough:	Yes
Ms. Roarty:	Yes
Mrs. Kumru:	Yes
Mrs. Krause:	Yes
Mrs. Willey:	Yes

**BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

### **Board Comments**

**Mrs. Hough:** Attended the HR & Finance Board sub-committee meeting.

**Mrs. Willey:** Nothing new to add but welcomed all new teachers.

**Mrs. Krause:** Thankful for the Facebook updates. Recognized Nolan Sailors, a former student, who was drafted in the recent Major League Baseball draft by the Kansas City Royals. It was also noted that Nolan's mom is a current employee with RPS.

**Ms. Roarty:** Attended the Buildings & Ground sub-committee meeting along with the NASB Leadership meeting. She is excited to meet the new teachers and is a little nervous about the HS parking lot being done on time. She stated that she thinks WW and BF look great after the outside paint jobs.

**Mrs. Kumru:** Attended Zoo day at Elementary Summer School. She also stated that WW looks great after its paint job.

**Mrs. Richards:** Noted there are only four weeks left of summer. She attended the Alumni meeting along with the Building & Grounds sub-committee meeting.

### **Legislative Services DRAFT Contract**

Mr. Joe Kohout and Mr. Brennen Miller visited with the Board about renewing the legislative services contract between Kissel, Kohout, ES Associates and Ralston Public Schools. The proposed arrangement would call for a 0% increase for the next two years, followed by a 3% increase for the third year of the contract.

### **Board Action Item**

#### **Motion to approve the purchase of English Language Learner Curriculum.**

Brenna Barna, Megan Bunn, and Katie Rasgorshek presented to the Board their review of the last several months piloting the two curricula Cengage and Vista for the ELL Curriculum Adoption. The final selection was VISTA.

Mrs. Katie Krause motioned to approve the purchase of English Language Learner Curriculum from Vista. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Carrie Hough.

Mrs. Hough:	Yes
Mrs. Richards:	Yes
Mrs. Krause:	Yes
Mrs. Willey:	Yes
Ms. Roarty:	Yes
Mrs. Kumru:	Yes

### **Karen Western School Improvement Plan Overview**

Mr. Andrew Mather provided an overview of the school improvement plan for the Board of Education.

### **District Financial Report**

Dr. Aaron Bredenkamp provided an overview of the District Financial Report, and he addressed questions from the Board.

### **Government Relations Update**

Mr. Jason Buckingham provided the Board with an update regarding Legislative issues.

### **NASB Update**

- Leadership Meeting in Lincoln on 7/30/25
- Area Meeting in Omaha on 9/9/25
- State Conference in November

### **2025-2026 Staff Handbook Review**

Mr. Ryan Pivonka outlined proposed changes to the 2025-2026 Staff Handbook and addressed all questions.

### **District Bond Project Update**

Mr. Buckingham provided an update to the Board of Education on the progress of various projects in motion with the 2021 Future Ready Ralston Bond Initiative.

July 3, 2025

- RHS
  - Gym ceiling is  $\frac{1}{3}$  complete.
  - Lifting RTU's on top of the wt. room this week
  - Basketball hoops by the end of July
  - 7/24, gym lockers
  - 7/16 for pool
  - Chillers on 8/27, install in October.
  - Drywalling old daycare areas
  - Locker rooms are being painted.
  - Lights in gym, install to start Monday.
  - The parking lot needs a break in the weather, multiple pours are scheduled, doubled the size of the concrete crew.
  - Light poles for parking lot next week
- RMS
  - Testing for low voltage systems to be finished by 7/14
  - The concrete is finished; the upper lot is tarred and striped.
  - Sound systems being installed in the gym.
- WW
  - Concrete tear out and replace scheduled for 7/7 and 7/8.

### **NDEE Clean Diesel Rebate**

Dr. Bredenkamp presented the district's submission to the NDEE Clean Diesel Rebate and the mandatory cost share portion of the program.

**Board Action Item**

**Motion to approve the 2025-2026 District Student Fee List Approval**

Ms. Mary Roarty motioned to approve the student fees as listed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Samantha Willey .

Ms. Roarty: Yes  
Mrs. Krause: Yes  
Mrs. Richards: Yes  
Mrs. Kumru: Yes  
Mrs. Willey: Yes  
Mrs. Hough: Yes

**Motion to approve Elementary, Middle and High School handbooks as presented.**

Ms. Mary Roarty motioned to approve the Elementary, Middle and High School handbooks as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Carrie Hough.

Mrs. Kumru: Yes  
Ms. Roarty: Yes  
Mrs. Hough: Yes  
Mrs. Willey: Yes  
Mrs. Richards: Yes  
Mrs. Krause: Yes

**Motion to approve Arbor Family Counseling Contract Renewal.**

Mrs. Katie Krause motioned to approve the 2024-2025 Arbor Family Counseling contract as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Samantha Willey.

Mrs. Kumru: Yes  
Mrs. Hough: Yes  
Mrs. Willey: Yes  
Mrs. Richards: Yes  
Mrs. Krause: Yes  
Ms. Roarty: Yes

**Approval of Policies reviewed and updated on 6/9/25 including policies 4062, 5001, 5015, 5016,5018, 5031, 6025, 6031,6034 and 6044.**

Mrs. Samantha Willey motioned to approve policies 4062, 5001, 5015, 5016, 5018, 5031, 5031, 6025, 6031, 6031, 6031, 6031, 6031, 6031, 6031, 6031, 6031, 6034 and 6044. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Katie Krause.

Mrs. Hough: Yes

Mrs. Willey: Yes  
Mrs. Richards: Yes  
Mrs. Krause: Yes  
Ms. Roarty: Yes  
Mrs. Kumru: Yes

**Motion to approve the Central Office concrete contract.**

Ms. Mary Roarty motioned to approve the bid from Weitz Construction to tear out and replace damaged concrete at Central Office in a bid amount of \$81,500.00. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Carrie Hough.

Ms. Roarty: Yes  
Mrs. Hough: Yes  
Mrs. Kumru: Yes  
Mrs. Richards: Yes  
Mrs. Willey: Yes  
Mrs. Krause: Yes

**Policy Review**

The Board and Administration reviewed proposed policies:

5002 Admission of Students - REDLINE  
5003 Admission of Part-Time Students REDLINE

**Adjournment**

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 pm with a motion made by Mrs. Elizabeth Kumru and a second by Mrs. Katie Krause.

Mrs. Krause: Yes  
Mrs. Richards: Yes  
Ms. Roarty: Yes  
Mrs. Willey: Yes  
Mrs. Kumru: Yes  
Mrs. Hough: Yes

The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

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Mrs. Robin Richards, President

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Mrs. Samantha Willey, Secretary

# 2025 Legislative Session\*

## January

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 DAY 1	9 DAY 2	10 DAY 3	11
12	13 DAY 4	14 DAY 5	15 DAY 6	16 DAY 7	17 DAY 8	18
19	20 HOLIDAY	21 DAY 9	22 DAY 10	23 DAY 11	24 DAY 12	25
26	27 DAY 13	28 DAY 14	29 DAY 15	30 DAY 16	31 DAY 17	

## February

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 DAY 18	4 DAY 19	5 DAY 20	6 DAY 21	7 DAY 22	8
9	10 DAY 23	11 DAY 24	12 DAY 25	13 DAY 26	14 RECESS	15
16	17 HOLIDAY	18 DAY 27	19 DAY 28	20 DAY 29	21 DAY 30	22
23	24 DAY 31	25 DAY 32	26 DAY 33	27 DAY 34	28 DAY 35	

## March

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 DAY 36	4 DAY 37	5 DAY 38	6 DAY 39	7 RECESS	8
9	10 DAY 40	11 DAY 41	12 DAY 42	13 DAY 43	14 DAY 44	15
16	17 DAY 45	18 DAY 46	19 DAY 47	20 DAY 48	21 RECESS	22
23	24 RECESS	25 DAY 49	26 DAY 50	27 DAY 51	28 DAY 52	29
30	31 DAY 53					

## April

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1 DAY 54	2 DAY 55	3 DAY 56	4 RECESS	5
6	7 RECESS	8 DAY 57	9 DAY 58	10 DAY 59	11 DAY 60	12
13	14 DAY 61	15 DAY 62	16 DAY 63	17 DAY 64	18 RECESS	19
20	21 RECESS	22 DAY 65	23 DAY 66	24 DAY 67	25 DAY 68**	26
27	28 DAY 69	29 DAY 70	30 DAY 71			

## May

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1 DAY 72	2 RECESS	3
4	5 RECESS	6 DAY 73	7 DAY 74	8 DAY 75	9 DAY 76	10
11	12 DAY 77	13 DAY 78	14 DAY 79	15 DAY 80	16 RECESS	17
18	19 DAY 81	20 DAY 82	21 DAY 83	22 DAY 84	23 RECESS	24
25	26 HOLIDAY	27 DAY 85	28 DAY 86	29 DAY 87	30 DAY 88	31

## June

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2 DAY 89	3 RECESS	4 RECESS	5 RECESS	6 RECESS	7
8	9 DAY 90	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

### Legislative Recess Days

February 14  
 March 7, 21, 24  
 April 4, 7, 18, 21  
 May 2, 5, 16, 23  
 June 3, 4, 5, 6

### Federal & State Holidays

January 20 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
 February 17 – Presidents' Day  
 April 25 – Arbor Day\*\*  
 May 26 – Memorial Day

\* The Speaker reserves the right to revise the session calendar.

\*\* The Legislature will be in session on Friday, April 25, the Arbor Day Holiday. Any legislative employees who work that day will receive compensatory time for hours worked on the holiday.



## Board of Education Legislative Goals 2024/2025

### Ralston Public Schools Non-negotiables

- RPS will continue to cultivate a systems thinking approach to all school programs, business, and operations.
- RPS will continue to provide the needed resources that support the defined Board of Education strategic priorities.
- With a focus on equity, RPS will continue to refine and grow our academic and social emotional programs to meet the needs of all of our students.
- RPS will continue to deliver a wide array of outstanding activity programs to allow our students a well-rounded school experience.
- RPS will continue to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of all programs and services and make adjustments as necessary.
- RPS will refine and grow our outreach programs and service expectations to include a focus on Social Emotional Learning, **Equity** and Staff Self Care.
- With a focus on equity, RPS will research and identify further opportunities and initiatives to help all of our students to be college or career ready.

### Board of Education Legislative Goals

- Continued emphasis that our students and education are a priority in Nebraska as well as advocate for local control and decision making.
- **Support legislation that fairly and equitably funds each public school district based on need.**
- Review, monitor, and potentially support legislation that identifies and increases different revenue mechanisms for public schools across Nebraska, **including but not limited to the repeal of sales tax exemptions.**
- **Oppose any efforts to create a partisan State Board of Education or Commissioner of Education.**
- **Oppose tax cuts that endanger any part of the State's revenue stream.**
- **Monitor any legislation that adjusts property valuation.**
- **Continue to support and enhance Learning Community Programs that serve students living in poverty and/or diverse student populations in Ralston and within the Metro Area.**
- **Support legislation to increase funding for early childhood programs.**
- **Encourage further adjustments to the needs formula within TEEOSA specifically for students who are of Limited English Proficiency and/or students living in poverty.**
- **Support systems, initiatives, and funding options to cultivate additional opportunities to enhance college and career readiness specifically in vocational or certification focused areas and paid student internships.**
- **Advocate for targeted programs and funding that support the "Whole Child" as it relates to students' social, emotional, and physical well being. (SEL)**
- **Oppose any legislation that advances charter schools, reduces the tax base for the purpose of funding private schools, or voucher systems that reduce funding and opportunities for public schools.**
- **Support school choice through the protection of net option funding.**



- **Continue to be a vocal advocate in the legislature for our students, staff and the Greater Ralston Community**
- **Support legislative efforts that promote or fund recruitment and/or retention programs for staff in public schools**
- **Support legislative efforts to promote and maintain the safety and security of our students and staff.**

2025

# Advocacy Handbook

For the 2025 Legislative Session

NASB'S LEGISLATIVE & LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES FOR 2025 AND A GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY  
AS ADOPTED BY THE NASB DELEGATE ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 22, 2024



The Nebraska Association of School Boards provides programs, services and advocacy to strengthen public education for all Nebraskans.

Leadership

Innovation

Vision

Engagement

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2,000,000 Nebraskans 329,000 Students 1,700 Locally Elected School Board Members 260 Member Districts/ESUs ONE NEBRASKA

109<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE, 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

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## WHAT CAN NASB DO FOR YOU?

We can assist you in preparing testimony, talking points, emails, or Op-Eds; facilitate Senator introductions and meetings in your district or the Capitol; feature your district visits with Senators; brief your board at a meeting in your community; and more ... Just ASK!

Interested in becoming more engaged in the legislative process? Whether it is from home, or in Lincoln, scan here to let us help you share your story, and advocate for public education in Nebraska as bills, topics, and issues arise.



## YOUR NASB LEGISLATIVE TEAM & RESOURCES

Colby Coash - Associate Executive Director, Director of Government Relations - [ccoash@NASBOnline.org](mailto:ccoash@NASBOnline.org)

Matt Belka - Director of Marketing, Communications & Advocacy - [mbelka@NASBOnline.org](mailto:mbelka@NASBOnline.org)

John Spatz - Executive Director - [jspatz@NASBOnline.org](mailto:jspatz@NASBOnline.org)

Lindsey Wooton - Administrative Specialist - [lwooton@NASBOnline.org](mailto:lwooton@NASBOnline.org)

**Bookmark the NASB Government Relations and Bills pages**

<https://members.nasbonline.org/government-relations>

<https://nasb.envisiams.com/legislative-bills>

NASB X/Twitter: [www.x.com/NASBOnline](http://www.x.com/NASBOnline)

NASB Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NASBOnline](http://www.facebook.com/NASBOnline)

NASB Videos: "NASB Home - News & Resources - Videos"

Hashtag: [#liveNASB](https://twitter.com/liveNASB)

Nebraska Legislature: [www.nebraskalegislature.gov](http://www.nebraskalegislature.gov)

Senators Web Pages: [www.nebraskalegislature.gov/senators](http://www.nebraskalegislature.gov/senators)





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## WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

Over the past few years, the Legislature has increasingly inserted itself into both the boardroom and the classroom. Decisions that have traditionally been left to local boards or the State Board of Education have been centralized at the State Capitol. In addition, the past years have seen an increase in efforts to divide public K-12 education and foster distrust between local boards and their constituents. There are things you can do:

- **Advocate for Local Control:** Talk to lawmakers about impactful decisions and how important it is that decisions remain local. Continue advocating for local control over local decisions. Let us help you!
- **Build Trust:** Share your decisions with your constituents. Celebrate your successes! Show lawmakers and constituents your commitment to transparency. Use your meetings to educate your public on the decisions you are making.
- **Share Your Story:** No one is more qualified to talk about your school district, your community, and your needs related to providing a quality education than you!

**DID YOU KNOW:** 79% of Nebraska's 1,700 locally elected school board members serve at or within 100 miles of where they graduated ... with 51% serving IN the district they graduated from. As a school board member and community leader, you are in an excellent position to educate and influence the legislative process and are seen as a key resource on education policy for your district.



We encourage all boards to include a legislative update as part of each meeting and to discuss/share key legislative information within your community. Advocacy is year-round, not just during the session. Bookmark and frequent NASB's Government Relations page for updates, information and Calls To Action, as well as social media, videos, our bills page, and more which summarizes all pertinent items related to public education in Nebraska.

Bookmark and frequent NASB's Government Relations page for updates and information. Be sure to utilize NASB's Legislative Notes, videos, bills page, and more which summarizes all pertinent items related to public education in Nebraska.

### 2025 LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

109th Legislature,  
1st Session

1st Day of the 2025 Session  
Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Day 10 ... Final day to introduce  
bills - January 23

NASB Legislation Committee  
Meeting - January 26

Legislative Issues Conference  
January 26-27 - Lincoln

Federal Advocacy Fly-In  
March 16-19 - Washington, DC

90th & Final Day of the  
Legislative Session - June 18

Legislative Proposals for 2026  
are due by July 1  
<https://members.nasbonline.org/government-relations/legislative-proposals>

NASB Legislation Committee  
Meeting - Summer 2025

NASB Legislation Committee  
Meeting - November 19

NASB Delegate Assembly  
November 21 - Omaha

All Dates Subject to Change

## SHARE YOUR STORY

**Be a Community Leader ... Be the expert on education in YOUR community!**

As an elected official, trust was put in you to make decisions based on the needs of your students, community and the taxpayer. NASB can provide you with data that can help you tell your story, by providing you with data on your students, achievement, your budget, even your facilities. Let us assist you in telling your story!

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### 109<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE, 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION



Sen. Bob Hallstrom  
District 1 - Syracuse



Sen. Robert Clements  
District 2 - Elmwood



Sen. Victor Rountree  
District 3 - Bellevue



Sen. Brad von Gillern  
District 4 - Elkhorn



Sen. Margo Juarez  
District 5 - Omaha



Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh  
District 6 - Omaha



Sen. Dunixi Guereca  
District 7 - Omaha



Sen. Megan Hunt  
District 8 - Omaha



Sen. John Cavanaugh  
District 9 - Omaha



Sen. Wendy DeBoer  
District 10 - Omaha



Sen. Terrell McKinney  
District 11 - Omaha



Sen. Merv Riepe  
District 12 - Ralston



Sen. Ashlei Spivey  
District 13 - Omaha



Sen. John Arch  
District 14 - Papillion



Sen. Dave Wordekemper  
District 15 - Fremont



Sen. Ben Hansen  
District 16 - Blair



Sen. Glen Meyer  
District 17 - Pender



Sen. Christy Armendariz  
District 18 - Omaha



Sen. Robert Dover  
District 19 - Norfolk



Sen. John Fredrickson  
District 20 - Omaha



Beau Ballard  
District 21 - Lincoln



Sen. Mike Moser  
District 22 - Columbus



Sen. Jared Storm  
District 23 - David City



Sen. Jana Hughes  
District 24 - Seward



Sen. Carolyn Bosh  
District 25 - Lincoln

# YOUR 2025-26 STATE SENATORS

2025

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## 109<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE, 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION



Sen. George Dungan  
District 26 - Lincoln



Sen. Jason Prokop  
District 27 - Lincoln



Sen. Jane Raybould  
District 28 - Lincoln



Sen. Eliot Bostar  
District 29 - Lincoln



Sen. Myron Dorn  
District 30 - Adams



Sen. Kathleen Kauth  
District 31 - Omaha



Sen. Tom Brandt  
District 32 - Plymouth



Sen. Dan Lonowski  
District 33 - Hastings



Sen. Loren Lippincott  
District 34 - Central City



Sen. Dan Quick  
District 35 - Grand Island



Sen. Rick Holdcroft  
District 36 - Bellevue



Sen. Stan Clouse  
District 37 - Kearney



Sen. Dave Murman  
District 38 - Glenvil



Sen. Tony Sorrentino  
District 39 - Elkhorn



Sen. Barry DeKay  
District 40 - Niobrara



Sen. Dan McKeon  
District 41 - Amherst



Sen. Mike Jacobson  
District 42 - North Platte



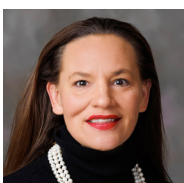
Sen. Tanya Storer  
District 43 - Whitman



Sen. Teresa Ibach  
District 44 - Sumner



Sen. Rita Sanders  
District 45 - Bellevue



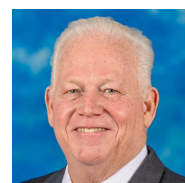
Sen. Danielle Conrad  
District 46 - Lincoln



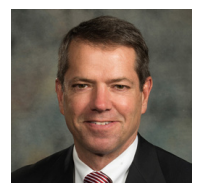
Sen. Paul Strommen  
District 47 - Sidney



Sen. Brian Hardin  
District 48 - Gering



Sen. Bob Andersen  
District 49 - Omaha




Gov. Jim Pillen

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## 109<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE, 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

 Committee Chair Ed Swotek Malcolm	 NASB President Stacy Jolley Millard	 NASB Secretary / Member 7 Suzanne Sapp Ashland-Greenwood	 Member 1 Shavonna Holman Omaha	 Member 2 Jane Erdenberger Omaha
 Member 3 Lanny Boswell Lincoln	 Member 4 Kathy Danek Lincoln	 Member 5 TBD	 Member 6 Beth Morrisette Westside	 Member 8 Amanda McGill Johnson Millard
 Member 9 Drew Blessing Kearney	 Member 10 Marla Grier South Sioux City	 Member 11 Doug Keener Mitchell	 Member 12 Gary Kubicek Norris	 Member 13 Steve Blocher West Point
 Member 14 Erick Lee Arapahoe-Holbrook	 Member 15 Brian Quackenbush Tri County	 Member 16 Mary Yilk ESU 9	 Appointed Member Lisa Albers Grand Island	 Appointed Member Patti Gubbels Norfolk
 Appointed Member Mike Palmer Sidney	 Appointed Member Jason Richters Centennial	 Appointed Member Dan Scheer St. Paul	 Appointed Member Jeremy Shuey Plattsmouth	

Term Ends 2025 for Appointed Members

Term Ends 2026 For Odd # Members

Term Ends 2028 For Even # Members





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109<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE, 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

**The Nebraska Association of School Boards is the only state organization created by school board members to represent the interests of school board members.**

**Your Association's legislative agenda is initiated each year with the submission of local board proposals.**

**The NASB Legislation Committee reviews all proposals, and then submits its recommendations to the NASB Board of Directors.**

**The Board can then review and amend the submissions before presenting them to the NASB Delegate Assembly.**

**The Delegate Assembly gives each member school district a voice in shaping the agenda of NASB.**

**Standing Positions remain in effect until they are repealed by the Assembly.**

## WHAT DOES THIS REPRESENT?

The narrative you read inside the pages of this book represents a set of belief statements which direct NASB's government relations efforts. These words guide our lobbying efforts at the State Capitol and the State Board of Education, as well as with our representatives in Washington, D.C.

While this work characterizes an effort to describe an issue or condition to be addressed, rarely is a bill written in such plain language. Legislative bills are a blend of several ideas (or perhaps a promising idea and a substantial price tag). NASB determines its stance on a bill with the Legislation Committee who offers guidance taking into consideration the technical and political aspects of a bill needed to navigate the turbulent amendment process.



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- ... AS APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE ON AUGUST 16, 2024  
 ... AND APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON AUGUST 17, 2024  
 ... AND APPROVED BY THE DELEGATE ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 22, 2024

Standing positions are statements of purpose and direction which are developed and maintained over time. They are considered annually by the Delegate Assembly and remain in effect until they are actively removed.

## BELIEF STATEMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE BOARD

## CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN

## CURRICULUM &amp; INSTRUCTION

## FUNDING &amp; FINANCE

## GOVERNANCE &amp; STRUCTURE

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS &amp; EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

## STATE POLICY

## BELIEF STATEMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE BOARD

**S-1 — Board Development** - NASB encourages boards of education to take part in board in-service and development programs and to budget funds for such programs. (1995)

**S-2 — Board Recognition** - NASB believes the service of school boardsmanship is fundamental to participatory democracy and deserves recognition collectively and individually from state and local communities. (prior to 1995)

**S-3 — Business and Education Partnerships** - NASB encourages boards of education to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with business to ensure mutual understanding and cooperation. (1995)

**S-4 — Collaborative Services to Youth** - NASB urges collaborative linkages between schools and other public and private agencies that serve children. (prior to 1995)

**S-5 — Leadership Team** - NASB believes that each board of education should create an administrative leadership team, which should include all supervisory and managerial employees including the superintendent and board members. (prior to 1995, amended 2007)

**S-6 — Parent Involvement** - NASB urges boards of education to support partnerships between parents and schools that encourage parent involvement in the education process. (1997)

**S-7 — Policy** - NASB considers it imperative that boards of education adopt clearly defined, flexible policies after input from the administration, parents, employees, and other interested parties. Policies, based on a clear understanding of the education process, should be thoroughly reviewed annually. The execution of policy is the responsibility of professional administrators and staff. (prior to 1995)

**S-8 — Use of Accountability Data for School Improvement** - NASB supports using school accountability data to determine potential strategies/resources for helping schools improve. We support the concept of growth or learning mindset which suggests that school effectiveness is assessed as an improvement process. Our perspective is that all schools in Nebraska are important and have opportunities to become more effective as quality educational systems. (2020)

## CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN

**S-9 — Abuse of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs** - NASB supports efforts by boards of education and state and national officials to strictly enforce policies regarding the sale, use or possession of illegal drugs including methamphetamine, marijuana, THC products and synthetic equivalents of THC and marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, vapor products (including e-cigarettes), and any products intended by appearance or effect to replicate tobacco products on school property. The designation of "drug free zones" near schools is also urged. (prior to 1995, amended 2015)

**S-10 — At-Risk Students and the Achievement Gap** - NASB recognizes that there are many children and youth who are experiencing special difficulties in achieving high education standards. NASB supports increased funding to help close the gap in educational opportunity and educational achievement, and urges boards of education to work with, and obtain increased funding from the state Legislature, as well as state and federal education agencies to assist at-risk children and youth in making adequate educational progress. (prior to 1995, amended 2009)



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**S-11 — Cooperation with HHS** - NASB supports legislation which mandates cooperation and consultation with school districts as it relates to the placement of children under the custody of DHHS. Comprehensive information about a child's educational needs should be shared with a school district prior to the placement of a student in a new school district. (2020)

**S-12 — Early Childhood Education** - NASB supports quality early childhood education programs accessible to all children and advocates programs that provide age-appropriate activities to prepare children for school. (prior to 1995)

**S-13 — Enrollment Option; Homebound Students** - NASB supports legislation stating that when an option student becomes homebound, the school district in which the student resides assumes full responsibility for educating the student. (1998, amended 2016)

**S-14 — Enrollment Option Limitation** - NASB supports legislation returning option students to the resident school district if the option district must contract with another school district or agency for the educational services needed by the student. (1996, amended 2016)

**S-15 — Liability for Medication Administration** - NASB supports legislation that would limit the liability of a school district and school district representatives for the administering of prescription medication to students. (1999, amended 2013, 2016)

**S-16 — Mental & Behavioral Health** - NASB will support legislative efforts to provide services related to mental and behavioral health to school-age children across Nebraska. (2018)

**S-17 — Nutrition Education/Student Wellness** - NASB believes that wellness programs for schools should emphasize healthy lifestyles and eating habits, mindful of all eating disorders, as well as obesity. (2004)

**S-18 — Safe School Environment** - NASB supports efforts to provide a school environment that is free from weapons, harassment, bullying, violence, drugs (including alcohol and tobacco), and other factors which threaten the safety of students and staff. (1997, amended 2012)

**S-19 — Statewide Poverty/Trauma Funding** - NASB recognizes the growing number of public school students across the state that are living in impoverished conditions and/or with traumatic experiences. NASB supports the use of research-based science to strengthen policy, program design and funding that targets those impacted by persistent poverty and/or trauma. (2017)

**S-20 — Student Discipline** - NASB opposes legislative mandates related to student discipline. NASB supports student discipline as an essential, mutual responsibility of parents, teachers, and administrators, with final responsibility resting with school boards. (1999, amended 2019)

## CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

**S-21 — Access to Equal Education Opportunities** - NASB supports equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their race, wealth or family circumstance, and urges the Legislature, the State Department of Education, and boards of education to remove all barriers that may prevent any child from having full access to such education opportunities. (1995, amended 2009)

**S-22 — Achievement Test Score Use** - NASB opposes the use of test scores for the comparison of school districts or for the ranking of schools. (1998)

**S-23 — Assessment of Student Learning** - NASB supports multiple approaches to assess student learning, with decisions on assessment made at the local district level, and opposes a single "high-stakes" testing procedure. (2001)

**S-24 — Cultural Diversity** - NASB urges all boards of education to support and implement curriculum which recognizes cultural diversity and enhances the knowledge of students about various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. (prior to 1995)

**S-25 — Curriculum Adoption** - NASB opposes legislative mandates addressing curriculum and testing. NASB supports the adoption of curriculum by local school boards and the State Board of Education. (2019)

**S-26 — Library/Media Content** - NASB supports that school district library/media content is a local decision. (2022)

**S-27 — Responding to Special Education Costs** - NASB supports legislative efforts to give school districts that incur unforeseeable additional special education expenses assistance to alleviate cash flow problems. (2005)

**S-28 — Student Expression** - NASB supports the authority of the local boards of education and school administration to regulate the content of school-sponsored publications and curriculum. (1997, amended 2009)

**S-29 — Support of Early Childhood Programs in the Community** - NASB will support early childhood education programs at the community level, which may include redefining economic development programs to include early childhood infrastructure development for communities and will support early childhood programs as an element in community comprehensive plans. (2018)

**S-30 — Technology** - NASB supports equal access to current technology for all school districts so they may engage all students in the curriculum, to equip them for an increasingly technological society and job market, and to provide them greater access to education services. (prior to 1995)



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## FUNDING &amp; FINANCE

**S-31 — Accounting of Funds** - NASB supports transparent accounting and full disclosure of all funds received and expended for public education consistent with federal regulations. (2005)

**S-32 — Budget Lid: Growth Factor** - NASB supports legislation which would establish an education expenditures “growth factor” which reflects the actual cost of providing a public education for school districts, learning communities, and ESUs. (2001, amended 2008)

**S-33 — Compensation for Statewide Standards & Assessments** - NASB supports adequate funding to compensate school districts/ESUs for the cost of implementing and managing the statewide learning standards and assessments. (2008, amended 2009, 2013)

**S-34 — Elimination of Budget Reserve Limits** - NASB supports legislation that eliminates reserve limitation in the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act and in debt service funds. (2000, amended 2001)

**S-35 — Elimination of Expenditure Limitation** - NASB supports legislation eliminating the limitation on general fund expenditures. (2000, amended 2011)

**S-36 — ESU Core Services Funding** - NASB supports legislation to adequately fund Educational Service Units in a manner that allows successful implementation of statewide educational initiatives that are developed by law in conjunction with the Nebraska Department of Education. (2009, amended 2015)

**S-37 — Expand use of Qualified Capital Purpose Undertaking Fund** - NASB supports the expansion of the Qualified Capital Purpose Undertaking Fund to include modifications for student and staff security including cyber security. (2015)

**S-38 — Financing Capital Improvements** - NASB supports adequate funding for school districts and ESUs for maintenance or replacement of our rapidly deteriorating facilities. (1997, amended 2015)

**S-39 — Fiscal Policy** - NASB believes the Governor and Legislature must work together to create fiscal policy that will adequately fund public education statewide based upon the needs of students and not driven by a pre-set allocation of funds for education regardless of need. Nebraska demographics and student needs are dynamic, as are the changing education standards required to be competitive nationally and internationally. To meet this challenge, fiscal policy would be built upon a broad base with the lowest possible rates to provide stability in the tax base and revenue stream, provide local government with the tools to generate adequate financial resources, yet equalize financial support

among taxpayers, and assure the principle of uniform assessment. (prior to 1995, amended 2009)

**S-40 — For-Profit Entities Operating in Tax-Exempt Zones** - NASB supports legislation to ensure equitable tax payments by for-profit business ventures operating on publicly owned or otherwise exempt property. (2003)

**S-41 — Funding of Mandated Programs** - NASB urges full funding by the state and federal governments at statutory levels of all programs, standards, activities, and services mandated to public schools and ESUs by the Legislature and Congress, and further urges that any unfunded mandates allow authority for supplementary appropriations or outside levy lid funding. (1997, amended 2012, 2017, 2019)

**S-42 — Funding: School District Infrastructure, Site Purchases and Building Operating Expenses** - NASB supports legislation that would provide an alternative to property taxes for financing facility development, maintenance, and operation. (2003)

**S-43 — General Fund Reserve Limit Exception** - NASB supports legislation that would not allow school districts to be penalized or state aid to be adjusted, to a school disadvantage, when any type of error or correction is made in calculating the state aid formula. (1999, amended 2016)

**S-44 — Including Gifts, Donations, or Foundation Funds as Receivables** - NASB opposes the inclusion of gifts, endorsements, donations, or foundation expenditures that are not regular operating expenses in the calculation of receivables in the state aid formula. (2000)

**S-45 — K-12 School Trust Land and Permanent School Fund** - NASB opposes any action that would reduce the assets, or the value thereof, of the school land trust or diversion of the Permanent School Fund. (prior to 1995, amended 2010, 2024)

**S-46 — Legislation Implementation** - NASB supports the concept that any legislative bill that limits financial resources, or requires additional financial resources, is done within a timeframe that will not negatively affect the school's ability to prepare their budget. (1997, amended 2015, 2017, 2019)

**S-47 — Legislative Review of Statutory Deadlines** - NASB urges legislative review of the conflicting mandatory deadlines that affect school revenues and expenditures. (2011)

**S-48 — Lower Local Effort Rate** - NASB supports lowering the Local Effort Rate and valuations in TEEOSA which would increase equalization aid. (2024)



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**S-49 — Property Tax Reform/Relief** - Any legislative discussion on property tax and distribution of state aid should include participation from school board and ESU board members. (2015)

**S-50 — Reset the Revenue Lid** - NASB supports legislation requiring the Nebraska Department of Education to recalculate the revenue lid to add the amount of the special education reimbursement, or alternatively, to not include the special education reimbursement in the revenue restricted by the lid. (2024)

**S-51 — Revenue Reductions for School Districts Affected by Property Valuation Losses** - NASB supports legislation that would create a hold harmless effect for districts which experience a decrease in valuation. (2004)

**S-52 — School District Options in Dealing with Large, Unanticipated Revenues** - NASB supports legislation giving school boards options in dealing with large, unanticipated revenue increases in order to minimize fluctuations in state aid. (2000)

**S-53 — School and ESU Funding Must Be Predictable and Sustainable** - Notwithstanding any current standing position or resolution, the NASB would consider the support of a school/ESU funding proposal only if it could be demonstrated to be predictable, sustainable, and it does not encroach on local control as defined by the locally elected school board or ESU members. (2024)

**S-54 — Special Building Fund Tax Levy Exclusion** - NASB supports amending the Nebraska Statutes that address budgeting and spending lid restrictions to allow school districts the ability to utilize up to fourteen cents of the Special Building Fund tax levy outside of the budgeting and spending lid restriction so that districts can plan for and fund capital improvement projects, building repairs and upgrades, and school district infrastructure needs. (2007, amended 2020)

**S-55 — State Funding System** - NASB supports a stable, predictable, equitable, and adequate statewide education funding system that honors the Legislature’s commitment to provide for free instruction in the common schools of this state, as guaranteed by the Nebraska Constitution, by prioritizing education funding in the state budget, and that:

- Invests in the education of all Nebraska public school children;
- Establishes a state fund or funding mechanism that assists Nebraska public schools with the costs of maintaining and constructing facilities;
- Reduces our dependence on local property taxes by drawing revenue from multiple funding sources;
- Promotes the responsibility of locally elected school boards to make sound, transparent school budget decisions;
- Provides funding in a timely and predictable manner;

- Includes the principle of equalization;
- Funds the total excess allowable costs for special education and support services; and
- Recognizes that a long-term solution to education funding will require an ongoing, collaborative effort to execute a vision and strategic plan to grow and diversify our economy. (1997, amended 2009, 2018)

**S-56 — Use of a Uniform Valuation Calculation to Determine Local Resources and State Aid** - NASB supports a property tax assessment system that utilizes uniform accounting practices to determine the property valuation number from which local and state officials can calculate both the local resources available to fund schools from property taxes, and the resulting calculation of state aid payments to school districts. (2003)

**S-57 — Vouchers and Tax Credits** - NASB opposes any attempt to amend or circumvent the Nebraska and United States Constitutions to permit the use of public funds for the support, either direct or indirect, of schools not controlled by the public at large. NASB opposes any state or federal legislation allowing either tax credits or vouchers for children, or the parents or guardians of children attending nonpublic schools, or donors to scholarship funds for non-public education. (prior to 1995, amended 2020)

## GOVERNANCE & STRUCTURE

**S-58 — Accountability** - NASB believes that boards of education are accountable to students, parents, taxpayers, and employees for providing education programs, striving for education excellence, identifying education needs, adopting clearly defined written policies, measuring the success of instruction programs, and interpreting and disseminating information to the public through a public relations plan. (prior to 1995)

**S-59 — Allied Schools** - NASB opposes legislation that would mandate the formation of an allied system of school districts. (2014, amended 2016)

**S-60 — Amend Open Meetings Act for Evaluations** - NASB supports legislation to allow boards to go into executive session to discuss superintendent evaluations and/or for the narrowing down of superintendent candidates. (2017)

**S-61 — Authority of School Boards** - NASB supports the authority of boards of education to effectively govern and execute their statutory responsibilities. (1997, amended 2015)



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**S-62 — Charter Schools** - NASB believes that any charter schools, or the like, involved with any aspect of K-12 education be authorized by a public school district, be located within the boundaries of such public school district and be accountable to the authorizing district for their student achievement, finances and operations. (1998, amended 2015)

**S-63 — Duties of Schools** - NASB believes that the primary function of Nebraska schools should be the education of students and that the Legislature should be discouraged from placing duties on school districts which are not directly related to education. (prior to 1995)

**S-64 — E-meetings - Fully-Implemented or Partial Allowable Attendance** - NASB supports legislation which allows for school board members to participate in school board meetings via electronic means while still maintaining a quorum when necessitated for the health and safety of the board and public. Virtual meetings cannot impede the public's ability to participate. (2020)

**S-65 — Educational Service Unit Governance** - NASB supports governance of ESUs by elected boards and supports local determination of specific mechanisms of that governance. (2005)

**S-66 — Educational Service Unit Reorganization** - NASB supports the continuation of ESUs as an effective means of delivering educational services to school districts and their students. Any reforms would provide for a statutory hold harmless provision in the distribution formula for Core Service funding when an Equity Unit reorganizes with any other ESU, and must be mindful of ESUs' essential role of delivering direct services and being responsible to the local school districts they serve. (2004, amended 2005)

**S-67 — Interactive Remote Communication Technology (Televideo)** - NASB urges the legislature to provide updated rules and procedures so patrons are able to readily testify at legislative hearings via televideo (interactive remote communication technology) on a regular, ongoing basis to allow for a more equitable opportunity for the public to participate in the legislative process. (2017)

**S-68 — Local Control and the Possession of Firearms on School Grounds** - NASB supports the rights of local school boards to determine the appropriateness, guidelines, and ability for the possession of firearms by non-law enforcement personnel on school grounds or at school related activities. (2023)

**S-69 — Organization** - NASB opposes legislation that would mandate consolidation of districts or administration. NASB favors cooperation between school districts as well as ESUs to remove all barriers and penalties to promote orderly and voluntary reorganization into more efficient governing and administrative units to best serve the educational needs of Nebraska's children. (prior to 1995, amended 2008, 2015, 2017, amended 2019)

**S-70 — Personal Liability** - NASB opposes unnecessary laws which make individual members of a governing board of a political subdivision personally liable for damage judgements which result from lawsuits filed against the political subdivision. (prior to 1995, amended 2015)

**S-71 — Publication of Minutes, Receipts, & Expenditures** - NASB supports removing the requirement to publishing hearing notices and meeting minutes in public newspapers and supports the use of alternative means to communicate board activity. (2020)

**S-72 — Restriction of Resources and Board Responsibilities** - NASB supports legislation allowing local boards to function as elected officials and to continue to establish policies, including finance policies, as representatives of the constituents who elected them. (1997)

**S-73 — School Activities** - NASB supports direct involvement by boards of education in the governance and activities of the Nebraska School Activities Association. (prior to 1995)

**S-74 — School Calendars** - NASB opposes state mandated uniform opening and closing dates for local school districts. (prior to 1995)

**S-75 — Updating notice requirements** - NASB supports updating notice requirements for all school board meetings that recognizes available technology. (2022)

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

**S-76 — Activity Assignments** - NASB opposes legislation that would require a separate written employment contract for coaching or any other activity assignment that would require that a person be notified by a specified date of the termination of an assignment for the following year. (1999)

**S-77 — Compensation** - NASB will support a concept of compensation for teachers which is not based solely upon the experience and education attainment of teachers as found on standard salary schedules. (1995)

**S-78 — Criminal Background Checks** - NASB supports legislation which would aid public schools and ESUs in obtaining criminal background history information on prospective and current employees, and personnel provided through any contract service provider or anyone working on school property. (1999, amended 2006)

**S-79 — Employee Bonuses and Incentives** - NASB supports legislation creating a comprehensive plan to recruit, retain and reward highly qualified individuals for teaching professions throughout the state, including offering incentives to encourage employees to sign a contract of employment. (2001, amended 2015)



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**S-80 — Employee Support** - NASB recognizes the need to support district employees with their health and supports initiatives that provide for the physical and mental wellness of all school employees. (2020)

**S-81 — Medical Insurance** - NASB supports the concept of exploring alternatives to the costs of health insurance for the purpose of assuring the greatest allocation of our financial resources to education programs and services for children. (prior to 1995, amended 2003)

**S-82 — Recognition** - NASB urges local school boards to develop and implement programs which recognize individuals for significant accomplishments and community service, experience, and competency. (prior to 1995, amended 2014)

**S-83 — Retirement** - NASB supports legislation to assure a retirement system that is sound, adequate, and sustainable for school districts and ESUs. (prior to 1995, amended 2012)

**S-84 — Scope of Bargaining** - NASB believes negotiations with employees should be limited to matters of employee salaries and fringe benefits, and opposes any attempt to broaden the scope of negotiations to include matters of policy and management rights. (prior to 1995)

**S-85 — Staff Development and Evaluation** - NASB supports in-service training, enrichment programs, and continuing education for professional staff. Regular evaluations of performance, competency in the subject areas, and demonstrated ability to instruct or manage, in part as shown through student performance, should be conducted to promote professional growth. (1995)

## STATE POLICY

**S-86 — Advisory Groups** - NASB requests that there be board of education representatives on all government commissions, councils, and committees which could have an impact on local school district policy or finance. (1995)

**S-87 — Choice and Affiliation** - NASB supports the concepts of choice and affiliation among public schools as a means to maximize education opportunity. NASB believes any such program should result in the least amount of disruption and uncertainty for the affected school districts. (1995)

**S-88 — Constitutional Rights & Responsibilities** - NASB, and school board members, fully supports the U.S. Constitution and the rights and responsibilities embodied within it. NASB therefore supports education and behavior that teaches and models expression of these rights and responsibilities. (2009, amended 2015)

**S-89 — Corporate Sponsorships in Schools** - NASB opposes restrictions on school districts' ability to exercise their best judgment in entering into corporate sponsorship agreements. (2004)

**S-90 — Educational Service Units** - NASB supports Educational Service Units as an effective and efficient means to provide educational services to local school districts. ESUs should be responsible to the local school boards they serve. (1997)

**S-91 — Guiding the P-16 Effort: 21st Century Skills** - NASB urges state and local policymakers to forge a new working relationship in redesigning Nebraska's public education system for the 21st century, with a focus on improving student achievement and holding each level of the system accountable, from preschool through post-secondary education or training, in a manner that:

- Promotes multi-level communication and interaction between all P-16 partners to enhance student academic success;
- Offers all students a rigorous developmentally-appropriate curriculum designed to opportunities and choice, regardless of the post-secondary path they choose;
- Engages the assets of the full community;
- Utilizes data and technology to individualize education for students and to incorporate new learning into the design;
- Closes the achievement gap by focusing on quality teaching and learning opportunities;
- Implements standards-based education fully in a seamless curriculum, so one level of the system builds on the next and the end result is known and understood from the beginning;
- Provides sufficient resources that are adequate and sustainable at every level of the system to meet the challenge, resisting unfunded or underfunded mandates; and
- Preserves the ability of local school boards and their communities to address local needs and challenges in a flexible manner using a variety of options. (2009, amended 2016)

**S-92 — Independent School Districts** - NASB supports the independence of established PK-12 school districts and also supports the cooperation and equalization of opportunity among school districts within learning communities. NASB believes that any legislation introduced impacting school districts or learning communities should seek to give districts and learning communities equalized resources. Any legislation should also allow these independent districts to maintain their right to governance, district curriculum, and the allocation of resources. (2006, amended 2013)



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**S-93 — Local Control for Public PK-12 Schools** - NASB believes public PK-12 systems should be organized to serve communities throughout Nebraska without arbitrary size limits or a single model, which would not fit our state’s varied communities. NASB opposes legislating arbitrary size limits and will work to remedy such limits currently in statute. (2006, amended 2013)

**S-94 — Local District Advocacy** - NASB supports the right and obligation of local school districts to advocate for legislative action that impacts their individual interests. (1996)

**S-95 — NDE Authority** - NASB opposes attempts by the legislature to preempt the statutory authority of the Nebraska State Board of Education to be the policy-forming, planning and evaluative body for Nebraska schools. (2017)

**S-96 — Nonpublic Schools Standards** - NASB believes that nonpublic schools should have the same state standards as the public schools, including school approval, accreditation, teacher certification and endorsement, and safety standards. (prior to 1995)

**S-97 — Policy Leadership & Vision on the Future of Nebraska’s PK-12 Schools** - NASB supports efforts to bring policy makers of the executive and legislative branches, educators, school boards, learning community coordinating councils, and ESU boards, and citizens together to determine the best course for the future delivery of PK-12 education to the students of the state. NASB boards emphasize increasing student achievement through governance structures that are clear, efficient, and controlled by the local district. (2003, amended 2008, 2010, 2013)

**S-98 — Voting Higher Than a Simple Majority** - The NASB firmly opposes any legislation that mandates a voting threshold higher than a simple majority for passing any issue presented to voters by a school district or ESU. We believe that requiring anything more than a majority vote undermines the democratic process and places undue barriers on the ability of school districts or ESUs to address critical needs and make decisions that reflect the will of the community. (2024)

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- S-2 Board Recognition
- S-3 Business and Education Partnerships
- S-4 Collaborative Services to Youth
- S-5 Leadership Team
- S-6 Parent Involvement
- S-7 Policy
- S-8 Use of Accountability Data for School Improvement
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- S-36 ESU Core Services Funding
- S-37 Expand use of QCPUF
- S-38 Financing Capital Improvements
- S-39 Fiscal Policy
- S-40 For-Profit Entities Operating in Tax-Exempt Zones
- S-41 Funding of Mandated Programs
- S-42 Funding: Infrastructure, Site Purchases & Operating
- S-43 General Fund Reserve Limit Exception
- S-44 Gifts, Donations, or Foundation \$\$\$ as Receivables
- S-45 K-12 School Trust Land and Permanent Fund
- S-46 Legislation Implementation
- S-47 Legislative Review of Statutory Deadlines
- S-48 Lower Local Effort Rate
- S-49 Property Tax Reform/Relief
- S-50 Reset the Revenue Lid
- S-51 Revenue Reductions from Valuation Losses
- S-52 Districts Dealing with Unanticipated Revenues
- S-53 Funding Must Be Predictable and Sustainable
- S-54 Special Building Fund Tax Levy Exclusion
- S-55 State Funding System
- S-56 Uniform Valuation Calculation for State Aid
- S-57 Vouchers and Tax Credits
- S-58 Accountability
- S-59 Allied Schools
- S-60 Amend Open Meetings Act for Evaluations
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- S-83 Retirement
- S-84 Scope of Bargaining
- S-85 Staff Development and Evaluation
- S-86 Advisory Groups
- S-87 Choice and Affiliation
- S-88 Constitutional Rights & Responsibilities
- S-89 Corporate Sponsorships in Schools
- S-90 Educational Service Units
- S-91 Guiding the P-16 Effort: 21st Century Skills
- S-92 Independent School Districts
- S-93 Local Control for Public PK-12 Schools
- S-94 Local District Advocacy
- S-95 NDE Authority
- S-96 Nonpublic Schools Standards
- S-97 Policy Leadership & Vision on the Future of PK-12
- S-98 Voting Higher Than a Simple Majority

# 2025 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

## Committee on Committees Report Standing Committees

Updated 1/10/2025

### **Agriculture (8)**

***Rm. 2102 – Tuesday***

DeKay (C), (VC), Hansen, Holdcroft, Ibach, Kauth, McKeon, Raybould, Storm

### **Appropriations (9)**

***Rm. 1003 – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Clements (C), (VC), Armendariz, Cavanaugh, M., Dorn, Dover, Lippincott, Prokop, Spivey, Strommen

### **Banking, Commerce and Insurance (8)**

***Rm. 1507 – Monday & Tuesday***

Jacobson (C), (VC), Bostar, Dungan, Hallstrom, Hardin, Riepe, von Gillern, Wordekemper

### **Business and Labor (7)**

***Rm. 2102 – Monday***

Kauth (C), (VC), Hansen, Ibach, McKeon, McKinney, Raybould, Sorrentino

### **Education (8)**

***Rm. 1525 – Monday & Tuesday***

Murman (C), (VC), Conrad, Hughes, Hunt, Juarez, Lonowski, Meyer, Sanders

### **General Affairs (8)**

***Rm. 1023 – Monday***

Holdcroft (C), (VC), Andersen, Cavanaugh, J., Clouse, DeKay, Quick, Rountree, Storm

### **Government, Military and Veterans Affairs (8)**

***Rm. 1507 – Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Sanders (C), (VC), Andersen, Cavanaugh, J., Guereca, Hunt, Lonowski, McKeon, Wordekemper

### **Health and Human Services (7)**

***Rm. 1510 – Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Hardin (C), (VC), Ballard, Fredrickson, Hansen, Meyer, Quick, Riepe

### **Judiciary (8)**

***Rm. 1525 – Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Bosn (C), (VC), DeBoer, Hallstrom, Holdcroft, McKinney, Rountree, Storer, Storm

### **Natural Resources (8)**

***Rm. 1023 – Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Brandt (C), (VC), Clouse, Conrad, DeKay, Hughes, Juarez, Moser, Raybould

### **Nebraska Retirement Systems (6)**

***Rm 1525 – At call of Chair***

Ballard (C), (VC), Clements, Conrad, Hardin, Jaurez, Sorrentino

### **Revenue (8)**

***Rm. 1524 – Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

von Gillern (C), (VC), Bostar, Dungan, Ibach, Jacobson, Kauth, Murman, Sorrentino

### **Transportation and Telecommunications (8)**

***Rm. 1510 – Monday & Tuesday***

Moser (C), (VC), Ballard, Bosn, Brandt, DeBoer, Fredrickson, Guereca, Storer

### **Urban Affairs (7)**

***Rm. 1023 – Tuesday***

McKinney (C), (VC), Andersen, Cavanaugh, J., Clouse, Quick, Rountree, Sorrentino

## Select Committees

### **Committee on Committees (13)**

Armendariz (C)

#### District 1:

Bosn

Bostar

Moser

Sanders

#### District 2:

Cavanaugh, J.

Fredrickson

Hunt

Spivey

#### District 3:

Brandt

Ibach

Jacobson

Murman

### **Enrollment and Review (1)**

Guereca (C)

### **Reference (9)**

Hansen (C), Ibach (VC), Arch, Ballard, Bostar, Dorn, Fredrickson, Jacobson, McKinney, Clements (nonvoting ex officio)

### **Rules (6)**

Lippincott (C), (VC), Bostar, DeBoer, Hansen, Ibach, Arch (ex officio)

## Special Committees

### **Building Maintenance (6)**

(C), (VC), Clements

### **Education Commission of the States (3)**

### **Executive Board of the Legislative Council (9)**

Hansen (C), Ibach (VC), Arch, Ballard, Bostar, Dorn, Fredrickson, Jacobson, McKinney, Clements (nonvoting ex officio)

### **Justice Reinvestment Oversight (5)**

(C),

### **Legislative Performance Audit (7)**

(C), (VC), Arch, Clements, Hansen

### **Midwestern Higher Education Compact (2)**

### **Planning Committee (9)**

(C), (VC), Arch, Clements, Hansen

### **State-Tribal Relations Committee (7)**

(C), (VC),

### **Statewide Tourism and Recreation Water Access and Resource Sustainability (STAR WARS) (11)**

Arch (C),

## Ralston Enrollment Report as of 07/28/2025

BLUMFIELD ELEMENTARY	Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
PS	2.00	41	1	1	43	4
KG	2.00	24	0	0	24	20
01	2.00	38	3	0	41	2
02	2.00	41	5	0	46	2
03	2.00	33	7	0	40	3
04	2.00	30	9	0	39	3
05	2.00	38	10	0	48	3
06	2.00	33	8	1	42	1
<b>Building Total:</b>		<b>278</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>38</b>

KAREN WESTERN ELEMENTARY	Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
PS	2.00	13	0	2	15	2
KG	2.00	13	0	2	15	10
01	2.00	25	2	0	27	1
02	2.00	21	7	0	28	3
03	1.00	27	10	0	37	1
04	2.00	19	7	0	26	0
05	1.00	26	8	0	34	0
06	1.00	16	5	0	21	1
<b>Building Total:</b>		<b>160</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>18</b>

MEADOWS ELEMENTARY	Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
PS	2.00	28	0	2	30	5
KG	2.00	28	0	4	32	19
01	2.00	29	10	0	39	1
02	2.00	40	8	0	48	0
03	2.00	32	16	1	49	0
04	2.00	33	13	0	46	0
05	2.00	31	7	0	38	0
06	2.00	25	12	1	38	0
<b>Building Total:</b>		<b>246</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>25</b>

MOCKINGBIRD ELEMENTARY	Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
PS	1.00	20	1	5	26	2
KG	1.00	19	0	10	29	37
01	3.00	42	8	0	50	3
02	3.00	61	8	0	69	4
03	3.00	50	9	1	60	5
04	3.00	62	13	0	75	1
05	2.00	47	10	0	57	2
06	3.00	31	8	0	39	2
<b>Building Total:</b>		<b>332</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>56</b>

## Ralston Enrollment Report as of 07/28/2025

SEYMOUR ELEMENTARY		Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
	PS	0	4	0	1	5	7
	KG	2.00	22	7	4	33	0
	01	2.00	27	6	1	34	1
	02	2.00	34	2	1	37	0
	03	2.00	32	10	1	43	0
	04	2.00	31	10	1	42	0
	05	2.00	36	7	2	45	1
	06	2.00	32	10	2	44	1
	<b>Building Total:</b>		<b>218</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>10</b>

WILDEWOOD ELEMENTARY		Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
	PS	2.00	26	0	0	26	6
	KG	2.00	15	0	0	15	19
	01	2.00	25	9	0	34	4
	02	2.00	23	12	0	35	5
	03	2.00	31	13	0	44	3
	04	2.00	28	12	0	40	3
	05	2.00	23	12	0	35	3
	06	2.00	23	12	1	36	5
	<b>Building Total:</b>		<b>194</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>48</b>

RALSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL		Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
	07		203	73	0	276	3
	08		174	61	2	237	2
	<b>Building Total:</b>		<b>377</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>5</b>

RALSTON HIGH SCHOOL		Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
	09		196	76	0	272	3
	10		179	90	0	269	3
	11		171	87	0	258	2

## Ralston Enrollment Report as of 07/28/2025

RALSTON HIGH SCHOOL	Nbr Sec	Current Enrollment	Option-In Enrollment	External Students	Total Students	Nbr Apps Pending
12		173	93	0	266	2
<b>Building Total:</b>		<b>719</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>10</b>
<hr/>						
<b>District Total:</b>		<b>2524</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3377</b>	<b>210</b>
KG:		121	7	20	148	105
01:		186	38	1	225	12
02:		220	42	1	263	14
03:		205	65	3	273	12
04:		203	64	1	268	7
05:		201	54	2	257	9
06:		160	55	5	220	10
07:		203	73	0	276	3
08:		174	61	2	237	2
09:		196	76	0	272	3
10:		179	90	0	269	3
11:		171	87	0	258	2
12:		173	93	0	266	2
<b>Total PS:</b>		<b>132</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>26</b>

# Meadows Elementary

July 28, 2025



## **School Improvement Goals:**

Reading scores will meet/exceed state averages  
Increased average daily attendance



# Reading Goal:

\*Our goal is to annually improve our reading proficiency levels in order to exceed state averages in reading as measured by NSCAS in May 2025.

# Data Points BOY:

Early reading:

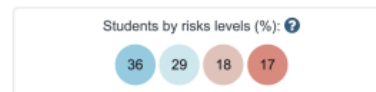


Fall

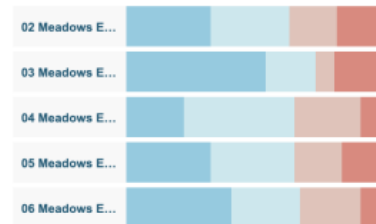


Fall NSCAS

α-Reading:



Fall



ELA- Fall NSCAS	Developing	On Track	Advanced
3rd	55%	36%	10%
4th	67%	28%	6%
5th	53%	36%	11%
6th	54%	34%	11%

## Action Steps:

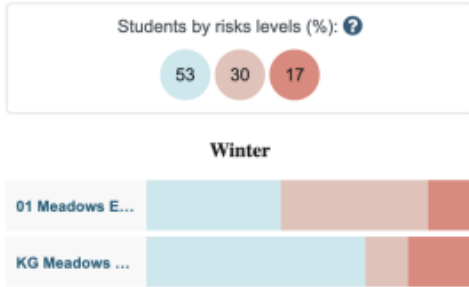
- **Reading-**

- Schedule is designed with Tier I and co-teaching as a focus.
- WIN time for intervention and extension support
- CORE phonics survey given to K-2 to indicate greatest area of need for intervention. Correlates with our UFLI intervention.
- IXL skill diagnostic used as additional formative assessment and a competitive tool with 'Leader Boards'- organized by Lindsay Kelly and Gina Yowell
- PLCs organized for four week rotation focusing on EL/Sped, SAT, SEL/behavior, and IRIP/reading supports
- Science of reading book studies led by Suzanne Graves (K-2) and Lindsay Sadlemyer (3-6).
- PBIS team attended professional development with ESU 3 and worked with Dr. B to redefine our focus.

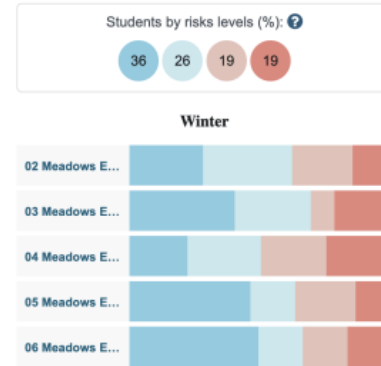


# Data Points at Semester:

## Early Reading:



## a-Reading:



## Winter NSCAS

ELA- Winter NSCAS	Developing	On Track	Advanced
3rd	44%	44%	11%
4th	47%	42%	11%
5th	54%	24%	22%
6th	50%	44%	6%



# Data Points at Semester:

- **Kindergarten-** 30 students made **aggressive growth-** Early Reading

This means a student demonstrating aggressive growth is progressing at a rate faster than at least **75%** of their peers in the national norm group for that assessment and grade level. It's an indication of accelerated learning and significant improvement over a specific time period.

- **Second grade-** 25 students made **typical to aggressive growth-** aReading
- **Fifth grade-** 46% of students considered **advanced-** aReading
  
- **Fourth grade-** 67% developing in fall to 47% in winter- NSCAS
- **Fifth grade-** 11% **advanced** in fall to 22% in winter- NSCAS



## Updated Action Steps:

- Reorganized our schedule for co-teachers to support skills instruction
- Backwards planning with help from Amber Scott
- Levels of Engagement, self-reflection visuals and conversations which help us in encouraging kids to engage and drive their learning
- Goal setting for NSCAS and FastBridge:
  - Students in 3-6 had a staff member as a 'NSCAS buddy'.
  - Students in K-2 had support from 3-6 students during FastBridge testing
- Counselor, Karly Johnson, presented lessons on test preparation
- 'Top Gun' theme for motivation
- Communication to families regarding goals and preparing their student for testing
- NeSA/NSCAS achievement boards in our hallway as motivation to strive for goals



# How engaged am I?

Active ←----- Passive -----> Active

## DISRUPTING

Distracting others  
Disrupting the teaching and learning



## AVOIDING

Looking for ways to avoid work  
Off-task behavior



## WITHDRAWING

Being distracted  
Separating from group work



## PARTICIPATING

Doing work  
Paying attention  
Responding to questions



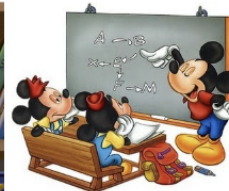
## INVESTING

Asking questions  
Sharing ideas  
Feels like what you are learning is important



## DRIVING

Setting goals  
Seeking feedback  
Collaborating with others



Disengagement

Engagement



## Data Points Today:

\*\*NSCAS scores are unofficial.

Compiled by our SIT team at our CIP data retreat-

Spring 2025 Fastbridge aReading Data (FastBridge Spring Data)

School Percentage - 74.6% (150/201)

2nd - 74.4% (35/47, 3 with no scores)

3rd - 74.4% (35/47)

4th - 77.7% (28/36)

5th - 77.1% (27/35)

6th - 69.4% (25/36)

**Boys** - 68.3% (69/101)

Girls - 81% (81/100)



ELA- Spring NSCAS	Developing	On Track	Advanced
3rd	36%	34%	30%
4th	39%	45%	16%
5th	28%	53%	19%
6th	22%	54%	29%





Hispanic ELA	3rd	4th	5th	6th
<b>*2024-2025</b>	2472/ 2420	2485/ 2458	2525/ 2501	2544/ 2489
<b>2023-2024</b>	2465/ 2444	2513/ 2473	2502/ 2446	2520/ 2476
<b>2022-2023</b>	2469/ 2455	2507/ 2480	2480/ 2464	2524/ 2486
<b>2021-2022</b>	2463/ 2454	2521/ 2512	2523/ 2472	2522/ 2482

Sped ELA	3rd	4th	5th	6th
<b>*2024-2025</b>	2472/ 2421	2485/ 2454	2525/ 2489	2544/ 2535
<b>2023-2024</b>	2465/ 2482	2513/ 2475	2505/ 2496	2520/ 2489
<b>2022-2023</b>	2469/ 2429	2507/ 2470	2480/ 2393	2524/ 2444
<b>2021-2022</b>	2463/ 2423	2521/ 2453	2523/ 2399	2522/ 2475

F/R ELA	3rd	4th	5th	6th
<b>*2024-2025</b>	2472/ 2455	2485/ 2465	2525/ 2481	2544/ 2518
<b>2023-2024</b>	2465/ 2457	2513/ 2489	2505/ 2477	2520/ 2507
<b>2022-2023</b>	2469/ 2453	2507/ 2489	2480/ 2470	2524/ 2493
<b>2021-2022</b>	2463/ 2425	2521/ 2490	2523/ 2484	2522/ 2489

## Our focus moving forward:

**Act: Generate action steps** to address your concerns.

- 1) Restructure PLCs, use IDEAL guiding questions
- 2) Focus on Levels of Engagement with a self-directed student as our goal.
- 3) Positive classroom environment, create a sense of belonging
- 4) IXL Diagnostic completed and analyzed consistently.
- 5) Collaborative planning to incorporate UDL and SIOP strategies.
- 6) Professional development on Archer strategies, PLCs, engagement, inclusive practices.
- 7) Teacher collective efficacy will be at our forefront and established through planned opportunities to collaborate and build trust.





Anita Archer's "Archerisms"

# Explicit Instruction

Teach the *stuff* and cut the fluff.

How well I teach = How well they learn

I do it. We do it. You do it.

Learning is not a spectator sport.

Everyone does Everything

Look carefully. Listen carefully.

Walk around. Look around. Talk around.

*FEEDBACK FEEDS FORWARD*

Perfected practice over time makes  
perfect and permanent.

Predictability predicts ability

If you expect it, pre-correct it.

Avoid the void, for they will fill it.

Teach with passion.  
Manage with compassion.

# NSCAS Trend Data:

\*denotes unofficial

## NSCAS Proficiency Percentages

	ELA	Math	Science
<b>2024-2025</b>	67.00%*	80.25%*	88.89%*
<b>2023-2024</b>	64.63%	76.19%	77.14%
<b>2022-2023</b>	57.43%	70.27%	79.49%
<b>2021-2022</b>	55.35%	53.46%	84.44%



# Attendance

## Goal:

- **95%** or higher daily attendance.  
94.96%
- Chronic absenteeism below **10%**  
11%



# Data Points BOY:

## Average Daily Attendance:

- **2021-22:** 92.71%
- **2022-23:** 94.05%
- **2023-24:** 95.25%

## Chronic Absenteeism:

**2021-22:** 71 students

**2022-23:** 56 students

**2023-24:** 31 students

## Students missing 10 days or more:

- **2022-23:** 97
- **2023-24:** 82



# Action Steps:

- Themed attendance competitions- featured on Facebook and in our Mustang Minute
- Random incentives for being at school on time. GO Team greets kids outside of their classrooms with a treat/incentive.
- Sharing of weekly data on Facebook and in our Mustang Minute newsletter each Sunday.
- Attendance boards- classroom teachers record their daily attendance percentage on their boards outside of their classrooms. Random morning incentives for those classes at 100% attendance (all here and on time).
- Parent comes in the building and completes a tardy slip if their child is late for school.
- Number one priority is having a welcoming climate for all.



# Data Points at Semester

## Average Daily Attendance:

- 2021-22: 92.78%
- 2022-23: 94.39%
- 2023-24: 95.68%
- 2024-25: 94.67%

## Updated action steps:

- Visuals with data shared with families of chronic students at Student Led Conferences.
- Added more rewards and incentives- raffle baskets (thanks KW), Mystery bags, grade level pairs competing, incentives for students who missed 3 days or less.



# Data Points Today:

## Average Daily Attendance:

- **2021-22:** 92.84%    **2022-23:** 94.16%    **2023-24:** 95.28%  
**2024-25:** 94.96%    **-0.32**
- Chronic:
- **2021-22:** 71 students                      **2022-23:** 56 students  
**2023-24:** 31 students                      **2024-25:** 35 students    **+4**

## Attendance data- 10 or more absences (2024-25 school year)- 75 total

Preschool- 5: (10, 10.8, 11, 13, 18.1)

Kindergarten- 8: (10.6, 11, 13.1, 13.3, 16.5, 16.6, 18) - 2 chronic

First- 7: (10.1, 10.5, 11.0, 11.1, 15.3, 16.4, 37)- 2 chronic

Second- 20: (10, 10, 10, 10.5, 10.8, 11.4, 12., 12, 12.4, 12.4, 12.5, 14.6, 14.8, 17.5, 19, 21.8, 22.5, 23, 27.5, 41)- 9 chronic

Third- 11: (10, 11.3, 13.1, 18, 19, 19, 19, 19.4, 23.8, 30.5, 51)- 7 chronic

Fourth- 8: (11, 11, 11, 15.5, 18, 19, 21, 23)- 4 chronic

Fifth- 8: (11, 11, 11.1, 12.3, 13.8, 26, 29.5, 35)- 3 chronic

Sixth- 10: (10, 11, 11.3, 14.4, 16, 17.5, 20, 22.5, 22.5, 26) - 6 chronic

**Hispanic- 34**

**EL- 12**

**Special Education- 12**

**Option- 15**

**Preschool (out of neighborhood)- 2**

**Intraschool transfer-2**



# Updated Action Steps:

## For 25-26 school year:

- Morning duty staff greet kids and families at arrival. Staff greeting at classroom door. First Boys Town skill we'll be introducing is 'greeting others'.
- We questioned if our communication is enough regarding families who do not speak English.
- Chronic tardies- offer student a classroom job that happens before school starts.
- More feedback from kids regarding what incentives are most motivating.
- We will implement a check in/check out **student mentors** for our kids who are above the 10% chronic attendance threshold or struggle with tardies.
- We'll continue with parents coming in the building to complete tardy slips. **We can collect data from these.**
- Mondays will be our attendance days for staff communication. **Will keep data regarding what needs families communicate to us.**
- Students will track their own daily attendance on calendars- will be shared at Student Led conferences and other attendance meetings.
- Visual daily attendance tracking using our attendance boards in the office.
- SAEBRS data review to identify specific student needs and problem solve as a team how to serve each student.
- Focus on belonging/inclusion- morning meetings, UDL and SIOP, create values and commitments as a staff and hold each other responsible.
- Positive magnets for classrooms that will be rewarded randomly for attendance.
- **Fidelity to the attendance process.**



# What we have learned moving forward into next year....

- **Belonging and connectedness-** insuring all feel a connection to our school community.



# Questions?

[lisa\\_schroeder@ralstonschools.org](mailto:lisa_schroeder@ralstonschools.org)





# Multicultural Education Report

## July 28, 2025

### Reflections & Future Steps/Considerations

#### Learning Environment

Strengths	Areas of Growth Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in staff who represent our district's cultural backgrounds</li> <li>• Classroom posters and visual aids are posted in multiple languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the opportunities to celebrate different cultures</li> <li>• Increase volunteers who represent our district's cultural backgrounds</li> <li>• Dr. Chism's work with Blumfield through the CSI-ATSI Grant</li> </ul>

#### Parent/Caregiver & Community Involvement

Strengths	Areas of Growth Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to written communication in Spanish (and at times other languages when possible)</li> <li>• Partnerships with Learning Community, One World Health, MCC</li> <li>• Teachers and administrators use Language Line</li> <li>• Title I family events across the district</li> <li>• Increased partnerships with families re: attendance</li> <li>• Distribution of Spanish Reading Kits for newcomer families</li> <li>• Blumfield Culture Fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase parent/caregiver involvement in day-to-day activities of the school</li> <li>• Connect more with community partners and strengthen our existing partnerships</li> <li>• Re-establish Spanish language courses for staff.</li> </ul>

#### Instruction

Strengths	Areas of Growth Focus
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compassionate staff</li> <li>• Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (<a href="#">SIOP</a>) PD for all new K-12 staff, a high quality instructional model addressing the academic needs of EL and all students</li> <li>• Implement equitable opportunities for all buildings to have <a href="#">common plan time</a> in order to instill a regular PLC rotation for all decision-makers to be at the table</li> <li>• Blumfield’s work with SPED Strategies to ensure rigorous instruction for all.</li> <li>• Strategic Plan that embraces diversity and inclusion regardless of background.</li> <li>• Implementation of Newcomers program, 5-8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase understanding and capacity of <a href="#">inclusion</a></li> <li>• Continue to work on the <a href="#">mindset</a> of high expectations for all students</li> <li>• Continue efforts to increase focus on rigor in core instruction</li> <li>• Continue efforts with MTSS and solidifying early warning systems</li> <li>• Increase co-teaching opportunities by providing common time to co-plan</li> <li>• Continue PD on Journey to Inclusion/co-teaching through Inclusive Practices Academy at ESU #3</li> <li>• Make a district-wide impact through the Learning Community Grant</li> </ul>
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**Curriculum**

Strengths	Areas of Growth Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Followed best practices in the <a href="#">curriculum adoption process</a></li> <li>• New curriculum is <a href="#">high quality</a>, which includes <a href="#">diversity representation</a> throughout</li> <li>• EL, Special Education, Reading Specialists, and HAL teachers serving on Toolboxes</li> <li>• New K-12 high-quality math curriculum</li> <li>• New K-12 EL Curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin efforts on development of Instructional Framework</li> <li>• Build systems to ensure consistency in <a href="#">pacing</a> and implementation across all elementary buildings (equitable opportunities for all RPS elementary students)</li> </ul>

**Human Relations**

• Strengths	• Areas of Growth Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of FastBridge K-10 <a href="#">SAEBRS</a> (Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepen understanding of Universal Design for Learning (<a href="#">UDL</a>), a framework to improve and optimize</li> </ul>

- Increasing [leadership capacity](#) among principals and teachers – increased Toolbox membership, adjusted Admin Meetings, and District Steering Committee to become a collaborative professional learning
- Implementation of Wellness Curriculum via elem counselors, included in specials cycle (diverse student groups represented throughout curriculum)
- Three schools implementing BIST to ensure students are taught life skills rather than punished
- Leadership Academy Spring 2025 and beyond

teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn

## 6020 Multicultural Education

In every curriculum area and at all grades, the school district will provide programs which foster and develop an appreciation and understanding of the racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage of all students. These programs will allow students to explore the history and contributions made by various ethnic groups and will emphasize human relations, sensitivity toward all races, and the rich diversity of the population of the United States. The programs shall be implemented within the guidelines of the State Department of Education and in accordance with any other applicable laws and/or regulations.

**Philosophy, Mission, and Program Goals.** The school district respects and appreciates cultural diversity and seeks to promote the understanding of unique cultural and ethnic heritage. The district will promote the development of a culturally responsible and responsive curriculum. The school district's program will explore the attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary to function in various cultures.

**District Guides, Frameworks, or Standards.** Appropriate district staff and/or committee(s) will review the school district curriculum guides, frameworks, or standards to determine that they appropriately incorporate multicultural education.

**Selecting Appropriate Instructional Materials.** Appropriate school district staff and/or committee(s) will review instructional materials and make a recommendation regarding those that are appropriate for the school district's multicultural education program.

**Providing Staff Development.** Appropriate school district staff and/or committee(s) will review the staff development provided for administrators, teachers, and support staff to determine that it includes appropriate multicultural education that is consistent with school district and program goals.

**Periodic Assessment.** Appropriate school district staff and/or committee(s) will periodically review the school district's multicultural education program by reviewing the criteria in this policy to assess whether the school district is adequately and appropriately incorporating multicultural education in all curriculum areas in all grades.

**Annual Status Report.** The superintendent will provide the board with a report on the status of the school district's multicultural education program annually.

Adopted on: July 13, 2020

Revised on:

Reviewed on: July 22, 2024



# Culture Fair





**Notes:**



# Culture Fair





## Notes:

- Pair Culture Fair with an established event - knew they would have a good turnout for Blumfield Bash
- Family surveys about involvement, visited with individual students
- Large response wanting to be involved
- Families brought in cultural items to share as well as candies and treats from their home countries
- The Fashion Show highlight of the night
- 6th Grade created country portfolios highlighting facts and information for each county
- Passport Program - We had a lot of families come through and get stamps for each country that they stopped at, and after families participated in the information presentations they were able to receive some Blumfield swag.

**2024 - 2025**  
**RPS Parent Communications Survey**  
**Summary**

# Demographic Information

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**Total Responses = 372**

## **My family lives:**

- RPS Boundaries = 260 (70%)
- Option Enrollment = 112 (30%)

## **My Student Attends:**

- Blumfield = 47
- Karen Western = 22
- Meadows = 50
- Mockingbird = 65
- Seymour = 39
- Wildewood = 25
  
- RMS = 45
- RHS = 79

**Total = 372**

## **Student Support Services:**

English Learner: 60

Special Education: 33

504 Plan: 22

Not Applicable: 263

*They could check all that apply.*

# School Communication

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## Top Five: Main Source of Information

1. School Email Newsletter
2. Teacher Emails
3. School Phone Call
4. R-Kids
5. Daily Announcements

**Question #1** - How much information about your student's school do you receive from each of the following?

**Categories:**

Main Source of Information

A Good Amount of Information

Some Information

Little to No Information

N/A - Does not apply to our student/family

## Right Amount of Information - Top 3

- Information on your student's attendance at school.
- Daily expectations of your student at school.
- Who your student's teacher is (their background, education, etc...)

## Would Like More Information - Top 5

### *Revolves Around Academic Performance*

- Information about what your student is learning in math so you can support them at home.
- Information about what your student is learning in reading so you can support them at home.
- Information about what your student is learning in their other subjects so you can support them at home.
- Ways you can support your student academically.
- Acknowledgement of your student's achievements.

**Question #2** - Think about the information you receive or that is available to you on the following topics. Please indicate your ratings on the amount of information.

### **Categories:**

*Too Much Information*

***Right Amount of Information***

***Would Like More Information***

*I Don't Want Information on this Topic)*

*As issues arise, I know I can talk with my student's teacher.*

**Strongly Agree = 209      Agree = 143**

*As issues arise, I know I can talk to my student's school principal.*

**Strongly Agree = 206      Agree = 141**

*My questions and opinions are valued.*

**Strongly Agree = 171      Agree = 167**

**Question #3** - Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

**Categories:**

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

## Questions:

- Student discipline is maintained effectively at my child's school.
- Parents/guardians are treated with respect at my student's school.
- Students are treated with respect at my student's school.
- Student accomplishments are recognized and promoted at my student's school.
- I believe my student is learning at his or her maximum potential.
- My student is proud of their school.
- My student enjoys going to school.
- My student feels safe and free from bullying at their school.
- I believe my student is receiving a quality education.

**Question #4** - Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

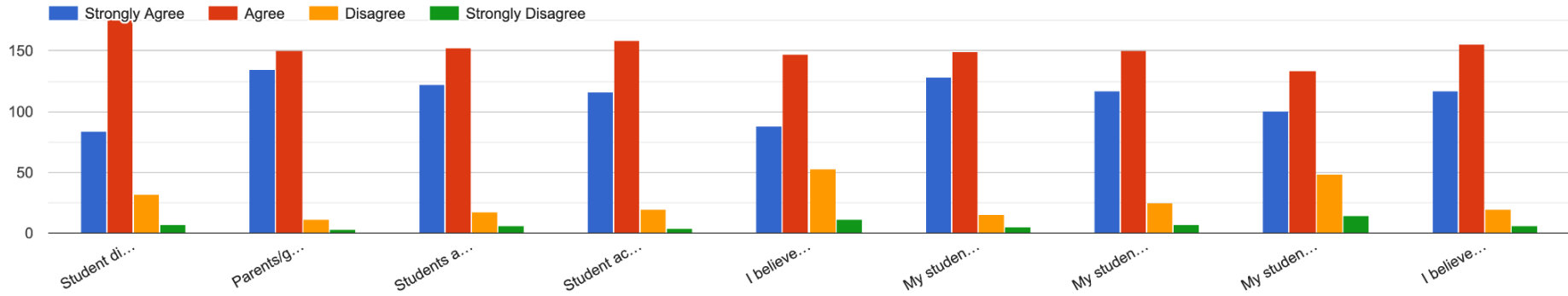
### Categories:

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree



- As you can see from the chart, the majority of responses from parents fell in the Strongly Agree or Agree categories.
- Highest responses in the Disagree category include:
  - I believe my student is learning at his or her maximum potential.
  - My student feels safe and free from bullying at their school.

## Question #4 Continued

**Question #4 (B)** - Do you feel that your student and your family are welcomed and valued by our school community?

**Yes = 305 (82%)**

No = 6 (1%)

**Sometimes = 58 (16%)**

Not Sure = 3 (1%)

**Question #5** - Do you feel that the school respects and embraces the cultural diversity of the students and families?

**Yes = 306 (82%)**

No = 9 (3%)

Sometimes = 31 (8%)

Not Sure = 26 (7%)

## **Question #6** - What could the school do to make your family feel more included in the school community?

### **Doing Well:**

- Lots of comments featuring the following:
  - Nothing at the moment
  - Everything is fine
  - Satisfied
  - We feel included

### **Can Improve On:**

- Timely Communication
- More Parent/Teacher communication
- More Opportunities for Parent Involvement
- Celebrate Diversity
- More information on what my child is learning & how we can help at home
- More celebration/recognition of student learning & achievement

**Question #7** - Are there any cultural events or activities you would like to see the school host to our district's diversity?

- **Most parents responded no, N/A, not at this time.**
- **Other parents and suggestions like:**
  - **More Family Nights/Parent Involvement Activities/Carnival Events**
  - **6th Grade Graduations**
  - **School Cultural Celebrations**
  - **Parent Educational Nights - Information on bullying, online safety, etc.**

# Language Questions

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Very Comfortable = **211**

Comfortable = **156**

Not Comfortable at All = **5**

**Question #8** - How comfortable are you with your current level of communication with your student's school

*(in terms of your native language so you can fully understand the information being provided)?*

**Categories:**

Very Comfortable

Comfortable

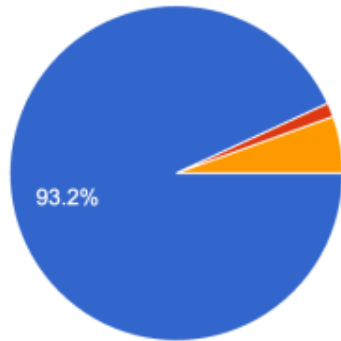
Not Comfortable at All

**Yes = 155**

No = 3

Not Sure = 34

Not Applicable = 180



- Si
- No
- No estoy seguro
- No es aplicable

**Question #9** - Do you feel that the school provides adequate translation or interpretation services?

**Categories:**

Yes (blue)

No

Not Sure (orange)

Not Applicable

**Yes = 354**

No = 1

Sometimes = 17

**Question #10** - Are you able to access all necessary school materials (newsletters, announcements, etc.) in your preferred language?

**Categories:**

Yes

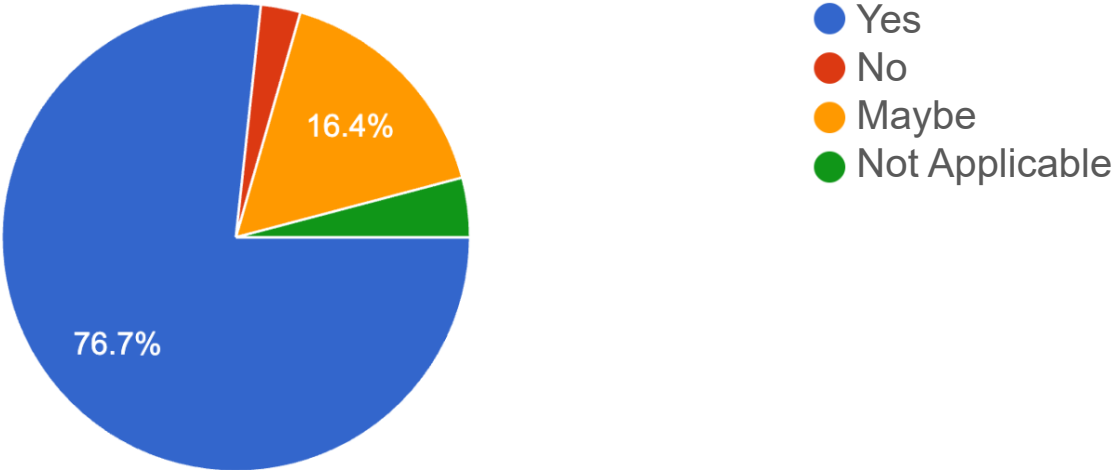
No

Sometimes

**Question #11** - What is the preferred language you would like to receive communication from the school and district?

English  
Spanish

**Question #12 - Would you be interested in attending school meetings or events if there were translation services provided?**



# District Questions

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## Sources:

- **District Website**
- District App
- **District Facebook**
- District Twitter
- District Instagram
- District YouTube Channel
- **District Newsletter (The RPS Weekly Message)**
- **District Newsletter (Community Connection)**
- **Local Media Outlets**

**(Sources highlighted rated the highest in main source or a good amount of information.)**

**Question #12** - How much information about RPS do you receive from each of the following sources?

## Categories:

*Main Source of Information*

*A Good Amount of Information*

*Some Information*

*Little to No Information*

*N/A - Does Not Apply to Our Family*

**Categories:**

Board of Education Updates  
Bond Issue Construction Updates  
Bond Issue Financial Updates  
Budget Updates  
Celebrations / Recognitions  
Community News  
Curriculum Updates  
District Mission & Beliefs  
District News / Updates  
Family Resources  
Legislative Updates  
Strategic Plan Updates  
Upcoming Events

**Question #13** - Think about the information that you receive or that is available to you on the following topics. Please indicate your ratings on the amount of information.

**Categories:**

*Too Much Information*  
*Right Amount of Information*  
*Would Like More Information*  
*I Don't Want Information on this Topic*

**Question #13** - Think about the information that you receive or that is available to you on the following topics. Please indicate your ratings on the amount of information.

***Categories:***

- *Too Much Information*
- ***Right Amount of Information - Highest selected category***
- ***Would Like More Information: Curriculum Updates, Celebrations/Recognitions, Upcoming Events, Legislative Updates, and Family Resources.***
- *I Don't Want Information on this Topic*

**Question #13 B** - What grade would you give RPS? (consider everything curriculum, quality of education, etc...)

**Categories:**

*A = 177*

*B = 146*

*C = 29*

*D = 13*

*F = 7*

**Question #13 C** - What grade would you give to communication?

**Categories:**

*A = 197*

*B = 127*

*C = 34*

*D = 4*

*F = 10*

**Final Question** - What information would you like to share with Mr. Buckingham, Superintendent of Ralston Public Schools, regarding what you believe RPS is doing really well or suggestions for improvement?

**More communication from individual teachers about how my student is doing and what they are learning about.**

**More information about the curriculum. Increase STEAM and HAL offerings to students.**

**Communication about how we are improving academically and the things we are putting in place to help do that.**

**Staff takes time to know students, families.**

**Providing safe space for students**

**"They do a great job, have excellent teachers committed to their students and families."**



Expenditures for Depreciation Fund for Fiscal Year 2025

**Equipment**

Soccer Goals at Mockingbird	\$5,084
Instrument Replacement for RMS & RHS	\$6,598

**Technology**

Staff Laptop Refresh	\$177,600
Student Laptop Refresh for BL, MB, SY	\$154,586
- Reduced backstock of student Chromebooks	

**Vehicles**

Truck for Snow Removal and Plow	\$56,479
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Year	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
<b>Total Cost to Depreciation</b>	\$748,525	\$546,774	\$284,080	\$606,243	\$612,493	\$618,993	\$280,252	\$637,462	\$682,920	\$652,759	\$351,926	\$669,304
BOY Depreciation	\$3,457,754	\$3,209,229	\$3,162,455	\$3,378,375	\$3,272,132	\$3,159,639	\$3,090,646	\$3,360,394	\$3,272,933	\$3,140,013	\$3,037,254	\$3,285,328
Deposit to Depreciation	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$600,000	\$600,000
EOY Depreciation	\$3,209,229	\$3,162,455	\$3,378,375	\$3,272,132	\$3,159,639	\$3,090,646	\$3,360,394	\$3,272,933	\$3,140,013	\$3,037,254	\$3,285,328	\$3,216,024
Assorted Actual Adjustments	\$13,299	\$11,682										
Technology Replacment	\$343,364	\$378,613		\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000		\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000		\$350,000
HS Chromebooks	\$114,270	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Kiln	\$16,981											
2024 F-250 w/plow	\$56,411							\$65,797				
1993 Ford F350 w/dump-blade		\$56,479							\$68,428			
2016 F-250 w/plow			\$54,080							\$71,166		
2016 F-250 w/plow				\$56,243							\$74,012	
2006 Ford F250 w/flatbed-sander					\$58,493							\$76,973
2008 Ford F250 w/blade-ladder rack						\$60,833						
2020 F-250 w/plow							\$63,266					
2011 Ford F550 Box Truck												
(6) 2023 Thomas 45 Passenger safety	\$110,850											
(2) 2024 Thomas/GMC Minotaur 22 P	\$93,350											
(5) 2017 Thomas 22 Passenger				\$100,000								\$142,331
(3) 2016 Minotaur DRW School Bus					\$104,000							
(4) 2017 Minotaur 22 pas. w/ lift						\$108,160						
(A) 2008 Thomas 60 Passenger			\$130,000									
(1) 2022 GM Express w/ lift							\$116,986					
(8) 2022 GM Express w/ lift								\$121,665				
(B) 2021 Thomas 44 passenger									\$164,491			
(9) 2021 Thomas 22 passenger										\$131,593		
(C) 2021 Thomas 46 passenger RE											\$177,914	

## 5002 Admission of Students

Students shall be admitted to the school district who are:

- ~~• legal residents of the school district or otherwise entitled by Nebraska law to attend the schools of the district tuition-free;~~
- ~~• approved for option enrollment pursuant to policy;~~
- ~~• approved as foreign exchange students pursuant to policy;~~
- ~~• legal residents of a district that has contracted with this district for their educational services;~~
- ~~• statutorily entitled to attend the schools of the district on a part-time basis pursuant to policy; or~~
- ~~• out-of-state students who have been enrolled pursuant to policy~~

required by law to be enrolled or are permitted to enroll by law or board policy.

- ~~• legal residents of the school district or otherwise entitled by Nebraska law to attend the schools of the district tuition-free;~~
- ~~• approved for option enrollment pursuant to policy;~~
- ~~• approved as foreign exchange students pursuant to policy;~~
- ~~• legal residents of a district that has contracted with this district for their educational services;~~
- ~~• statutorily entitled to attend the schools of the district on a part-time basis pursuant to policy; or~~
- ~~• out-of-state students who have been enrolled pursuant to policy.~~

Students who have been placed in a foster home within the school district are not residents of the district and will not be permitted to enroll unless the district has received a written determination from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services that it is in the best interests of the student not to attend his or her district of residence.

Prior to enrolling any student who is a ward of the state of Nebraska or a ward of any court, the district will ask to review a completed copy of

the "Education Court Report Form" promulgated by the Nebraska Supreme Court's Commission on Children and Families in the Courts – Education Sub-Committee. If there is no such completed form, district staff will offer assistance to the appropriate responsible individual in securing the information necessary to complete the form as part of the district's enrollment process.

Except in adult education classes or when otherwise required by law, no student who is of 21 years of age or older, or who has earned a high school diploma or its equivalent will be allowed to be enrolled in or continue to attend school in the district.

Students who seek to enroll in the district must comply with each board policy, state statute and regulation that applies to their situation. Grade level placement will be determined in accordance with district policy.

Adopted on: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised on: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_

## **5003 Admission of Part-Time Students**

A student may be permitted to enroll on a part-time basis pursuant to this policy and applicable curricular practices when enrollment is appropriate for reasons that include but are not limited to the following: the student receives alternative instruction on a **primary** part-time basis; is enrolled for a limited number of credit hours needed to graduate; has a modified schedule because of a disability or as part of an individualized education plan; or is a student who resides in the school district but attends a private, denominational, or parochial school or a school that elects not to meet accreditation or approval requirements (referred to herein as an exempt school student or an exempt school, respectively).

**Eligibility and Application for Enrollment.** A student may be eligible for part-time enrollment if the student:

1. is of appropriate age to attend school;
2. is a resident of this school district or a resident of another school district attending a private, denominational, parochial, or exempt school. For residents of another school district, the student is only eligible to part-time enroll if
  - a. this school district is the closest to the student's residence that offers the extracurricular sport or activity they desire to participate in, and their resident school district does not offer that sport or activity, or
  - b. the school building the student would attend if accepted for part-time enrollment is closer than the school building the student attends or would attend at the resident district;
3. has not graduated from high school; and
4. has not received a graduate equivalency diploma.

The parent or guardian must meet all of the district's admission requirements and file an application for enrollment on forms provided by the school district by May 15<sup>th</sup> prior to the year of enrollment. For second semester high school courses, the application must be filed by October 15. For students who move into the district mid-semester, the application must be filed within 10 days of moving into the district. The administration shall review the application, determine whether to approve or deny it, notify the parent or guardian, and schedule enrollment at an educationally appropriate time in the building or attendance center of the administration's choice. Enrollment does not carry over from one school year to the next, and the parent or guardian must apply for enrollment each school year.

**Limitations Based on Resources.** The part-time enrollment of students is subject to limitations for grades, classes, courses, and programs based on the limited resources available to the school district. Full-time students shall be given priority for enrollment in grades, classes, courses, and programs.

**Placement of Students.** Part-time students shall be placed in courses for which they have adequate preparation and which are determined to be educationally appropriate based on criteria that include, but are not limited to the student's age, achievement test scores, academic record, evaluation by school personnel and any other standards used by the district for the placement of students. Students who are enrolled at least half-time are required to take the same academic achievement tests administered to full-time students.

**Grades and Academic Honors.** Part-time students shall receive grades, report cards, and transcripts, but shall not be eligible to graduate, receive a diploma or qualify for class ranking unless they meet all district requirements for such including earning a sufficient number of credit hours and semesters of attendance.

**Applicability of School Rules.** Students accepted for part-time enrollment are subject to all rules and standards of the board of education and administration as set forth in policy, handbooks or other communications, as well as the rules and directives of the building administration and staff. They must remain on the school campus during scheduled classes but must leave the school campus when not engaged in a course, course-related activity, or an extracurricular activity or sport, unless the building principal approves their presence. Students who violate school policies, rules, or directives shall be subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including suspension and expulsion.

### **Extracurricular Sports and Activities.**

Students who are enrolled in a private, denominational, or parochial school may not participate in extracurricular sports and activities sponsored by the school district unless an existing cooperative agreement exists between the private, denominational or parochial school and Ralston Public Schools. Any such students who desire to participate in extracurricular sports and activities regulated by an athletics or activities association in which this school district is a member must be enrolled in 5 credit hours in this school district to participate.

Exempt school students may only participate in extracurricular sports and activities if they are enrolled in at least 5 credit hours per semester and enrolled in the number of credit hours at this school district set out below. Exempt school students are not eligible to participate in extracurricular sports and activities sponsored by the school district if they participate in any sport or activity sponsored by any other public, private, denominational, or parochial school. Any such students who desire to participate in extracurricular sports and activities regulated by an athletics or activities association in which this school district is a member must be enrolled in 5 credit hours in this school district to participate. Students seeking to participate in extracurricular sports and activities not regulated by such an entity may only participate if they enroll in at least 5 credit hours on a part-time basis.

All students permitted to participate in extracurricular sports and activities under this policy must also meet all other eligibility requirements set by the board, administration, and coach/sponsor prior to participating and for continued participation in the sport or activity. This includes but is not limited to rules for completing courses; up/down lists for deficient grades and/or incompletes; and all eligibility and other requirements of the Nebraska School Activities Association and any other governing bodies for the activity or sport.

**Transportation.** Part-time school students are not entitled to transportation or reimbursement for transportation ~~by virtue of their status as part-time students.~~ to and from the school for class attendance purposes, unless required by law. Eligible part-time students are entitled to transportation to and from practices and extracurricular events to the same extent as the school district's full-time students, but part-time students must arrange their own transportation and arrive timely to the designated pick-up point for such transportation.

**Option Enrollment.** Students may not enroll on a part-time basis pursuant to the school's option enrollment program.

**Open Enrollment.** **[OPTION 1]** ~~Students may not enroll on a part-time basis pursuant to the school's open enrollment program.~~ **[OPTION 2]** ~~Students may enroll on a part-time basis pursuant to the school's open enrollment program.~~

Adopted on: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised on: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_

**6005**  
**Academic Credits and Graduation Requirements**  
**COVID-19 Adjustments**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the items outlined in red will apply to students wishing to graduate in the Class of 2021. These COVID-19 adjustments will be in effect for the 2020-2021 school year only.

The district shall accept credits toward graduation that were awarded by an accredited school district, and shall award a diploma to an option enrollment or open enrollment student if the student meets the district's graduation requirements.

Course credit is allowed only for grades 9, 10, 11, 12. Students may repeat courses in which they made failing grades, but it is not necessary to repeat courses not required for graduation.

The responsibility for determining when students are eligible to be graduated from high school is delegated by the Board of Education to the building principal.

Specific Requirements - Each student is expected to successfully complete course work in each of the following areas as listed:

**Graduation Requirements Beginning with the Class of 2015**

1. English: 35 credits (English I - 10 credits, English II - 10 credits, English III – 10 credits, Composition – 5 credits)
2. Oral Communications: 5 credits
3. Social Studies: 30 credits (World Cultures & Geography - 5 credits, US History – 10 credits, US Government – 5 credits)
4. Mathematics: 30 credits (Algebra I or higher 10 credits)
5. Science: 30 credits (Life Science – 10 credits, Physical Science – 10 credits)
6. Physical Education: 20 credits (Swim – 2.5 credits and Family Life Education – .5 credits)
7. Fine Arts: 10 credits
8. Career Education: 25 credits (Consumer Finance – 5 credits and Career Exploration – 5 credits)
9. Elective Courses: 55 credits

**Graduation Requirements Beginning with the Class of 2021**

1. English: 35 credits (Must pass Eng. 1, Eng. 2, Eng. 3 and Composition)
2. Oral Communications: 5 credits
3. Social Studies: 30 credits (Must pass World Civilization, U.S. History and American Government)
4. Mathematics: 30 credits (including 10 above pre-Algebra level)
5. Science: 30 credits. (Must pass Life Science & Chem/Physics 1)
6. Physical Education: 20 credits (Must pass Family Life Education and Fitness & Swim Foundations) (Swim PE requirement will be suspended for the Class of 2021. Students will still need 20 credits in Physical Education)
7. Fine Arts: 10 credits
8. Career Education: 25 credits (Must pass Consumer Finance and Career Exploration)
8. Elective Courses: 55 credits (45 for the Class of 2021)

All students **except 2021 Seniors** must successfully complete 240 hours of credit in grades 9-12, and attend a minimum of seven semesters.

**Students in the Class of 2021 must successfully complete 200 hours of credit in grades 9-12 and must attend more than six semesters.**

All students must function within the guidelines of an Individual Learning Plan.

### **Community Service**

All students must complete 10 hours of community service for each year of attendance at Ralston High School (40 total). **The community service requirement will be suspended for the Class of 2021.**

### **Physical Education Waiver for students through 2020**

Students may waive up to 5 credits of the physical education requirement if they begin and complete 1 full season of the following activities: pom, cheer, football, cross country, volleyball, soccer, tennis, swim, basketball, wrestling, golf, track and field, baseball, or softball. This does not change the minimum number of credits required for graduation.

### **Early Graduation**

Students may graduate at mid-term of their senior year if they make a formal application to the Senior Counselor prior to September 15<sup>th</sup> of the Senior Year.

**Students in the Class of 2021 may apply for early graduation after they have completed more than six semesters. To apply for early graduation, students must complete an application form and submit it to the principal. The principal will inform the superintendent of each completed application.**

The High School Principal will review any unique circumstances related to these graduation requirements for any student and make appropriate recommendations to the Superintendent.

### **Pupil Progress-Secondary**

Pupils in grades 9-12, with approval of the superintendent or their designee, may earn credit by correspondence from an accredited school approved by the Nebraska Department of Education, provided work is supervised by a teacher with valid Nebraska certification.

Pupils may enroll in approved night school courses that meet Nebraska Department of Education specifications, and thereby earn credit toward secondary school graduation requirements provided that approval has been granted by the superintendent or their designee.

Adopted on: **August 24, 2020**

Revised on:

Reviewed on: **August 10, 2020**

# **Legislative Services Contract**

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## **Between Ralston Public Schools and Kissel, Kohout, ES Associates for 2025-2028**

### **Agreement**

This agreement is made and entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, by and between Joseph D. Kohout, representing Kissel Kohout ES Associates, L.L.C., hereinafter called “Contractor”, and the Ralston Public Schools, hereinafter called “RPS”.

RPS proposes engaging Contractor in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein to render certain special professional services in legislative and governmental affairs activity.

Contractor possesses certain skills, experience, and competency to perform such services, and RPS is agreeable to engaging Contractor for such services upon the terms provided.

Now, therefore, the parties do mutually agree as follows:

### **1. Engagement of Contractor**

RPS agrees to engage the Contractor, and the Contractor agrees to provide the services and advice as hereinafter set forth. The parties intend to create an independent Contractor relationship with this Agreement. RPS is interested only in the results to be achieved. The conduct and control of the work will lie solely with the Contractor. The Contractor is not to be considered an employee of RPS for any purpose and neither the Contractor nor the Contractor’s employees are entitled to any of the benefits that RPS provides to its employees. RPS does not agree to use the Contractor exclusively, and the Contractor is free to contract to perform similar services for other entities while under contract with RPS.

### **2. Scope of Services**

RPS agrees to engage the Contractor, and the Contractor agrees to provide the services as set forth in the Scope of Services which is attached hereto, marked as Appendix “A”.

### **3. Terms of Contract**

The term of the contract shall be for a period of three (3) years, commencing on August 1, 2025 and may either terminate on July 31, 2028 or be renewed upon mutual agreement of both parties prior to the termination date.

### **4. Compensation**

For the period beginning on August 1, 2025, RPS agrees to pay to the Contractor compensation for services set forth in Appendix B. The Contractor shall not be entitled to reimbursement for expenses and agrees to pay all expenses incurred in the service to

RPS from the agreed upon fees. Such amount shall be billed to RPS in monthly installments.

### **5. Registered Lobbyist**

The Contractor shall always be registered as a lobbyist for RPS for the duration of this contract pursuant to Nebraska law. The Contractor shall file in a timely manner all forms and reports required by law to be filed with the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission or any other administrative agency with jurisdiction over the Contractor or RPS.

### **6. Personal Performance**

The Contractor agrees to personally perform the services set forth in this agreement.

### **7. Support Services**

When deemed necessary by RPS and its representatives in consultation with the Contractor, RPS shall make its staff and/or Board Members available to the Contractor to provide testimony and information needed to further RPS's purposes before the Legislature.

### **8. Interest of Contractor**

The Contractor affirms that it presently holds no interests that would conflict with its responsibilities to RPS. The Contractor further agrees not to acquire such interests in the future, and to notify RPS in advance of any intent to represent clients in fields relevant to RPS.

Principal recognizes that the Contractor is engaged in the business of lobbying for several clients. From time to time, an issue of legislative concern may affect more than one of the Contractor's clients. RPS and the Contractor further recognize that the legislative interests of RPS and the other clients of the Contractor may not always be compatible.

Any conflict of interest which arises with respect to any legislative issue will be brought to the attention of all affected clients by the Contractor and will be resolved in the following manner:

- 1) An attempt will be made to resolve or compromise the conflict between clients;
- 2) If a client elects to withdraw the conflicting issue from its legislative program, the conflict of interest will be considered resolved;
- 3) If a conflict is not resolved by a client's withdrawal of the issue or the mutual compromise of the conflicting points of view, the Contractor shall continue to represent, on the conflicting issue, only the legislative interests of the client which has had the Contractor for the longer period of time. In this circumstance, RPS agrees that it will not object in any manner to this continued representation.

RPS does not, nor will, object to the Contractor being engaged by another school district or education organization within the following limitations: the client is not a private or parochial K-12 school; the client is not a charter or similar school; and the client is not an organization that advocates for school choice which allocates public dollars to private or parochial K-12 schools.

RPS acknowledges that the Contractor currently represents Omaha Public Schools and that, under the terms of that engagement, Omaha Public Schools has agreed to defer in the event of any conflict with Ralston Public Schools, in favor of Ralston Public Schools.

**9. Findings and Reports Confidential**

Any reports, information, data, statistical forms, procedures, systems, studies, and any other communications or form of knowledge given to or prepared or assembled by the Contractor under this contract that RPS requests to be kept confidential shall not be made available to any individual or organization by the Contractor without the prior written approval of RPS.

**10. Termination**

This Agreement may be terminated before the end of the Term or any subsequent term upon the mutual written agreement of the parties; by RPS if RPS determines that there is “cause” for termination; or by the Contractor. If either party chooses to terminate this agreement by any method other than by mutual written agreement, the party seeking to terminate must provide thirty (30) days’ written notice to the other party. For the purpose of this Agreement, “cause” shall include without limitation, the Contractor’s failure, refusal, or neglect to perform any duty required hereunder, negligence or alleged criminal misconduct, or a change of state or federal law or the interpretation of existing law by Nebraska state courts or any administrative or executive agency with jurisdiction over RPS that renders any aspect of this agreement void or unlawful.

Executed by Contractor this \_\_\_ day of July, 2025.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Joseph D. Kohout  
Managing Member

Executed by Ralston Public Schools this \_\_\_ day of July, 2025.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Jason Buckingham  
Superintendent of Schools

## **Appendix A – Legislative Scope of Services**

- Read and Review all Legislation
- Identify bills and amendments of importance
- Monitor Hearings
- Prepare Testimony
- Organize Public Hearing Testimony for clients
- Maintain Contacts with Senators and Staffs
- Work with Committee Staffs and Legislative Staff
- Work individually with Senators on Committees of importance
- Discuss issues with all Senators
- Coordinate strategy with Senators, staffs and other lobbyists
- Sponsor and attend fund-raisers
- Sponsor and attend Legislative Events
- Work with Executive Branch and State personnel
- Maintain daily records of legislative action
- Alert clients when action is required
- Client communication
- Maintain legislative files for clients
- Prepare Legislative Newsletters as needed
- Prepare Updates to clients as needed
- Prepare end of Session Report as requested
- Assess and Communicate Legislative Impacts
- Monitor Interim Study Resolutions
- Attend meetings when needed and requested
- Provide access to cellular phone
- Return calls promptly
- Year-round updates to clients
- Administer Political Action Funds
- Participate in Senatorial Elections
- Screen Candidate Policy Positions
- Meet with Senators and Staff during offseason

## Appendix B – Compensation

Contract Year	Annual Fee	Monthly Fee
August 1, 2025 – July 31, 2026	\$48,873	\$4,065.30
August 1, 2026 – July 31, 2027	\$48,873	\$4,065.30
August 1, 2027 – July 31, 2028	\$50,247.11	\$4,187.25

District	2021 Lobbyist expenditure			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
OPS	1 \$ 4,875.00	\$ 4,875.00	\$ 4,875.00	\$ 4,875.00
	2 \$ 24,200.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 24,200.00
Total				
Millard	1 \$ 2,958.00	\$ 2,958.00	\$ 2,958.00	\$ 3,000.00
	2 \$ 15,200.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,200.00
Total				
Westside	\$ 5,750.82	\$ 11,501.64	\$ 8,626.23	\$ 11,701.64
PLV	\$ 9,750.00	\$ 9,750.00	\$ 9,750.00	\$ 9,750.00
Bellevue	\$ 13,700.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 13,500.00
Bennington	\$ 5,200.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Ralston	\$ 10,687.50	\$ 7,125.00	\$ 14,458.32	\$ 10,999.98

District	2024 Lobbyist expenditure			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
OPS	\$ 30,195	\$ 30,195	\$ 30,195	\$ 30,195
Millard	\$ 17,718	\$ 1,268	\$ 33,768	\$ -
Westside		\$ 8,885	\$ 8,885	\$ 8,885
PLV	\$ 9,750	\$ 9,750	\$ 9,750	\$ 6,500
Bellevue	\$ 13,700	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 18,000
Bennington	\$ 6,950	\$ 6,750	\$ 6,750	\$ 6,750
Gretna	\$ 7,700	\$ 7,546	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
Elkhorn	\$ 7,426	\$ 7,426	\$ 7,426	\$ 7,426
Grand Island	\$ 9,644	\$ 9,644	\$ 9,644	

Ralston	\$	11,783	\$	11,783	\$	12,058	\$	12,196
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Total

\$ 19,500.00  
\$ 78,400.00  
**\$ 97,900.00**

\$ 11,874.00  
\$ 60,400.00  
**\$ 72,274.00**

**\$ 37,580.33**

**\$ 39,000.00**

**\$ 54,200.00**

**\$ 20,200.00**

**\$ 43,270.80**

Total

\$ 120,780

\$ 52,755

\$ 26,655

\$ 35,750

\$ 58,700

\$ 27,200

\$ 30,246

\$ 29,705

\$ 28,932

\$ 47,821



# **Employee Handbook**

**Revised July, 2025**

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Professionals:

Welcome to the Ralston Public Schools – we are glad to have you on our team. At Ralston Public Schools, we believe that our employees are our most valuable assets. In fact, we attribute our success as a public school district in significant part to our ability to recruit, hire and maintain a happy, professional, and productive instructional and support staff. We hope that during your career at Ralston Public Schools you will become a productive and successful member of our team.

This employee handbook describes, in summary form, the personnel policies and procedures that govern the employment relationship between the Ralston Public Schools and its employees. The policies and procedures stated in this book are just a general outline; many policies are described in detail in the negotiated agreement that applies to your employment group. You may receive updated information concerning changes in policy and procedures from time to time, and those updates should be kept with your copy of the handbook. If you have any questions about any of the provisions in the handbook, please contact Human Resources at the Administrative Offices.

Personally, as Superintendent of Schools, I want to thank you in advance for your commitment and professionalism as we all work together as a team to make the Ralston Public Schools a world class educational institution. I would also like to extend an open invitation to you to share any compliments, concerns, or ideas with me that will help all of us to make our organization better.

Sincerely,

Jason Buckingham  
Superintendent

# WELCOME

Welcome, and congratulations on becoming a member of the Ralston Public Schools employee team. By accepting this opportunity, you are committing your talents and skills to the task of developing well educated, productive and responsible adults. The work you do now is an investment in the future of our students.

## **RALSTON'S PURPOSE STATEMENT**

A community dedicated to achieving excellence through purposeful instruction and nurturing a climate of hope.

## **RALSTON'S DIRECTION STATEMENT**

Cultivating resilient citizens prepared for the diverse demands of the future.

## **GOVERNING BELIEFS**

The Ralston Public Schools believe

- An educational process is a partnership involving the school, the family, the student, and the community
- Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process
- All students can learn
- Students learn best when schools maintain high expectations for learning
- The foremost responsibility of any educational organization is the student
- The essence of education is the ability to develop lifelong learners to deal responsibly with choice in a changing world

## **THE SCHOOL BOARD**

The Board of Education is the controlling body of the Ralston Public Schools. The Board is responsible for establishing a vision, making policy and establishing the budget.

Members of the Ralston Board of Education are elected by the qualified voters of the Ralston School District on a non-partisan ballot on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November of even numbered years. The term of office is four years and begins on the first Thursday following the first Tuesday of January after the election.

Board of Education meetings are held the second and fourth Monday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the District Office Board Room. Notice of meetings are published the preceding Wednesday in the Omaha Daily Record. These are open meetings and visitors are welcome.

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for seeing that the Board's policies are put into action. The superintendent does this through a system of administrators who serve throughout the schools and offices in the district. In this way, all functions are orchestrated to best reach our goals.

You and the work you do are important and integral parts of a carefully planned system designed by the residents of the Ralston School District. They are depending on you to nurture and educate our most precious resource - our children.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The school district's handbooks are intended to convey information and explain school regulations and procedures that are necessary for the school to run smoothly and efficiently. Although the board of education may take action to approve the handbooks annually, the administration has the authority to change the contents of any handbook at any time so long as the changes are consistent with board policy.

None of the district's handbooks create a "contract" between the school district, staff members, parents or students. If any information contained in any handbook conflicts with board policy or state statute, the policy or statute will govern.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The school district prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity in any education program or activity that it operates.

Individuals who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their disability, or that have other related concerns or questions, should contact the ADA/ Title II Coordinator: Dr. Ryan Pivonka at (402) 898-3483, [ryan\\_pivonka@ralstonschools.org](mailto:ryan_pivonka@ralstonschools.org) or in person at school.

Individuals who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their sex, or that have other related concerns or questions, should contact the Title IX Coordinator: Dr. Ryan Pivonka at (402) 898-3483, [ryan\\_pivonka@ralstonschools.org](mailto:ryan_pivonka@ralstonschools.org), 8545 Park Drive, Ralston Nebraska or in person at school. The School District's specific Notice of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex may be accessed at the following link: [https://www.ralstonschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=1169&dataid=9780&FileName=3053\\_-\\_Nondiscrimination.pdf](https://www.ralstonschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=1169&dataid=9780&FileName=3053_-_Nondiscrimination.pdf).

Individuals who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their race, color, or national origin, or that have other related concerns or questions, should contact the Title VI Coordinator: Dr. Ryan Pivonka at (402) 898-3483, [ryan\\_pivonka@ralstonschools.org](mailto:ryan_pivonka@ralstonschools.org), 8545 Park Drive, Ralston Nebraska or in person at school.

Individuals who believe that they have been the subject of any other unlawful discrimination or harassment should contact the Human Resource office at (402) 898-3483, [ryan\\_pivonka@ralstonschools.org](mailto:ryan_pivonka@ralstonschools.org) or in person at school. Students may report discrimination or harassment to any staff member who will then forward it on to the appropriate coordinator or administrator. The staff member will follow school district policies to respond to the report.

For additional prohibited discrimination and related information, please review school district Policy 3053 – Nondiscrimination.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

The Ralston Public Schools shall provide equal opportunity to employees and applicants for employment in accordance with applicable equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws, directives and regulations of federal, state, and local governing bodies. Opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment includes hiring, placement, promotion, transfer or demotion, recruitment, advertising or solicitation for employment, treatment during employment, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and layoff or termination. Employees will support and comply with the district's established equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination policies. Employees shall be given notice of this policy annually.

Individuals who file an application with the school district will be given consideration for employment if they meet or exceed the qualifications set by the board, administration, and Nebraska Department of Education for the position for which they apply. In employing individuals, the district will not discriminate in any aspect of employment with regard to race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability, age, marital status, veteran status, genetic background, pregnancy or childbirth, or related medical condition.

## **COMPENSATION**

### **SALARY INFORMATION**

Teachers and identified certified employees are placed on a salary schedule according to the negotiated agreement between the Ralston Education Association and the Board of Education. Placement and advancement on the schedules are based on experience, the number of years served in the district, the addition of approved undergraduate hours for endorsements or specialties not previously approved, or graduate hours in your field. Teachers who report college hours before November 1<sup>st</sup> advance on the schedule for the entire school year. The Human Resource Office can be contacted for more information or an explanation of the salary schedule.

### **SALARY INFORMATION FOR CLASSIFIED STAFF**

Pay rates for classified staff are established each year by the Board of Education with input from the superintendent of Schools and the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance. A raise may be granted each year based on the financial climate of the school district.

### **PAYDAY**

Ralston school employees are paid monthly. Payday is the 18th of the month, unless that date falls on a weekend. In that case deposits are issued the Friday before. Employees are notified by automated e-mail when pay records are available for viewing each month.

## **UNIT PAY**

Teachers who have duties beyond their normal teaching assignments, such as coaching, department head responsibilities, and building supervision, may be eligible for supplemental pay. Supplemental assignments and unit pay schedules are determined annually. The supplemental salary schedule is a part of the teacher's negotiated agreement. In order to maintain accurate compensation records, teachers are expected to notify the Human Resource office as soon as possible regarding any changes to their supplemental assignments.

## **CLOCKING IN AND OUT**

Hourly employees are required to use the district's online (ETS) timesheet to record all hours worked. Staff members are required to clock in no sooner than 7 minutes before/after the scheduled shift and clock out no later than 7 minutes before/after the scheduled shift. If an employee is unable to clock in or out within the allotted period of time, the staff member is required to attach a note to the timecard explaining the discrepancy to their supervisor.

If an employee misses an entry into the timekeeping system, the staff member is responsible for correcting their timecard at the earliest possible convenience. If an employee makes a correction to their timesheet, the staff member is required to attach a note to the timecard explaining the discrepancy to their supervisor. Employees who consistently miss time clock entries may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees are not allowed to use another person's login credentials under any circumstances in order to clock in/out or modify the timecard of another staff member.

Any employee who knowingly misrepresents or falsifies documentation about the number of hours they have worked or knowingly misrepresents or falsifies documentation about the number of hours another employee has worked will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **OVERTIME AND COMPENSATORY TIME**

All classified staff members must keep an accurate record of all hours worked for the district. Employees who are "non-exempt" under the Fair Labor Standards Act and who work more than 40 hours in a workweek will be paid at the rate of time-and-one-half (1½) times their regular rate of pay for all overtime hours or will be provided compensatory time. All overtime must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Overtime that is not approved in advance, may not be payable. Scheduled holidays, vacation days, time off for jury duty, and time off for sickness, emergencies or other personal reasons will not be considered hours worked for overtime purposes.

“Non-exempt” employees may not waive their rights under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 4050.

## **DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Direct deposit of paychecks into bank accounts is mandatory. Instead of a check, employees can access their pay records online through the Employee Access Center. To enroll in direct deposit, employees must provide a voided check prior to their first pay date.

## **DEDUCTIONS**

All required deductions, such as for federal, state, and local taxes, retirement contributions, and all authorized voluntary deductions, such as for insurance or union dues, will be withheld automatically from your paychecks. Garnishments are legal proceedings imposed by a court of law upon the school district requiring payment to a third party of monies earned by district employees. The school district will accept all legal garnishments and tax levies against wages in compliance with state and federal law. An employee's pay will be held upon receipt of a garnishment until a court order is issued indicating satisfaction of the indebtedness or until ordered to surrender the monies to the court or its agent. The school district prohibits improper pay deductions, and employees shall be reimbursed for any improper pay deductions. If you believe that an improper deduction has been made to your pay, you should immediately report this information to your direct supervisor, payroll personnel, or the superintendent.

If a staff member owes funds to the district at the time of their resignation or termination, the district may deduct that which is owed to the district from the employee's final paycheck.

## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

An employee's responsibilities to the district take precedence over personal responsibilities during school hours. Employees may not engage in other employment business activity during assigned duty hours.

Teachers are expected to assist students who are having learning problems as part of the teachers' employment. Such assistance is expected both in the classroom and at other times during the school day. A teacher shall not solicit a student or parent to retain the teacher as a tutor and shall not act as a tutor for pay or other remuneration for any student who is then enrolled in any class taught by that teacher. In all other cases during the school year, a teacher may act as a tutor for pay or other remuneration upon prior approval of the building principal and superintendent or their designee.

Employees shall not sell, solicit or promote the sale of goods or services to students. Employees shall not sell, solicit or promote the sale of goods or services to parents of students when the employee's relationship with the district is used to influence any sale or may be reasonably perceived by parents as attempting to influence any sale. Employees with supervisory or managerial responsibilities shall not sell, solicit or promote the sale of goods or services to employees over whom they have such responsibilities in any manner that could reasonably be perceived as coercive by the subordinate employee(s). Employees shall not use employee, student, or parent directories in connection with the solicitation, sale, or promotion of goods or services and shall not provide any such directory to any person or entity for any purpose without the prior knowledge or approval of the building principal.

No school board member, administrator, teacher, or other employee shall use the personnel, facilities, resources, equipment, property, or funds of the district for personal financial gain or business activities.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 4008.

### **AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT**

Classified staff members are employed “at-will” unless they are a member of a bargaining unit that is subject to a negotiated agreement with the district. Either you or the school district may terminate your employment at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, guaranteeing employment for any specific duration.

## **BENEFITS**

### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

The school district’s health insurance plan is administered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska. The plan year’s coverage is effective September 1st. The current plan is as stated in your employee benefit package. If one of the qualifying members is less than full time but at least 50% FTE, the monthly premium will be prorated based upon the reduced FTE. Details are available in the Payroll Office. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned.

### **DENTAL INSURANCE**

Dental coverage through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (100% A, 75% B, and 50% C coverage) covers the cost of preventive, diagnostic and maintenance services. This includes a check-up and cleaning twice a year, fillings, extractions, X-rays and sealants. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned.

### **LONG-TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE**

Employees will receive 66 2/3 percent long-term disability insurance coverage based on the employee’s salary and fringe benefits. An employee shall be entitled to disability coverage beginning on the date when the employee has used all of their accumulated sick leave. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned.

### **LIFE INSURANCE**

The district provides term life insurance (\$20,000 in most cases) for full time employees. The plan includes accidental death and dismemberment coverage in the same amount as the basic life benefit. Employees may choose to buy supplemental insurance at an amount allowed by the

district and the carrier. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned.

### **WORKER’S COMPENSATION**

The school district shall provide workers’ compensation insurance for the protection of the district and its employees, and such other insurance as the board deems appropriate or has agreed to provide pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement.

Workman’s compensation pays medical costs for injuries on the job and partially reimburses for loss of salary up to a legislated maximum. Salary reimbursement begins after a seven-day waiting period. If the employee is off the job more than six weeks, the initial seven days will be paid retroactively.

### **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

An eligible employee may receive tuition reimbursement based on the terms of the negotiated contract. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned.

### **COBRA BENEFITS**

Under a federal law known as COBRA, employees, their spouses, and children are allowed to continue group health insurance at their own expense under any of the following conditions:

- Death of the employee.
- Leaving the district’s employment, whether through resignation or termination.
- Reduction of hours.
- Divorce or legal separation.
- The employee is entitled to benefits under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act.
- A dependent child ceases to be a dependent child under the plan.

Coverage may continue for up to 18 months in cases of termination or reduction of hours, and 36 months in other instances. Details are available through the Business Office.

### **403B PLAN**

Monthly contributions to qualified 403b investment accounts are available through payroll deductions. Employees can elect to have money deducted from their monthly salary and sent to an account with an approved 403B Plan vendor. Contact the payroll office for a list of approved vendors, and also once you have set up an account with your financial planner. Additional information is available through the Business Office.

### **PAY FLEX**

Pay Flex is a program designed to set aside your pre-tax salary dollars for specific medical or childcare expenses. When enrolled in the program, a specified amount is put into an account

before payroll deductions. The money in this account is available for health care needs not covered by insurance, such as orthodontics, co-pays, prescriptions, eyeglasses, and also for childcare costs from qualified providers.

Enrollment in or withdrawal from the Pay Flex program is permitted in October each year during the official enrollment period. The plan year is October 1- September 30. Enrollment information is distributed in August and enrollment forms are due September 1st. Contact the Business Office for more information.

### **VOLUNTARY SEPARATION PROGRAM**

Teachers with 20 years of service may qualify for the Voluntary Separation Program. The Voluntary Separation Program is outlined in the teacher's negotiated contract or through specific board action.

### **RETIREMENT**

Employees are required to participate in the Nebraska School Employees Retirement system. Contributions, which are subject to change annually, are deducted automatically from paychecks. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned.

## **LEAVE**

### **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

The school district shall provide leave to its employees in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act. Under the FMLA, eligible employees are entitled to certain rights, and have certain obligations with respect to unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons.

**FMLA leave eligibility:** An eligible employee under the FMLA is an employee who has been employed by Ralston Public Schools for at least twelve (12) months, who has worked at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months, and who works at a facility in which at least fifty (50) employees are employed at that facility or within seventy-five (75) miles of that facility. Returning Service members are given credit for any months or hours of service they would have been employed but for their military service.

**Reasons for FMLA leave:** The school district will grant an eligible employee up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave under the following conditions:

- For birth of a son or daughter, and to care for the newborn child
- For placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care
- To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition

- Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of their job
- Because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in the armed forces in support of a contingency operation

The school district will grant an eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a covered service member a total of 26 workweeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period to care for the service member. The leave described in this paragraph shall only be available during a single 12-month period.

The school district will continue group health plan benefits on the same basis as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period. Any share of health plan premiums which have been paid by the employee prior to FMLA leave must continue to be paid by the employee during the FMLA leave period.

The school district requires employees to substitute any accrued paid vacation leave, paid personal leave, paid family leave, paid medical leave or paid sick leave for FMLA leave. However, nothing in this policy shall require the school district to provide paid sick or medical leave in any situation in which the school district would not normally provide such paid leave.

Any staff member who needs to take an extended leave for medical or personal reasons must submit a leave request and complete FMLA forms. The absences that most often fall into the scheduled category are maternity, scheduled surgeries, and medical leaves of absence.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 4011.

### **FAMILY MILITARY LEAVE**

All employees, including elected officials of the State of Nebraska or any political subdivision thereof, who shall be members of the National Guard, Army Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air Force Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve, shall be entitled to a leave of absence from their respective duties, without loss of pay, on all days during which they are employed with or without pay under the orders or authorization of competent authority in the active service of the State or of the United States, not to exceed fifteen workdays in any one calendar year. Such leave of absence shall be in addition to the regular annual leave of the persons named herein.

When the Governor of this state shall declare that a state of emergency exists, and any of the persons named in this section are ordered to active service of the state, an additional leave of absence will be granted until such member is released from active service by competent authority. During the additional leave of absence because of the call of the Governor, any official or employee subject to the provisions of this section shall receive such portion of his salary or compensation as will equal to the loss he may suffer while in active service of the State.

An administrator, at their discretion, may require an employee who requests leave under the Nebraska Family Military Leave Act to provide certification from the proper military authority to verify the employee’s eligibility for the leave requested.

Military Leave under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will be governed by the FMLA and the board's policy regarding the FMLA.

**SICK LEAVE**

Sick leave is granted as per the negotiated contract. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned. Unless prohibited by a negotiated agreement that an employee belongs to, an employee’s supervisor may require an employee to submit a physician’s written certification attesting to the employee’s sickness or disability after three consecutive days of absence due to illness. Any employee who fraudulently uses, or attempts to use, sick leave in a manner that is not consistent with the terms outlined by the district will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

**PERSONAL LEAVE**

Personal leave is granted as per the negotiated contract. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned.

**BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

An employee shall be permitted paid leave for bereavement purposes per the current negotiated contract. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned. Any employee who fraudulently uses, or attempts to use, bereavement leave in a manner that is not consistent with the terms outlined by the district will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

**ASSOCIATION LEAVE**

Association leave is granted as per the negotiated contract. All benefits of this nature will be available to employees as outlined in the negotiated agreements or benefits procedures of the employee group in which you have been hired for and assigned. Any employee who fraudulently uses, or attempts to use, association leave in a manner that is not consistent with the terms outlined by the district will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

**JURY DUTY**

An employee who has been called to serve as a juror will be granted paid leave. Employees must sign over to the district the compensation they receive for jury duty, but not compensation for expenses.

An employee who has been subpoenaed to testify as a witness in a court proceeding shall be entitled to one day of paid leave. To receive paid leave, the employee must sign over to the district their witness fee.

An employee who has been subpoenaed to testify in court in a matter relating to business of the district will be considered on official District business.

## **ELECTION DUTY**

An employee who has been selected to perform election duty will be granted paid leave. Employees must sign over to the district the compensation they receive for Election duty, but not compensation for expenses.

## **VOTING**

Ralston Public Schools will grant employees time off to vote if they do not have two consecutive hours away from work while the polls are open. The district will specify the two hours the employee may be absent from work to vote, and no deduction will be made from wages on account of such absence. Appointed election officials should contact their administrator to arrange paid time off.

## **REPORTING LEAVE**

All employees are expected to report all leave taken to their supervisor and the employee benefits professional each time leave is taken. Please speak with your building administrator or direct supervisor as to their expectations to make sure this is accomplished as soon as possible. Failure to report leave will be considered insubordination and will be addressed as such.

# **PURCHASES AND REIMBURSEMENT**

## **PURCHASE ORDERS**

Orders may be placed at your building. A requisition form must be filled out. This is available from the school secretary or a supervisor. It must be filled out completely, including address, item, quantity and price. It must also be signed by a supervisor. The requisition form should be turned in to the building secretary for input as a purchase order. The building secretary will notify accounts payable for printing and mailing of the purchase order. The original signed requisition and any additional information should be attached to the requisition and sent to accounts payable. No items or service should ever be ordered without being assigned to a purchase order and submitted into the purchase order system.

If the item is needed immediately, a requisition, complete with purchase order number, can be obtained from the building secretary. The requisition, approved and signed by a supervisor, can then be taken to the vendor. A receipt of goods will be issued. The completed and signed requisition and receipt should be turned in to the building secretary for input into the system as a purchase order. Once entered, the requisition and receipt should be submitted to accounts payable for the printing of the purchase order.

There may be occasions, such as registration to attend a preapproved seminar, when a fee will need to be paid prior to the Board of Education meeting. Please contact your building secretary for details. Administrators are responsible for establishing procedures in their buildings and department to ensure that these procedures are followed.

## **TRAVEL**

All out-of-district travel must be pre-approved by a supervisor. A travel and expense form is available [online](#) or on the [Ralston Forms](#) website. All receipts being submitted for reimbursement (especially transportation, lodging and meals) must be kept and submitted with the completed travel and expense form to the Accounts Payable Department. Receipts must be itemized, or the district may not be able to reimburse expenses. It is the responsibility of the employee to collect itemized receipts. Please see Appendix A for reimbursement guidelines.

When travel exceeds 150 miles, employees can request hotel accommodations for the day(s) which the purpose/program for travel occurs. If the purpose/program begins prior to 9:00 am, employees can request hotel accommodations for the night prior to the purpose/program for travel starts.

Air travel will be approved by a supervisor when deemed necessary, and/or the cost of mileage reimbursement exceeds the cost of airfare.

## **MILEAGE**

Expenses for required travel throughout the district on school business by an approved employee may be reimbursed if the employees' own vehicle is used. Mileage reimbursement is based on the state approved rate and will be within the guidelines of the Local Government Miscellaneous Expenditure Act. Mileage requests shall be submitted using the [online form](#). Itemized details of each trip must be included on the form. One entry labeled total miles for the day is not acceptable. Forms must be filled out completely and signed electronically by the employee and supervisor. Forms shall be turned in at the end of each month. They will be processed by the Accounts Payable Department (see reimbursement checks). Please see Appendix A for reimbursement guidelines.

## **REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES**

Guidelines are in place to outline reimbursement of expenses to employees while doing the business of the Ralston Public Schools. Please review the Ralston Public Schools Reimbursement Guidelines in Appendix A of this document.

## **REIMBURSEMENT CHECKS**

Reimbursement checks are issued once a month and are processed by the Accounts Payable Department. Vouchers must be submitted by the 25th of the month to receive payment the following month. Please see Appendix A for reimbursement guidelines.

## **RESTRICTIONS ON EMPLOYEES RECEIVING GRATUITIES**

An employee who, because of their employment by the school district, receives any bonus merchandise or gift with a value over \$25.00 must disclose the receipt of such gift to the superintendent. The superintendent, at their discretion, may require that the gift become the property of the district.

Employees are directed to discourage merchants from offering bonus paraphernalia in exchange for the school's patronage.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

Job descriptions are the district's way of letting employees know what is expected of them. They are not, however, comprehensive nor intended to be limiting. Employees are part of a total team. If anything on the description is unclear, clarification should be sought by contacting the district's Human Resource office.

### **PLACEMENTS AND TRANSFERS**

The District Office assigns all staff. Top priority is given to the needs of the students. Assignments within buildings or departments are the responsibility of the building/program administrator.

It is the policy of the Ralston Public Schools to fill all positions with the best-qualified people. The district reserves the right to place/transfer employees in positions they see are most beneficial to the success of the district. The district also prefers to promote from within whenever possible. As positions become available, administration will, at its discretion, either directly promote or transfer a qualified employee of the district or open the position for application by internal and external candidates.

If a position is opened for application, it will be posted electronically. Frequently, job vacancies will be advertised with outside sources during the same week they are posted online. This is done to speed up the screening process and to aid in ensuring that vacancies are filled by the most qualified persons.

To apply for an open position, you should either submit a formal letter of interest to the Human Resources Office referencing the position and requesting an interview. Interviews will be arranged by the Human Resources Department.

A detailed procedure regarding district transfers is available. Contact Human Resources Office or your building principal for more information.

### **HOURS**

Members of the certified staff shall be on duty before and after the regularly scheduled student school day long enough to plan and to carry out their individual professional responsibilities as determined by the superintendent of Schools and/or the building principal.

Classified staff hours are determined at time of hire.

If a staff member needs to leave campus during their regularly assigned hours, they are expected to obtain permission from their building principal and/or notify a member of the school's front office staff before their departure and upon their return (if applicable). To help maintain accurate records of who is currently on campus, principals may require their staff members to sign out when they leave the building then sign back in upon their return.

Staff members who repeatedly leave campus without obtaining the permission of their building principal and/or notifying a member of the school's front office staff may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS**

Negotiated agreements for the various employee groups are available for review electronically in the Essential Documents folder located in the district's G-mail system (Google Drive). The negotiated agreement and salary schedule for teachers are negotiated by the district and the Ralston Education Association.

### **EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL FILE**

The district shall maintain a personnel file regarding each employee. All materials in a personnel file, except for employment references and information that was gathered in the process of assessing an applicant for hiring, shall be available to the employee for review within a reasonable period of time of the employee's request. Employees may inspect the contents of their personnel files only in the presence of an administrator or a person designated by the administration. An employee may respond to any document(s) in their personnel file by submitting a written response to the person responsible for keeping the file, who shall attach the response to file copies of the disputed document.

No person other than school officials engaged in their professional duties shall be granted access to employees' personnel files, and the contents of such files shall not be divulged in any manner to any unauthorized person. An attorney acting on behalf of the board of education or administration is deemed to be a school official.

### **NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER**

The district must keep accurate employee information. Therefore, the Human Resources Office should be contacted regarding change of address or phone numbers. This information is for district use only and is not made available to the public.

### **CERTIFIED EVALUATIONS**

All certificated employees to be evaluated shall be notified annually in writing. A certified administrator, with the exception of the local board of education when it is evaluating the superintendent, will observe and evaluate each probationary certified employee for a full instructional period once each semester and each permanent certificated employee for a full instructional period once each school year. If the probationary certificated employee is a superintendent, they shall be evaluated twice during the first year of employment and at least once annually thereafter. The evaluation will include, but not be limited to evaluating the employee's instructional performance, classroom organization and management, personal conduct, and professional conduct. Evaluation of instructional performance and classroom organization and management is applicable to teachers only.

The Ralston Public Schools shall provide procedures for the evaluation of staff. The evaluation shall serve as a basis for improvement of performance and continued employment in the Ralston

School District. The procedures shall provide a source of information for sound decision-making as well as for counseling, for in-service training, and for continual growth of all employees. The procedures shall provide not only for the identification and improvement of staff skills and abilities that enhance the learning process, but also for the dismissal of those who do not meet the standards of the district.

The administrator will provide the employee with a written list of deficiencies, suggestions and a timeline for correcting the deficiencies and improving performance, and sufficient time to improve. The evaluation form will include notice that the employee may respond to the evaluation in writing.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policies 4030 and 4031.

### **CLASSIFIED EVALUATIONS**

Non-certificated District employees will receive a written evaluation yearly. To gain a clear understanding of your job expectations and your performance, you and your supervisor will discuss your evaluation together and each of you will sign it. The evaluation then becomes part of your permanent personnel file.

Classified employees who are new to the district may receive an initial evaluation by their supervisor at the conclusion of a 60-day probationary period of employment. This evaluation is at the discretion of the employee's supervisor and is used to identify strengths and/or areas where continued professional growth may be needed.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

A Ralston School District employee who wishes to file a grievance with the district may use the grievance procedure outlined in Board Policy 4013. Certified staff members should follow the grievance procedure outlined in the teachers' negotiated agreement.

### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

The key to a successful working relationship between employer and employee is good communication. If a problem arises with a job performance or behavior, it is important for the employee to have a clear understanding of the district's concerns. The following disciplinary guidelines have been set by the district. With cooperation, these procedures can keep small problems from becoming big ones.

The following disciplinary actions will be considered whenever an infraction of the employer and employee relationship occurs. Infractions may be related to policies, rules, regulations or procedures that are administrative in nature, or the infraction may be related to job performances. These actions are not intended to be a hierarchy, but options. It is understood that this guideline for disciplinary action in no way negates the grievance clause of the contract between the school and the Ralston Education Association. The supervisor will select the most appropriate action.

- **Verbal Counseling:** A conversation which would include but not be limited to reminding the employees of rules, regulations, procedures, job description as well as complimentary remarks of good performance.
- **Oral Reprimand:** A written summary of an oral reprimand that will be placed in the employees personnel file to document the conversation. (i.e., on such and such day I had a discussion with John Doe about...) A signature of the employee and supervisor is required on this written summary.
- **Conference Report:** A set meeting with the employee and their supervisor to discuss inadequate performance or inappropriate behavior. This conference will provide a thorough discussion of behavior or inadequate performance and actions needed to be taken to improve that behavior or performance. This conference may include the superintendent. A written summary, signed by the employee, is placed in the employee's personal file.
- **Written Reprimand:** An action by an employee of a more serious nature will trigger a written reprimand. It gives the employee notice that their actions have placed their continued employment with the district in jeopardy.
- **Suspension with Pay:** This will generally be used when an employee has been charged with a crime or when a serious accusation is made against the employee. The employee may be suspended with pay while an investigation is conducted.
- **Suspension without Pay:** This action may be taken for two reasons: 1) as a result of less serious disciplinary actions which have not improved performance. 2) as a result of an infraction of a very serious nature.
- **Termination of Employment:** This action may be used when the nature of the infraction warrants it or when the employee's records show previous infractions have not been corrected. Employee will be given a written notice of the effective date of termination.

### **JOB ABANDONMENT**

Unexcused absences are a serious matter. Unless prohibited by a provision within a collective bargaining agreement, any employee who has three consecutive days of unexcused absences shall be considered to have abandoned their job without notice, effective at the end of the employee's normal shift on the third day. The employee's supervisor shall notify the Human Resource Office at the end of the third workday. Abandonment is considered a voluntary resignation.

### **RESIGNATION OR DISMISSAL OF CERTIFICATED STAFF**

Certificated staff members who know they will not be returning to employment at the school district for the following school year are encouraged to submit their resignations as early as possible, to enable the board to find suitable replacements. In the event of dismissal, procedures for the dismissal of certified staff members are governed by the laws of the State of Nebraska.

Staff members who submit their resignations to the board of education by April 15<sup>th</sup> will be released from the next school year's contract. Staff members who submit their resignations after April 15<sup>th</sup> will not be released unless the board is able to obtain the services of a quality replacement. Staff members who refuse to fulfill their contractual obligations are subject to being reported to the Professional Practices Committee of the Nebraska Department of Education.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

### STAFF ETHICS

The Regulations and Standards for Professional Practices Criteria, commonly known as Rule 27 of the Nebraska Department of Education, are the minimum standards for all certificated staff members of the school district. All certified employees are responsible for reading, acknowledging, and complying with these standards.

Please refer to APPENDIX C to review these standards in detail.

Ralston Public Schools respects the privacy interests of its employees and recognizes their right to conduct their personal lives free from interference from the District. Nonetheless, employees should keep in mind that, even while offduty, they represent the Ralston Public Schools to the public and should strive to preserve the district’s reputation. In addition, certain types of offduty conduct may reflect poorly upon an employee’s character and judgment and thereby influence their standing as an employee of the Ralston Public Schools. Therefore, employees

who engage in unprofessional or criminal conduct or other serious misconduct offduty may be subject to disciplinary action by the district, including termination of employment, if such conduct is determined by administration to be harmful to our image, inconsistent with expectations of our employees, or otherwise adversely affects our legitimate business interests. School district employees are responsible for conducting themselves professionally and for teaching and modeling high standards of behavior and civic values, both at and away from school. Employees are required to establish and maintain professional boundaries with students. They may be friendly with students, but they are the students’ teachers, not their friends, and they must take care to see that this line does not become blurred. This applies to employees’ conduct and interactions with students and to material they post on personal web sites and other social networking sites. The posting or publication of messages or pictures or other images that diminish an employee’s professionalism or ability to maintain the respect of students and parents may impair their ability to be an effective employee. Employees are expected to behave at all times in a manner supportive of the best interests of students.

Unless an employee has a legitimate educational purpose, the following behavior is a violation of the professional boundaries that employees are expected to maintain with students. The following list is intended to illustrate inappropriate behavior involving students but not to describe every kind of prohibited behavior.

- Communicating about sex when the discussion is not required by a specific aspect of the curriculum.
- Joking about matters involving sex, using double entendre or making suggestive remarks of a sexual nature.
- Displaying sexually inappropriate material or objects.
- Making any sexual advance, whether written, verbal, or physical or engaging in any activity of a sexual or romantic nature.
- Kissing of any kind.
- Dating a student or a former student within one year of the student graduating or otherwise leaving the district.

- Intruding on a student’s personal space (e.g., by touching unnecessarily, moving too close, staring at a portion of the student’s body, or engaging in other behavior that makes the student uncomfortable).
- Initiating unwanted physical contact with a student.
- Communicating electronically (e.g., by e-mail, text messaging, through social media or instant messaging) on a matter that does not pertain to a school matter. Electronic communications with students generally are to be sent simultaneously to multiple recipients and not just to one student except when the communication is clearly school related and inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (i.e., grades). In these cases, the students’ parents should be included in the communications when possible.
- Playing favorites or permitting a specific student to engage in conduct that is not tolerated from other students.
- Discussing the employee’s personal issues or problems that should normally be discussed with adults.
- Giving a student a gift of a personal nature.
- Giving a student a ride in the employee’s vehicle without first obtaining the express permission of the student’s parents or a school administrator.
- Taking a student on an outing without first obtaining the express permission of the student’s parents or a school administrator.
- Inviting a student to the employee’s residence without first obtaining the express permission of the student’s parents and a school administrator.
- Going to a student’s home when the student’s parent or a proper chaperone is not present.
- Repeatedly seeking to be alone with a student.
- Being alone in a room with an individual student at school with the door closed.
- Any after-school hours activity with only one student.
- Any other behavior that exploits the special position of trust and authority between an employee and student.

An employee is required to make a report to their direct supervisor and/or superintendent if the employee reasonably believes that another employee has violated or may have violated this policy. Concerns or violations shall be reported immediately. Violations committed by or concerns about the superintendent shall be reported to the President of the Ralston School Board.

A student who feels their boundaries have been violated should immediately report the conduct or communication to a teacher, administrator, counselor, or other school employee with whom they feel comfortable.

All reports made under this policy will remain confidential to the extent allowed by law. Retaliation for good faith reports or complaints made as a result of this policy is prohibited. Individuals who knowingly and intentionally make a false report shall be subject to discipline as provided by district policy and state law.

A violation of this policy will form the basis for employee discipline up to and including termination or cancellation of employment, filing a report with Health and Human Services, filing a report with law enforcement officials and filing a report with the Commissioner of Education.

## **PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR**

The following set of rules and regulations is intended to serve as a general guideline in governing appropriate employee behavior. The list is not intended to include all offenses for which an employee may be disciplined or discharged.

### **Performance Rules:**

- Always make your best effort in your work.
- You are expected to meet reasonable standards of efficiency, productivity, and performance.
- Do not leave during working hours without advance permission from your supervisor.
- Always be punctual.

### **Behavior Toward Others:**

- All staff members are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times. This expectation includes all interactions staff members have with students, staff members, parents, or other stakeholders of the Ralston Public Schools.
- Insubordination is prohibited. Insubordination includes the failure or refusal to obey the orders or instructions of a supervisor or administrator, the use of abusive or threatening language toward such individuals, or any conduct that undermines supervisor authority.
- Do not threaten, intimidate, coerce, provoke, interfere, or fight with other employees, supervisors, or students and their families at any time.
- Do not make false or malicious statements about employees, supervisors, students and their families, or Ralston Public Schools at any time.
- The use of profane or abusive language is not permitted in any situation.

### **Property of Others:**

- Do not abuse, misuse, damage, destroy, sabotage, or steal the property of Ralston Public Schools, or the property of employees, supervisors, or students and their families.
- The use of Ralston Public Schools' equipment and supplies for personal purposes is generally not permitted. On various occasions and with permission from administration usage may be permitted on a limited basis and for a nominal fee.

### **Honesty:**

- Do not falsify or fail to disclose completely all information requested or recorded on any employment, personnel, or other record of the district or its students and families.
- Do not alter, misuse, or remove from the district, without proper authorization, employee lists, student records, or confidential information of any nature.

### **Condition of District Premises:**

- Do not create or contribute to unsanitary conditions on the district's premises; do not litter.
- Keep you work area safe and clean at all times.

**Other Rules:**

- Do not post or remove notices, signs, or any written or printed material on or from bulletin boards or elsewhere on the district’s property at any time without advance permission.
- Always report any mistake by yourself or another person that could affect the district.

**EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of the school district to provide an environment free of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct or communication constituting sexual harassment. Sexual harassment by any employees and students is unequivocally prohibited. Sexual harassment is misconduct that interferes with work productivity and wrongfully deprives employees of the opportunity to work and students of the opportunity to study and be in an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtones. Sexual harassment includes all unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other such verbal or physical misconduct. Sexual harassment is a prohibited practice and is a violation of the law.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has issued guidelines interpreting Section 703 of Title VII as prohibiting sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined in those guidelines as follows:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical misconduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

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

A person who feels harassed is encouraged to inform the person engaging in sexually harassing conduct or communication directly that the conduct or communication is offensive and must stop. If the person who feels harassed does not wish to communicate directly with the person whose conduct or communication is offensive, or if direct communication with the offending person has been ineffective, the person who feels harassed should report the conduct or communication using the district’s complaint policy. Complaints involving sexual harassment may also be submitted at any time to the district’s Title IX coordinator.

Regardless of the means selected for resolving the problem, the good faith initiation of a complaint of sexual harassment will not affect the complainant’s employment, compensation or work assignments as an employee, or status as a student.

**COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Good communication helps to resolve many misunderstandings and disagreements. This complaint procedure applies to complaints unless the complaint is subject to a different procedure required by law, policy or contract. Individuals who have a complaint should discuss

their concerns with appropriate school personnel in an effort to resolve problems at the lowest level of the chain of command. When those efforts do not resolve matters satisfactorily, including matters involving discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, or age, a complainant should follow the procedures set forth in any specific policy addressing those areas or the procedures set forth below. Allegations of sex discrimination covered by Title IX will be addressed through the board's Title IX policy.

References to “coordinator” in this policy refer to the board-designated coordinator for the applicable area, such as the Section 504 Coordinator for allegations of disability-based discrimination.

A preponderance of the evidence will be required to discipline a party accused of misconduct. This means that the investigator must conclude that it is more likely than not that misconduct occurred.

### **Complaint and Appeal Process.**

1. The first step is for the complainant to speak directly to the person(s) with whom the complainant has a concern. For example, a parent who is unhappy with a classroom teacher should initially discuss the matter with the teacher. However, the complainant should skip the first step if complainant reasonably believes speaking directly to the person would subject complainant or complainant's student to discrimination or harassment.
2. The second step is for the complainant to speak to the building principal, coordinator, superintendent of schools, or president of the board of education, as set forth below. Anyone with questions about the appropriate person to speak with may request clarification from the superintendent.
  - a. Complaints about the operation, decisions, or personnel within a building should be submitted to the principal of the building.
  - b. Complaints about the operations of the school district or a building principal should be submitted in writing to the superintendent of schools.
  - c. Complaints about the superintendent of schools should be submitted in writing to the president of the board of education.
  - d. Complaints involving discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, or age may also be submitted at any time during the complaint procedure to the applicable coordinator. Complaints involving discrimination or harassment may also be submitted at any time to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education: by email at [OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov); by telephone at (816) 268-0550; or by fax at (816) 268-0599.
3. When a complainant submits a complaint to an administrator or coordinator, the administrator or coordinator shall first determine whether another applicable procedure is required by policy or law and if so, direct the complaint to the appropriate person to follow that procedure. If not, the administrator or coordinator will promptly and thoroughly investigate the complaint, and shall:

- a. Determine whether the complainant has discussed the matter with the respondent.
    1. If the complainant has not, urge the complainant to discuss the matter directly with the respondent, if appropriate.
    2. If the complainant refuses to discuss the matter with the respondent, the administrator or coordinator shall, in his or her sole discretion, determine whether the complaint should or must be pursued further.
  - b. Strongly encourage the complainant to reduce his or her concerns to writing.
  - c. Interview the complainant and, if necessary, the respondent against whom the complaint is filed, to determine:
    1. All relevant details of the complaint;
    2. All witnesses and documents which the complainant believes support the complaint;
    3. The action or solution which the complainant seeks.
  - d. Respond to the complainant. If the complaint involves discrimination or harassment, the response shall be in writing and shall be submitted within 180 calendar days after the administrator or coordinator receives the complaint.
4. If either the complainant or the respondent is not satisfied with the decision he or she may appeal the decision to the superintendent. The superintendent may assign a qualified designee to hear any appeal. This provision applies to appeals under the board's policies governing complaints of discrimination or harassment, including Title IX and any other policy with a separate grievance or complaint procedure, unless that other procedure includes its own appeal process. All requirements for appeals within any other policy apply, and in addition to those requirements, the following also apply.
- a. The appeal must be in writing.
  - b. This appeal must be received by the superintendent no later than three (3) calendar days from the date of the decision.
  - c. For complaints addressed through other applicable procedures that do not include a separate investigatory process, the superintendent will investigate as he or she deems appropriate.
  - d. The superintendent will prepare a written decision and provide it to the complainant and any other person entitled by law to receive the appeal decision. For complaints involving discrimination or harassment, the superintendent shall submit the decision within 180 calendar days after the superintendent received complainant's written appeal. Appeals to the superintendent from complaints involving discrimination or harassment are final once the superintendent delivers the written decision, as are all other appeals/complaints to the superintendent unless the complaint can be appealed on the limited grounds to appeal to the board below.
5. The board's role is to set policy, establish and implement a budget, and evaluate the superintendent. The board does not manage the daily operations of the school district entrusted to its administration unless required by law or policy. Because of the board's statutory roles, it does not hear complaints or appeals that may involve oversight or discipline of students, staff, or others, unless those involve the superintendent as discussed below. The board does not hear complaints or appeals based on allegations of discrimination or harassment unless otherwise required by law. The board will hear appeals only in the following circumstances:

- a. When the complaint is about a board policy, not implementation of the policy;
- b. When the complaint involves the budget or school expenditures that have been or must be approved by the board; or
- c. When the board is required by law, policy, or contract to hear a complaint or appeal.

If a complaint involves those limited grounds and a party is not satisfied with the superintendent's decision regarding the complaint or appeal, he or she may appeal the decision to the board.

- d. This appeal must be in writing.
  - e. This appeal must be received by the board president no later than ten (10) calendar days from the date the superintendent communicated his/her decision to the complainant.
  - f. This policy allows, but does not require the board to receive statements from interested parties and witnesses relevant to the complaint appeal. However, all matters involving discrimination or harassment allegations against the superintendent shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated by the board president or a designee.
  - g. The board president will notify the complainant and any other person legally required to receive the decision in writing of its decision. If the complaint involves discrimination or harassment allegations against the Superintendent, the board president shall submit the decision within 180 calendar days after receiving the written appeal.
  - h. There is no appeal from any decision of the board unless authorized by law.
6. Formal complaints about the superintendent shall be filed with the president of the board. However, complaints about the superintendent do not include disagreement with the superintendent's decision on appeal based on a complaint of discrimination, harassment, or action of any other employee who is not the superintendent. Upon receipt of a complaint, the board president or his or her designee shall promptly and thoroughly investigate the complaint, and shall:
- a. Coordinate with school district staff, other than the superintendent, to determine if another procedure in policy or law requires the complaint against the superintendent to follow another procedure. If so, the board president will coordinate handling the complaint through that procedure. If another procedure applies, such as in the case of allegations of sex discrimination against the superintendent, the board president or, at his or her discretion, the full board will serve only to hear any appeal by a party to the complaint.
  - b. Determine whether the complainant has discussed the matter with the superintendent.
    1. If the complainant has not, the board president or designee will urge or require the complainant to discuss the matter directly with the superintendent, if appropriate or required.
    2. If the complainant refuses to discuss the matter with the superintendent, the board president shall, in his or her sole discretion, determine whether the complaint should or must be pursued further.
  - c. Determine, in his or her sole discretion, whether to place the matter on the board agenda for consideration at a regular or special meeting by the full board.

- d. Respond to the complainant or appeal. If the complaint or appeal involves discrimination or harassment, the response shall be in writing and shall be submitted within 180 calendar days after the president received the complaint.
  
- e. Appoint or contract with other individuals qualified to assist the board through this process or any other applicable procedure used to address allegations against the superintendent.

**No Retaliation.** The school district prohibits retaliation against any person for filing a complaint or for participating in the complaint procedure in good faith.

**Special Rules Regarding Educational Services and Related Services to Students with Disabilities.** Students with disabilities and their families have specific rights outlined in state and federal law, including administrative processes by which they may challenge the educational services being provided by the school district. Therefore, the appeal process contained in this policy may not be used to challenge decisions made by a student's individualized education plan (IEP) team or 504 team.

Complaints about the educational services provided a student with a disability, including but not limited to services provided to a student with an IEP, access to curricular and extracurricular activities, and educational placement must be submitted to the school district's Director of Special Education. The Director of Special Education will address the complaint in a manner that he/she deems appropriate and will provide the complainant with a copy of the Notice of IDEA Parental Rights promulgated by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Complaints about the educational services provided a student with a disability pursuant to a Section 504 plan must be submitted to the school district's 504 Coordinator. The 504 Coordinator will address the complaint in a manner that he/she deems appropriate and will provide the complainant with a copy of the Notice of Section 504 Parental Rights adopted by the board of education.

Complaints about the educational services provided to a student who is suspected of having a disability must be submitted in writing to the school district's Director of Special Education or to the district's 504 Coordinator. The Director of Special Education or 504 Coordinator will either refer the student for possible verification as a student with a disability or will provide prior written notice of the district's refusal to do so.

**Bad Faith or Serial Filings.** The purpose of the complaint procedure is to resolve complaints at the lowest level possible within the chain of command. Individuals who file complaints (a) without a good faith intention to attempt to resolve the issues raised; (b) for the purpose of adding administrative burden; (c) at a volume unreasonable to expect satisfactory resolution; or (c) for purposes inconsistent with the efficient operations of the district may be dismissed by the superintendent without providing final resolution other than noting the dismissal. There is no appeal from dismissals made pursuant to this section.

## **DRESS CODE**

The attire worn by staff members conveys an important image to students and the general public. Certified staff, para-educators and office staff are expected to dress professionally. The building principal may temporarily suspend all or a portion of the dress code when other factors support a lower dress expectation for school employees. Custodial, maintenance, food service, and transportation staff should wear their employee uniform during work hours.

Staff must maintain a clean and professional image at all times when representing the district. Staff members who dress unprofessionally or have an appearance that is a distraction to the learning environment will be in violation of this policy and referred to the administration to correct the situation. Staff members who continue to dress in an inappropriate manner will be considered insubordinate and handled accordingly.

### **SECURITY BADGES**

All District employees are required to wear a Ralston School District security badge. The initial security badge will be provided by the school district. All replacement badges will be purchased at the expense of the employee. While on duty and in the various school buildings staff members should have their ID badge on.

### **CARE OF DISTRICT PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT**

Nearly all staff members will be issued some sort of equipment or property owned by the Ralston Public Schools to help achieve your job responsibilities. Examples of this equipment could be laptop computers, various electronic equipment or phones, books, tools, or different types of safety equipment. Staff members are expected to use great care and respect when using District owned equipment and property. In the event that District owned property has been lost, stolen, or damaged beyond what is normal wear and tear, the district will assess appropriate monetary damages back to the staff member to replace the lost, stolen, or damaged item.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY AT SCHOOL**

Bringing valuable personal property to any school district building is strongly discouraged. The Ralston Public Schools will accept no level of responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property brought to school by employees. The best advice in these situations is to leave valuable personal property at home in a secure place to be assured of its protection. Examples of such items are: personal computers, expensive jewelry, large amounts of cash, personal electronic devices, tools, and family keepsakes to name just a few.

### **CERTIFICATION AND ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

All educators, including substitute teachers, must be duly certified by the Nebraska Department of Education in accordance with the Department's rules and the laws of Nebraska. They must file copies of their teaching certificates, including endorsements, with the superintendent of schools, and must promptly file any changes in certification or endorsements.

Certified employees are required to maintain all their endorsements and may not permit any endorsement to lapse or remove it from their certificates. Any certificated employee working under a provisional endorsement must document regular progress and complete said endorsement as outlined in the Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 21.

The board or superintendent may require a certified employee to obtain a new endorsement when it is deemed necessary for the benefit of the school district and/or to comply with federal or state requirements.

Each administrator, including the superintendent, principals, and supervisors or supervisor of any special subjects or subject in which persons directly supervise the work of other teachers shall hold either a Nebraska Administrative and Supervisory Certificate or a Nebraska Professional Administrative and Supervisory Certificate.

### **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF CERTIFIED STAFF**

Every six years, permanent certificated employees shall give evidence of professional growth.

The six-year period shall commence on August 1st of the year the certified staff member achieves permanent status or tenure and shall end on July 31st after the sixth year of continuous service. Each subsequent six-year cycle shall begin immediately following the end of a cycle.

Hours or credits cannot be accumulated during one cycle to be applied during a subsequent six-year cycle.

Six semester hours of college credit shall be accepted as evidence of professional growth. Other activities which may count towards the teacher's professional growth requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Mentoring a teacher new to the district
- Leading (or serving on) an external accreditation visit
- Teaching undergraduate or graduate level college courses directly related to education
- Publishing professional journal articles and/or research on a topic directly related to education
- Presenting on a topic directly related to education at a state or national conference
- Presenting on a topic directly related to education during a district inservice
- Attending at a state or national conference directly related to education
- Attending pre-approved professional workshops, seminars, or local inservice activities
- Serving on a pre-approved district-level committee
- Serving on a building school improvement committee
- Supervising a student teacher

One unit of professional growth credit will generally be equivalent to twelve hours of personal time spent on an educational activity.

Failure to comply with the requirement shall result in the following action:

1. Those certified staff members who fail to meet the statutory requirements shall be frozen on the salary schedule for the seventh year of the cycle or the first year of non-compliance.
2. Those in non-compliance with the statutory requirements shall be notified by April 15th of the sixth year of the cycle that their contract will be amended for the following contract year to include a freeze in dollar amount.
3. Evidence of compliance with the statutory requirements by October 1st of the seventh year shall result in restoration of normal salary status.

4. Failure to complete the statutory requirements by March 15th of the seventh year shall result in notification of suspension without pay and a recommendation for termination of employment at the close of the contract year as specified under Nebraska Revised Statute 79-824

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES**

Professional development is an important part of keeping with current trends and practices to provide the best service and instructional quality for our students and community. With that, employees will be asked to participate in professional development activities on a regular basis.

Professional development opportunities may be initiated by teachers, building administrators, or district administration. In all cases professional development must support the goals and mission of the Ralston Public Schools. Prior to registering for a professional development activity get approval from your supervisor or administrator. Procedures for registering for professional development activities are outlined in Appendix B of this document.

## **DISCLOSURE OF STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

Parents/guardians may inquire about the professional qualifications of their child’s classroom teachers. The district designates the following information as “directory information” and will give parents/guardians such information upon request:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or provisional teaching certificate.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher, along with information about other graduate certification or degrees held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the parent/guardian’s child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks, by a teacher who does not meet state or federal requirements.

## **ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, ACCOUNTABILITY**

The instructional curriculum of the Ralston Public School District will reflect state-approved academic content standards and district-established academic content standards. The Board of Education adopts District academic content standards that are equal to or exceed in rigor, the measurable academic content standards adopted by the state board of education. These content standards describe the knowledge, skills, and processes that are taught, learned, and assessed.

The Board of Education shall direct the superintendent to develop and implement a comprehensive student assessment system. The assessment system will be responsive to federal, state, and district requirements. It will reflect district identified academic content standards and state approved academic content standards. The comprehensive student assessment system shall be aligned with the instructional curriculum of the Ralston Public School District.

The Board of Education of the Ralston Public School District directs that the instructional curriculum shall be the taught curriculum.

The responsibility of the teachers is to teach the instructional curriculum using best practices that promote student learning. The responsibility of the principals shall be to monitor the taught curriculum through the use of the curriculum guide and learning plans as well as to evaluate teachers through the teacher evaluation process to ensure the instructional curriculum is the taught curriculum. The superintendent and their designee(s) shall ensure that principals monitor the implemented curriculum and evaluate teachers.

## **ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION AND SECURITY**

The purpose of all testing and assessments is to measure students' knowledge, skills or abilities in the area tested. All staff members are prohibited from engaging in any behavior that adversely affects the validity of test scores as a measure of student achievement. This policy applies to all national, state, and local assessments, including both standardized and general classroom assessments.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 4048.

# **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## **USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

The use or possession of any tobacco product, including the use of vapor products, alternative nicotine products, or any other such look-alike product, is not permitted on school property at any time.

## **BREAK TIME FOR NURSING MOTHERS**

The district will provide reasonable break time for an employee who wishes to breastfeed or express breast milk for her nursing child each time the employee has the need to do so. The district will provide a place, other than a bathroom, which is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public for one year after the child's birth.

## **BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING**

All public school employees who interact with students and any other appropriate personnel are required to complete at least one hour of behavioral and mental health training with a focus on suicide awareness and prevention training every year. The superintendent will determine the appropriate personnel required to receive the training.

These employees must complete the training designated by the school district or superintendent no later than October 31 of each school year or within 30 days of their initial employment, whichever is later. Failure to complete this training may subject the employee to employment-related discipline.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE**

It is vitally important to have a healthy workforce that is free from the effects of illegal drugs. The use or possession of unlawful drugs in the workplace has a very detrimental effect upon safety and morale of the affected employee, coworkers, and the public at large; and on productivity and the quality of work.

Federal law requires this school district, as a recipient of federal funds, to maintain a drug-free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the district's workplace is prohibited. The term "workplace" includes every location where district employees may be found during their working hours or while they are on duty, regardless of whether the location is within the geographic boundaries of the district. Any employee who violates this policy will be disciplined with measures up to and including discharge. The district may, in its sole discretion, require or allow an employee who violates this policy to participate in and satisfactorily complete a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

The district shall provide every current employee with a copy of this policy and shall provide each newly hired employee with a copy upon hiring. Every employee shall be required to signify receipt of a copy of the policy in writing. All district employees must abide by this policy, including those who are not directly engaged in the performance of work pursuant to a federal grant.

Within five days after a conviction, an employee must notify the head of the department in which they are assigned of any conviction of a criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace. The failure to report such a conviction will result in dismissal. If the employee convicted of such an offense is engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the provisions of a federal grant, the district shall notify the grant agency within 10 days of receiving notice of a conviction from the affected employee or of receiving actual notice of such a conviction.

An employee who is convicted of violating any criminal drug statute for conduct that occurred in the workplace will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension or discharge. The district may, in its sole discretion, require the employee to participate in and satisfactorily complete a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

### **DRUG TESTING OF DRIVERS**

Drivers for the school district must be free from drug and alcohol abuse, and the use of illegal drugs or improper use of alcohol is prohibited. The overall goal of drug and alcohol testing is to ensure a drug-free and alcohol-free transportation environment, and to reduce accidents, injuries and fatalities.

No driver shall: (1) report for duty or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety-sensitive functions while having an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater; (2) use alcohol while performing safety-sensitive functions; (3) perform safety-sensitive functions within four hours after using alcohol; or (4) refuse to submit to a pre-employment controlled substance, a post-accident alcohol or controlled substance test, a random alcohol or controlled substance test, a reasonable suspicion alcohol or controlled substance test, a return-to-duty alcohol or controlled substance test, or a follow-up alcohol or controlled substance test required under state or federal law or this policy. No driver required to take a post-accident alcohol test shall use alcohol for eight hours following the accident, or until they undergo a post-accident alcohol test, whichever occurs first.

A driver shall not refuse to submit to testing. A driver will be considered to have refused to submit to testing if the driver fails to provide a sample or specimen necessary for testing upon a

lawful request, consistent with the required testing protocols. The refusal to submit to the testing used by the district will be grounds for refusal to hire driver applicants and to terminate the employment of existing drivers.

Any driver who becomes unqualified on the basis of violation of the terms of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action that may include termination of the driver's employment and shall include the immediate removal from safety-sensitive functions in compliance with federal law. No driver tested pursuant to this policy and the school district's drug testing program and procedures who is found to have an alcohol concentration of 0.02 or greater, but less than 0.04 shall perform or continue to perform safety-sensitive functions until the start of the driver's next regularly scheduled duty period, but not less than 24 hours following administration of the test.

Any applicant who tests positive for the presence of these illegal drugs is medically unqualified to drive and will not be considered for the position of driver: (1) marijuana, (2) cocaine, (3) opiates, (4) amphetamines, or (5) phencyclidine (PCP). Any district driver who tests positive shall be medically unqualified and removed from service immediately.

A driver who has been involved in a reportable accident must submit to drug and alcohol testing as soon as possible. A reportable accident includes any accident in which there is a fatality, a person is injured and must be treated away from the accident site, the driver receives a citation for a moving violation, or a vehicle is towed from the scene. The driver must notify the district immediately regarding any reportable accident.

If a driver is so seriously injured that they cannot submit to testing at or immediately after the time of the accident, the driver must provide the necessary authorization for the district to obtain hospital reports or other documents that would indicate whether there were controlled substances or alcohol in the driver's system.

All drivers will be subject to unannounced random testing for drugs and alcohol. The district or its agents will periodically select drivers at random for testing. A district official will notify a driver when their name has been selected and will instruct the driver to report immediately for testing. By its very nature, random selection may result in one driver being tested more than once in a 12-month period, while another driver may not be selected at all during the same 12 months.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 4003.

### **WORKPLACE SEARCHES**

To safeguard the property and interests of our students, employees, and patrons; to help prevent the possession, sale, and use of illegal drugs on school grounds, and in keeping with the spirit and intent of the district's drug-free workplace policy and other policies, the school district reserves the right to question employees and all other persons entering and leaving our premises, and to inspect any packages, parcels, purses, handbags, briefcases, lunch boxes, or any other possessions or articles carried to and from school when it has reasonable grounds to do so. The school also reserves the right to search any employee's office, desk, files, locker, or any other school owned property on school grounds. All offices, desks, files, lockers, and so forth, are school district property and are issued or provided for the use of employees only during their

employment with the district. Inspections may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the administration. Employees who refuse to cooperate with this provision will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

## **WEAPONS AND FIREARMS**

**Weapons:** No student may possess, handle, or transmit any weapon while on school grounds or at any school activity or event off school grounds except as permitted by this policy. No visitor under the age of 18 may possess, handle, or transmit any weapon while on school grounds or at any school activity or event off school grounds except as permitted by this policy.

**Definition of Weapon:** The term “weapon” means any object, device, instrument, material, or substance which is capable of causing injury in the manner it is used or intended to be used.

**Firearms:** No person may bring, possess, handle or transmit a firearm on school grounds, in a school owned vehicle, or at a school activity or event off school grounds, except as permitted by this policy.

**Definition of Firearm:** The term “firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921, means any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any firearm muffler or firearm silencer, or any destructive device (excluding an antique firearm).

**Exceptions Regarding Firearms:** The prohibition against firearms does not apply to:

1. The issuance of firearms to or possession by members of the armed forces of the United States, active or reserve, National Guard of this State, or Reserve Officers Training Corps or peace officers or other duly authorized law enforcement officers when on duty or training; or
2. Firearms that may lawfully be possessed by a person who is receiving instruction at the school under the immediate supervision of an adult instructor;
3. Firearms which may lawfully be possessed by a person for the purpose of using them, with the approval of the school, in a historical reenactment, in a hunter education program, or as part of an honor guard;
4. Firearms contained within a private vehicle **operated by a nonstudent adult** that are not loaded **and** are encased or are in a locked firearm rack that is on a motor vehicle; or
5. A handgun carried as a concealed handgun by nonstudent adult who holds a valid permit issued under the Concealed Handgun Permit Act in a vehicle or on their person while riding in or on a vehicle into or onto any parking area, which is open to the public and used by the school if, prior to exiting the vehicle, the handgun is locked inside the glove box, trunk, or other compartment of the vehicle, a storage box securely attached to the vehicle, or, if the vehicle is a motorcycle, a hardened compartment securely attached to the motorcycle while the vehicle is in or on such parking area, except as prohibited by federal law.

**Definition of Encased:** The term “encased” means enclosed in a case that is expressly made for the purpose of containing a firearm and that is completely zipped, snapped, buckled, tied, or otherwise fastened with no part of the firearm exposed.

**Exceptions for Students:** The only exceptions for a student to bring or possess a weapon, including a firearm, are as follows:

1. The firearm or weapon has been brought to school grounds or to an activity or event off school grounds for some educational purpose;
2. The person bringing the firearm or weapon has requested and received the prior approval of both the instructor and the building principal to do so; and
3. All arrangements to use and store the firearm or weapon safely while it is on school premises have been agreed to and carried out.

**Consequences – Firearm:** Any student who brings a firearm, as that term is defined in 18 United States Code 921, to school will be expelled from school for one calendar year. The superintendent of schools and the board of education shall have the authority to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

**Consequences – Weapon:** State law and this policy provide that any student who violates this policy by knowingly bringing, possessing, handling or transmitting a weapon, other than a firearm, on school grounds, in a school owned vehicle, or at a school activity or event off school grounds may be suspended on a long-term basis, mandatorily reassigned, or expelled for the remainder of the school year in which the expulsion takes effect (if the misconduct occurs during the first semester) or the remainder of the second semester, summer school, and the first semester of the following school year (if the misconduct occurs during the second semester).

**Confiscation of Firearms:** Administrative and teaching personnel are statutorily authorized, without a warrant, to confiscate any firearm possessed in violation of this policy. By statute, any firearm that is confiscated by school personnel shall be delivered to a peace officer as soon as practicable. Such firearms are subject to being destroyed by law enforcement authorities.

**Report to Law Enforcement Authorities:** All school personnel are required to report any violation of this policy to a principal or the Superintendent of Schools. Pursuant to state and federal law, school personnel are required to report to law enforcement authorities when a student brings a firearm or weapon to school.

### **NOTIFICATION OF ARREST, CRIMINAL CHARGES, LICENSURE OR CHILD ABUSE**

Employees shall notify the superintendent or designee by the next working day after the employee is (a) arrested; (b) ticketed; or (c) issued any form of criminal charge for committing an offense, crime, or infraction.

The above notification and reporting requirement herein apply if:

1. The maximum penalty for the crime equals or exceeds seven days incarceration;
2. The crime relates to abuse, neglect, or endangerment of a minor, or a minor was allegedly a victim or a witness;
3. The crime relates to misuse of drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances;
4. Job responsibilities are impacted including offenses that:

- a. Would constitute a violation of NDE Standards of Conduct and Ethics, chapter 27;  
or
  - b. Would impact the employee’s ability to operate a motor vehicle if the employee at times needs to travel during duty time or the employee at times drives students; or
  - c. Would impact the employee’s Commercial Driver’s License if the employee’s job requires that the employee have a CDL.
5. The crime relates to alleged violence, force, coercion, or sexual misconduct;
  6. The arrest or criminal activity occurs while the employee is on duty, or at a school attendance facility, on school property, at a school-supervised activity or school-sponsored function or in a school-owned or utilized vehicle.

Employees must also promptly report to the superintendent or designee whenever the employee has been sentenced to be incarcerated for any period of time, even if the offense is not otherwise reportable. Employees must give full disclosure of the existence and nature of the above proceedings and shall also immediately notify the superintendent or designee of the disposition of any such case or matter.

Employees shall also notify the superintendent or designee by the next working day after the employee becomes aware that a complaint has been filed against the employee that could affect a certificate or license requirement for the employee’s position. Employees shall also notify the superintendent or designee by the next working day after the employee becomes aware that a report of child abuse or neglect has been made against the employee under the Child Protection Act.

Legal documents related to criminal charges, arrests, and child abuse complaints shall be treated and maintained as part of the employee’s confidential criminal background file. Failure to notify the superintendent or designee as required under this policy may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

It shall be the policy of the Ralston Public Schools to take every reasonable precaution for the safety of the students, employees, visitors and all others having business with this school district.

The district will provide a loss control program designed to prevent on-the-job injuries and illnesses. In addition, each building will design procedures to address school violence. With staff and parent involvement, each school principal shall be responsible for developing a building safety management plan. The plan shall be reviewed annually. Cooperation by all employees is expected in our effort to make our schools a safe place to work and learn.

## **REPORTING AN ACCIDENT**

If an employee is involved in an accident at work, immediately or as soon as possible within 24 hours, they must complete an Employee Accident Form and report the accident to the immediate supervisor. This form is available from the building secretary. The supervisor will then complete an accident analysis form. Both forms must be sent to the Business Office.

In order to protect you and other employees, you must present a physician's statement releasing you to return to work following any injury or illness for which you received a doctor's care or that resulted in your absence for three or more consecutive scheduled working days. The doctor's

release must state that you are released to return to work either: (a) without limitation; or (b) with limitations, listing them specifically.

### **THREAT REPORTING AND ASSESSMENT**

All staff and students must report substantive threats to a member of the administration immediately and comply with any other mandatory reporting obligations. Staff and students who are unsure whether a threat is substantive or transient should report the situation. Staff and students must make such report regardless of the nature of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person(s) who were threatened or who were the focus of the threatening behavior. Staff and students must also make such reports regardless of where or when the threat was made or the threatening behavior occurred.

THREATS OR ASSAULTS THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE POLICE AT 911.

### **UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS**

In general, a student or employee illness or injury will be dealt with by the school nurse or health paraprofessional. Because the need to help a sick or injured child may exist, training is required for all school employees. Because of the threat of infectious diseases, the following precautions must be followed for everyone's health & safety.

- Gloves should be worn when contact with any blood or bodily fluids are anticipated and should therefore be carried during playground duty, school activities, sports and field trips. They should also be worn for touching mucous membranes or broken skin (abrasions, etc.). Gloves should be changed after contact with each student. Hands should be washed immediately after removal of gloves.
- Disposable paper supplies and bandages should be used in the treatment and clean-up of any blood or bodily fluid.
- Disposable emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation masks should be used for such emergencies.
- Employees, who have an open lesion, wound, dermatitis, etc., should cover them with a dressing that will prevent contamination from other sources.
- Clean-up of blood and bodily fluids are dealt with primarily by the custodial staff. Again, precautions must be taken by all employees.
- Gloves must be worn for clean-up and disposal.
- Contain blood or bodily fluids with paper towels and use them to wipe up. Then place them in an individual plastic bag for disposal.
- Vomit must be covered with vomit absorbent first. (This is available from the custodians.) Follow the directions, then place the material in an individual plastic bag for disposal.
- Anything non-disposable (dust pans, brooms, etc.) must be sanitized. Cover them with a plastic bag until this can be done correctly.

- All plastic bags containing disposed material must be tied and disposed of in a lined trash receptacle.
  
- Soiled clothing should be removed immediately and placed in a plastic bag for laundering in hot water and detergent for 25 minutes. If cooler water is used, appropriate solutions must be used to inactivate the microorganisms.
- Both the injured party and the first aid responder must wash their hands or any exposed areas of the body immediately at the finish of clean-up and disposal. Should first aid to a fellow employee or visiting adult be required, the same precautions should be applied.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

The school district strives to provide a safe environment for both students and staff while safeguarding the rights of all students and employees, including those with communicable diseases. Communicable diseases are defined by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in Title 173 Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 1 and include HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis (A, B, and E), Measles, Mumps, and Tuberculosis.

A student who has been diagnosed with a communicable disease shall be provided with educational services in accordance with state law and board policy. Generally, individuals with a communicable disease will be restricted only to the extent necessary to prevent the transmission of the disease, to protect their health and rights of privacy, and to protect the health and safety of others. The decision regarding a student's education program and placement shall be made on an individual basis in light of current medical and educational information and recommendations. These will be determined by the superintendent, the student's Section 504 or Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, or the district's Crisis Team. In addition, participation in Nebraska School Athletic Association (NSSA) events will be subject to its rules and procedures, if any.

If medical judgment substantiates that an employee has a chronic communicable disease and that employee poses a significant health threat to students and/or other employees, the employee may be placed on medical leave.

The superintendent is responsible for assuring that procedural safeguards are used when determining the employment status of employees with chronic communicable diseases.

In the event of a serious health outbreak that significantly impacts the day-to-day operations of the district, the rules and information provided in this handbook may be supplemented or amended by the school district's administration at any time, consistent with applicable law and board policy. All staff members shall be provided notice of any such changes by the district's regular means of contact.

### **HIPPA**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 protects certain health information. Prior to obtaining or releasing employees' protected health information, employees may be requested to sign an authorization for the disclosure of health information. If protected health information is requested from a third party, the School District will ensure that protected health information is released only as allowed by federal and state law.

### **HIV/AIDS AND AIDS-RELATED CONDITIONS**

Ralston Public Schools recognizes that Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), its related conditions such as AIDS Related Complex (ARC), and seropositive test results for HIV/AIDS and/or ARC, are the source of considerable concern and pose significant and delicate issues for all employees. As a result of such recognition, we have established guidelines for handling issues that may arise when an employee is affected by these conditions.

**Policy Statement:** Ralston Public Schools is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. Consistent with this commitment, the Company will treat HIV/AIDS and/or ARC the same as other illnesses in terms of all our employee policies and benefits, such as group health and life insurance, disability leaves of absence, and other disability benefits.

Based on the overwhelming weight of available medical and scientific opinion, including statements from the Surgeon General of the United States, and the U.S. Public Health Service and Centers for Disease Control, there is no evidence that such diseases are casually transmitted in ordinary social or occupational settings or circumstances. Therefore, subject to changes in available medical information and/or specific conditions involving the potential for transmission of these diseases, it is the policy of Ralston Public Schools that employees with such diseases or any of their related conditions may continue to work as long as they are able, with any reasonable accommodation required by law, to perform the essential functions of their positions. Employees who are affected by HIV/AIDS and/or ARC or any other lifethreatening illness will be treated with compassion and understanding. Co-workers will be expected not to refuse to work or withhold their services for fear of contracting such diseases by working with such an affected employee and not to harass or otherwise discriminate against such a person.

**Procedures:** Recognizing the need for all employees to be able to be accurately informed about these diseases, Ralston Public Schools will make every effort to have information available regarding the facts about them, how they are transmitted and not transmitted, and how best to keep them from spreading. Employees who would like to be provided with this information should contact the Human Resources Department.

Employees affected by or concerned about HIV/AIDS and/or ARC or any of their related conditions are encouraged to contact their supervisor or Human Resources Department to discuss their concerns and to obtain additional information. Additional information can also be found on the Nebraska AIDS Project website at <http://www.nap.org>. All such communications will be treated by Ralston Public Schools with strict confidentiality.

### **AHERA NOTIFICATION**

In the past, asbestos was used extensively in building materials because of its insulating, sound absorbing, and fire retarding capabilities. Virtually any building constructed before the late 1970s contained some asbestos. Intact and undisturbed asbestos materials generally do not pose a health risk. Asbestos materials, however, can become hazardous when, due to damage or deterioration over time, they release fibers. If the fibers are inhaled, they can lead to health problems, such as cancer and asbestosis.

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), which requires schools to be inspected to identify any asbestos containing building materials. Suspected asbestos-containing building materials were located, sampled (or assumed) and rated according to condition and potential hazard. Every three years, Ralston Public Schools has conducted a re-inspection to determine whether the condition of the known or assumed asbestos containing building materials (ACBM) has changed and to make recommendations on managing or removing the ACBM. At the last re-inspection conducted on January 22, 2013, all materials listed in the Management Plan as asbestos containing (or assumed to be asbestos-containing) were inspected and found to be in good condition.

The law further requires an asbestos management plan to be in place. Ralston Public Schools developed a plan, as required, which has been continually updated. The plan has several ongoing requirements: publish a notification on management plan availability and the status of asbestos activities; educate and train its employees about asbestos and how to deal with it; notify short-term or temporary workers on the locations of the asbestos containing building materials; post warning labels in routine maintenance areas where asbestos was previously identified or assumed; follow set plans and procedures designed to minimize the disturbance of asbestos containing building materials; and survey the condition of these materials every six months to assure that they remain in good condition.

It is the intention of Ralston Public Schools to comply with all federal and state regulations controlling asbestos and to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure students and employees a healthy and safe environment in which to learn and work. You are welcome to review a copy of the asbestos management plan in school district administrative office or administrative office of the school during regular business hours. Pat Flinn is our designed asbestos program coordinator, and all inquiries regarding the asbestos plan and asbestos-related issues should be directed to 402-898-3460.

### **SCHOOL CLOSING**

During the winter months there are occasionally mornings when the decision is made to close school due to severe wind chills or driving conditions that make it unsafe for students who walk to school or are inexperienced drivers. On those days principals and specific personnel will report to check buildings and monitor if some students arrive at school so they can be returned home for safety reasons. All other personnel will not report. The Virginia Moon Administrative Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on those days. A school closing protocol will be published annually to outline specifics surrounding this process.

When school is closed there will be no school-sponsored activities held without the permission of the superintendent or their designee.

## TECHNOLOGY

### USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The use of school-owned technology, including computers, whether stand-alone, as a part of a local area network, or as part of a wide area network such as the Internet, is a privilege, not a right. The following policies apply to any and all electronic devices (including personal devices) that are used on school property, whether or not the user is connected to a network.

All use of technology, whether personally owned or provided by the district, must be consistent with and driven by the educational objectives of the Ralston School District.

The following guidelines shall be observed by all staff members regarding the acceptable use of the district's Internet resources:

- Staff shall be restricted to use the Internet to conduct research for instructional purposes.
- Staff may use the Internet for school-related e-mail communication with fellow educators, students, parents and patrons.
- Staff may use the Internet in any other way which serves a legitimate educational purpose and that is consistent with district policy and good professional judgment.
- Teachers should integrate the use of electronic resources into the classroom. As the quality and integrity of content on the Internet is not guaranteed, teachers must examine the source of the information and provide guidance to students on evaluating the quality of information they may encounter on the Internet.

The following behaviors represent unacceptable use of the district's Internet resources:

- Staff shall not access obscene or pornographic material.
- Staff shall not engage in any illegal activities on school computers, including the downloading and reproduction of copyrighted materials.
- Staff shall not use school computers or district Internet access to use peer-to-peer sharing systems such as BitTorrent or participate in any activity which interferes with the staff member's ability to perform their assigned duties.
- The only political advocacy allowed by staff on school computers or district Internet access is that which is permitted by the Political Accountability and Disclosure Act and complies with district policy.
- Staff shall not share their passwords with anyone, including students, volunteers or fellow employees.

To display or print sexually explicit images or documents on the district's systems is a direct violation of the district's Sexual Harassment policy. In addition, sexually explicit material may not be archived, stored, distributed, edited, or recorded using our network or computing resources. The exception to this would be documents/files needed to be archived for legal reasons.

The distribution or sharing of confidential information related to the faculty, staff, or students of the Ralston Public Schools is expressly prohibited. Even when physically able to do so, users will not access any information other than which they are specifically authorized to, and which is

necessary for the performance of their assigned duties. The district's information may not be utilized for the benefit of any other person or organization.

No employee may use the district's Internet, Intranet, or e-mail facilities to deliberately propagate any virus, worm, Trojan horse, or trap-door program code. Likewise, no employee may use the district's Internet or e-mail facilities to knowingly disable or overload any computer system or network, or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user. Local law enforcement officials will be contacted in the event of theft and/or intentional damage to district's equipment or network systems.

While on district property, the use of technology shall not be permitted for personal reasons or for purposes that are contrary to the goals and objectives of the Ralston Public Schools, unless deemed incidental, intermittent, or occasional. The district administration shall have sole and absolute discretion to determine what personal use may be permitted as incidental, intermittent, or occasional. The Ralston Public Schools shall not be held liable for any loss (including, but not limited to, financial loss, identity theft, or loss of information) an employee may experience while conducting personal business on school property or with equipment owned by the district.

Any district-owned electronic devices are subject to service at any time, which may result in the loss of data. The district will not be responsible for any damage a user may suffer, including loss of data.

The Ralston School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the technological services it provides. The Ralston School District will not be responsible for any liability or expense the user may incur in connection with the use of District technology. The user agrees to indemnify (hold harmless) the Ralston School District for any expenses, including attorney's fees, arising out of the use of District technology in violation of this agreement.

The Ralston Public Schools Internet facilities, computing resources, e-mail and voice mail must not be used to knowingly violate the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation, or the laws and regulations of any state, city, province, or other local jurisdiction in any way.

Any violation of school policy and rules regarding the use of the district's computer and/or Internet resources may result in:

- Discharge from employment or such other discipline as the administration and/or the board deem appropriate.
- The filing of a complaint with the Commissioner of Education alleging unprofessional conduct by a certified staff member.
- When appropriate, the involvement of law enforcement agencies in investigating and prosecuting wrongdoing.

The Ralston Public Schools will comply with reasonable requests from law enforcement and regulatory agencies for logs, diaries, and archives on individuals' Internet, e-mail, and voice mail activities. In addition, the Ralston Public Schools may divulge any information found during monitoring to any party it deems appropriate.

## **TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM**

The district desires to use technology in a way that aids in the education of students. It is the goal of the district to embrace the helpful elements of technological advancement while remaining mindful of potential student privacy issues.

Teachers who wish to bring a device into the classroom should inform the principal before deploying the device. The building principal may, at their discretion, prohibit the use of such devices or otherwise limit their use. The building principal may, at any time, direct that a teacher discontinues use of a given device.

Smart speakers, such as Google Home, Amazon Echo, Apple HomePod, and similar devices, may be approved for use in the classroom. The device must be registered to an account linked to the classroom teacher's school e-mail address.

Any assistive technology, such as an AngelSense device, that actively or passively create or transmit audio or video recordings must have that function disabled while the student uses the device in a district classroom, unless required by law. No assistive technology devices will be permitted to record or transmit the classroom activity of other students unless required by law.

For more information, please see Board Policy 3050.

## **OFF-DUTY PERSONAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

School employees may use the internet, school computers, and other school technology while not on duty for personal use as long as such use is (1) consistent with other district policies, (2) consistent with the provisions of Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 27 (Nebraska Department of Education "Rule 27"), and (3) is reported as compensation in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and taxes, if any, are paid. All of the provisions of Rule 27 will apply to non-certificated staff for the purposes of this policy. In addition, employees may not use the school's Internet, computers, or other technology to access obscene or pornographic material, sext, or engage in any illegal activities.

## **SCHOOL AFFILIATED WEBSITES**

Staff must obtain the permission of the administration prior to creating or publishing any school-affiliated webpage that represents itself to be school-related, or which could be reasonably understood to be school-related. This includes any website which identifies the school district by name or which uses the school's mascot name or image.

Staff must provide administrators with the username and password for all school-affiliated web pages and must only publish content appropriate for the school setting. Staff must also comply with all board policies in their school-affiliated websites and must comply with the board's policy on professional boundaries between staff and students at all times and in all contexts.

Publication of student work or personally-identifiable student information on the Internet may violate the Federal Education Records Privacy Act. Staff must obtain the consent of their principal or the superintendent prior to posting any student-related information on the Internet.

## **SCHOOL AFFILIATED SOCIAL MEDIA**

Any social media account which purports to be “the official” account of the school district (e.g., “Ralston Football”), or any of its programs, classes or entities will be considered to be an account that is used exclusively for the school district’s business purpose. Staff members may not use “official” accounts for personal use.

Staff may be required to provide their supervising administrator with the username and password to school-affiliated social media accounts. Staff may also be required to interact with specified individuals on school-affiliated social media accounts.

When staff use school-affiliated social media accounts to comment on school-related matters, they do not do so as private citizens and are therefore not entitled to First Amendment protections.

Staff must comply with all board policies, contract provisions, and applicable rules of professional conduct in their social media usage. They must comply with the board’s policy on professional boundaries between staff and students at all times and in both physical and digital environments.

Staff must obtain the consent of their building principal or the superintendent prior to posting any student-related information in order to make sure that the publication does not violate the Federal Education Records Privacy Act or any other laws. Staff must also comply with all applicable state and federal record retention requirements, even with regard to personal social media usage.

Staff must comply with all applicable laws prohibiting the use or disclosure of impermissible content, such as copyright laws, accountability and disclosure laws, and any other law governing the use of resources of a political subdivision. Questions about appropriate content should be referred to the staff member’s supervising administrator.

The following is a list of unacceptable uses of social media which constitute a basis for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment:

- Staff shall not access obscene or pornographic material while at school, on school-owned device or on school-affiliated social media accounts.
- Staff shall not engage in any illegal activities, including the downloading and reproduction of copyrighted materials.
- Staff shall not access social media networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram on school-owned devices or during school time unless such access is for an educational activity which has been preapproved by the staff member’s immediate supervisor. This prohibition extends to using chat rooms, message boards, or instant messaging in social media applications and includes posting on social networking sites using personal electronic devices.

For more information, please see Board Policy 4051.

## **MONITORING / NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY**

Access to the District’s network, email, voice mail, and Internet/Intranet resources are given to employees to assist them in the performance of their work. At a minimum, all employees are expected to check their email on a weekly basis when they are providing services to the district. The district owns the computer system and monitors e-mail and Internet communications, Internet usage, and patterns of Internet usage. Staff members have no right of privacy in any electronic communications or files, which are stored or accessed on or using school property and these are subject to search and inspection at any time.

Although Ralston Public Schools does not routinely monitor employee use of computers, Internet, e-mail or voice mail, it reserves the right to do so at any time at its discretion.

The use of encryption or passwords, the labeling of an email or document as private or personal, the deletion of an email or document, or any other such process or action shall not diminish the district’s rights in any manner.

Ralston Public Schools will comply with reasonable requests from law enforcement and regulatory agencies for logs, diaries and archives on individuals’ Internet, email and voice mail activities. In addition, Ralston Public Schools may divulge any information found during monitoring to any party it deems appropriate.

## **COMMUNICATION / ACCESSING INFORMATION**

Communication is vital to having an informed and efficient organization that is responsive to the needs of students and the community. All employees are expected to regularly read their printed and electronic communication. It is expected that employees reply promptly to mail, e-mail, and other communication requests by parents, community members, students, other teachers, and administration.

Employees who are interested in communicating electronically with more than half of the staff members at a building site, for reasons that are not related to the normal, day-to-day operations of the school, must first receive the permission of the principal or the employee’s immediate supervisor. Likewise, employees who are interested in communicating electronically with staff members at the district level, for reasons that are not related to the normal, day-to-day operations of the district, must first receive the permission of a district administrator. In all cases, the information being communicated must advance the educational objectives of the Ralston Public Schools and may not interfere with the learning environment, be harmful to our image, inconsistent with the expectations of our employees, or otherwise adversely affect our legitimate business interests. Employees who attempt to circumvent and/or violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

## **CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE**

Ralston Public Schools recognizes that employees will need to use cell phones and other electronic devices occasionally. However, the District prohibits excessive use of such devices during working hours.

## **DISTRICT CELL PHONES**

The district will provide identified employees with a cell phone. Approved employees will be able to choose from an identified list of cell phones that the district will provide. The monthly service charge will be paid by the district based upon the negotiated agreement with the cell phone service provider. Approved employees wishing to hold their own cell phone contract will be reimbursed a \$50.00 monthly stipend and a \$100.00 equipment stipend every two years. If an approved employee holds their own cell phone contract and is paid a stipend, they must supply their phone number to RPS so they can be contacted. All approved employees will have to sign a cell phone user agreement before being supplied with a district provided cell phone.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WHILE DRIVING**

Except as provided below, school personnel shall not use any electronic communication device to read a written communication, manually type a written communication, send a written communication, verbally communicate with others, or otherwise communicate with others while operating a school vehicle or while using a school-issued electronic communication device while operating a private vehicle. This prohibition includes but is not limited to answering or making telephone calls, engaging in telephone conversations, and reading or responding to e-mails, instant messages, or text messages.

The superintendent or building principal may grant exceptions and allow verbal communication on an as needed basis for specific district-related worked based upon employees' duties and responsibilities.

# **POLICIES REGARDING STUDENTS**

## **STUDENT SAFETY**

Teachers shall make every reasonable effort to protect students from conditions that interfere with the learning process or are harmful to the health and/or safety of others.

Physical restraint of a student may sometimes be necessary to protect the student and/or other individuals. Physical restraint will be used with extreme caution and only in emergency situations where there is a risk of injury to someone if physical restraint is not used, and only after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate. Staff members may physically restrain a student without advance notice to the building administrator when a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others.

The Ralston School District's emphasis is on prevention and behavioral de-escalation that reduces the risk of injury. The emphasis is always on the care, safety, and welfare of our students. The primary technique that should be utilized by staff members is verbal de-escalation. Physical restraint may only be used when non-physical interventions would not be effective, and/or the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

Administrative and teaching personnel may take actions regarding student behavior, other than those specifically provided in Board policy and the Student Discipline Act, which are reasonably necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or prevent interference with the educational process. Such actions may include, but need not be limited to, counseling of students, parent conferences, referral to restorative justice practices or services, rearrangement of schedules, requirements that a student remain in school after regular hours to do additional work, restriction of extracurricular activity, or requirements that a student receive counseling, psychological evaluation, or psychiatric evaluation upon the written consent of a parent or guardian to such counseling or evaluation. Disciplinary consequences may also include in-school suspension, Saturday School, and any other consequence authorized by law. District administrators may develop building-specific protocols for the imposition of student discipline.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 5035.

## **STUDENT BULLYING**

Nebraska statute defines bullying as “an ongoing pattern of physical, verbal or electronic abuse”. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines bullying as “any unwanted, aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple time or is highly likely to be repeated”. The school district’s administrators will consider these definitions when determine whether any specific situation constitutes bullying. These definitions include both in-person and cyberbullying behaviors.

School district staff will investigate allegations of bullying using the same practices and procedures that the district observes for student disciplinary matters. In no circumstance will school district staff be deliberately indifferent to allegations of bullying.

## **EMERGENCY EXCLUSION**

Any student may be excluded from school in the following circumstances subject to the procedural provisions governing short-term suspension found elsewhere in these policies or state law:

- (a) If the student has a dangerous communicable disease transmissible through normal school contacts and poses an imminent threat to the health or safety of the school community; or
- (b) If the student's conduct presents a clear threat to the physical safety of themselves, or others, or is so extremely disruptive as to make temporary removal necessary to preserve the rights of other students to pursue an education.

Any emergency exclusion shall be based upon a clear factual situation warranting it and shall last no longer than is necessary to avoid the dangers that prompted the exclusion.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 6031.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

Corporal punishment, defined as the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for disapproved behavior, is strictly prohibited. Some physical contact is inevitable. Therefore, physical contact, short of corporal punishment, is acceptable to promote personal interaction with students, to maintain order and control, and to protect persons and property.

## **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Because of their daily contact with school-age children, educators and other school employees are in a unique position to identify abused and/or neglected children. Educators are required by law to report any known child abuse or neglect. Nebraska law defines child abuse or neglect as knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be (1) placed in a situation that endangers their life or physical or mental health; (2) cruelly confined or cruelly punished; (3) deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter or care; (4) left unattended in a motor vehicle, if such child is six years of age or younger; (5) sexually abused; or (6) sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to solicit for or engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions.

Any school employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected must report the suspicion to the building principal immediately.

The principal and the school nurse and/or the school guidance counselor or school psychologist shall, whenever possible, investigate the concern immediately within 24 hours of receiving the initial report. The school staff shall endeavor to conduct this investigation in a manner that does not interfere with any current or future investigation by law enforcement. When the principal determines that a report should be made, they shall make a report to the office of social services or law enforcement. The principal shall inform the employee(s) who made the initial report whether they have made a report to the office of social services or law enforcement. If no such report has been made but is deemed appropriate, the employee(s) shall file such a report if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected in conjunction with the building principal, school counselor or school psychologist.

The building principal, school counselor, or school psychologist must complete the necessary paperwork and keep it on file. Any doubt or question in reporting such cases shall be resolved in the favor of reporting the suspected abuse or neglect. Consultation between the administrator and school employee is encouraged; keeping in mind that prompt reporting is essential.

The report to authorities shall contain the following information to the extent it is available: (1) name and position of reporting person; (2) name, address, and age of abused or neglected person; (3) address of the person or persons having custody of the abused or neglected person; (4) the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect, or the conditions and circumstances which would reasonably result in such abuse or neglect; and (5) any other information that may be useful in establishing the identity of the persons involved and cause of the abuse or neglect.

Nebraska statutes give legal immunity from any civil or criminal liability to any person who makes a good faith report of child abuse or neglect or participates in a judicial proceeding resulting from such a report.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 4054.

### **STUDENT INTERVIEWS**

Employees shall refer any police officer, child protective service worker, or other similar individual seeking to speak to or interview a student to an administrator.

### **STUDENT SEARCHES**

Certified and classified staff members may not search students or their belongings. If a staff member suspects that a student is in possession of contraband, they should immediately contact a member of the administration and supervise the student until the administrator arrives. Students who are suspected of having an item in violation of school rules may be directed to wait with a staff member.

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS**

All forms of electronic communication with students including, but not limited to, the use of e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, and social media must advance the educational goals and objectives of the Ralston Public Schools.

### **STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any student records, including reports of illness, abuse and neglect are strictly confidential. Student privacy will be rigidly protected by all employees of the district. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The school district provides students with a certificated school guidance counselor. Information that students provide to counselors and/or school psychologists is confidential but not legally privileged. The counselor and/or school psychologist will attempt to respect the privacy of student disclosures but will share all relevant information with other education professionals as appropriate or as directed. The counselor and/or school psychologist will also contact parents and law enforcement officials as appropriate.

Records of the counseling relationship, including interview notes, test data, correspondence, tape recordings and other documents, are to be considered professional information for use in counseling, not part of the student's education record.

When a counselor and/or school psychologist is in doubt about what information to release, they should discuss the matter with the building principal or with the superintendent.

## **CRISIS ASSISTANCE**

The school district will use a Crisis Response Team (CRT) to plan and coordinate efforts to deal with an emergency that involves the school, staff, and students. The primary concern will be the safety and welfare of students and staff, followed by the protection and salvaging of property.

During a crisis, school will be conducted in as normal and routine a manner as possible. To help provide students and staff with the services to cope with an emergency, the CRT may call upon patrons and school and community professionals who are skilled in providing counseling. A careful balance must be maintained between the right of the public to information and the rights of the student and staff to privacy and normalcy. All crisis information will remain confidential unless decided otherwise by the general coordinator. The general coordinator will be responsible for dealing with the media and providing information to the public.

For more information, please see Ralston Board Policy 4036.

## **SUMMARY**

This handbook is a general guide to the operations of the school district. More information and specific details on matters covered here are provided in negotiated agreements, Board of Education policies and building handbooks. Questions that are not addressed in this handbook may be answered by contacting a supervisor, the Human Resources Office or another appropriate office. All employees are wished the best as they work with their colleagues to provide quality education for the students of Ralston.

*Ralston Public Schools—Employee Handbook*  
**EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE**

This is to certify that I have read this employee handbook and I am familiar with its contents. I understand that it is not a binding contract but a set of guidelines for the implementation of personnel policies. I understand that by signing this acknowledgement, I agree to abide by the policies and procedures set forth by the Ralston Public Schools.

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Employee Signature

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Employee Name (Printed)

---

Date

APPENDIX A

**Ralston Public Schools  
District Reimbursement Guidelines**

**Receipts:**

If an expense item is to be reimbursed by Ralston Public Schools, there must be a receipt attached validating the expense. The receipt must include the following:

1. Name of business where purchase was made or service was performed. (Some business receipts do not include the business name. Please write the name on the receipt.)
2. Date of service
3. Detail of items/service purchased
4. If expense is for a meal or food, please include the name of the meeting and the names of the individuals who attended or ate the meals claimed for reimbursement.
5. If needed receipts may be attached to a plain piece of paper to include all pertinent information.

The following types of receipts are NOT acceptable:

1. Summary credit card slip showing only the total charge; must have itemized receipt
2. Cancelled check
3. Credit card statement with the expense circled

**Bottom Line:** If you do not have an acceptable receipt for expense reimbursement the district may not be able to reimburse for that expense item.

**Mileage:**

Mileage will be reimbursed at the standard IRS mileage allowance. The IRS updates the rate annually. Mileage requests shall be submitted using the [online form](#). Please remember to check on the availability of the Ralston Public Schools vehicles for trips in which several staff members will be attending. When available, the district vehicles must be used for travel. Mileage will only be reimbursed from your place of work to the activity location identified and back. Mileage will not be paid from your home or residence.

**Rental Cars:**

Rental cars are not reimbursed to the employee unless the following conditions exist:

1. Prior approval from the Assistant Superintendent for Business AND one or more of the following conditions exist:
2. The cost of the cab fare or shuttle, to **or** from the airport, is more than the daily rate plus incidentals, such as fuel and parking, to rent the car.
3. The hotel where the employee is staying is not within walking distance to the conference and the hotel does not offer shuttle service to the conference.
4. The rental is less expensive than a flight for several persons attending an event and is within a reasonable driving distance.

**Purchasing Items:**

We are a tax-exempt organization. As a result, we are not required to pay sales tax on purchases. Because of this, purchasing items on a personal basis and asking for reimbursement is discouraged. An employee who elects to purchase an item on their own may seek reimbursement for the item but will not receive reimbursement for any sales tax paid. The district does recognize that at times cost savings may be realized by purchasing items on a personal basis. If this becomes necessary, advanced permission from your supervisor is required prior to purchasing items that you wish to be considered for reimbursement. When asking for reimbursement on such purchases please use the receipts portion of this document to guide the reimbursement submittal. *NO PERSONAL ITEMS ARE TO BE PURCHASED USING OUR TAX EXEMPTION. PLEASE RING UP PERSONAL ITEMS SEPARATELY!*

**Expenses that will not be reimbursed:**

1. **Alcoholic Beverages** will NOT be reimbursed.
2. **Entertainment** such as movies, etc.
3. **Laundry fees**
4. **Personal maintenance items**
5. **Tips** for cab fare, shuttles, and meals will be reimbursed but are limited to 20% of the charges.
6. **Cab fares, shuttle costs, etc.** for employee's personal travel such as sightseeing, shopping, travel to and from dining locations, etc.

**Meals:**

When traveling away from Ralston, and it is necessary to have a meal while on duty, it is expected that care is used in selecting an appropriate price level restaurant. Meal expenses are only reimbursed up to the [government per diem rate](#), including the reduced amount for the first and last day of travel. Gratuities are only reimbursed up to 20% of the charges. It is the employee's responsibility to know and abide by the per diem rate for their dining location. Any charges above these amounts will not be reimbursed. It is also expected that detailed documentation and itemized receipts are kept to ensure reimbursement. Meal reimbursement is for RPS staff members only unless the event is hosted by the Ralston Public Schools and you are doing the business of the Ralston Public Schools.

**District Cell Phones:**

The district will provide identified employees with a cell phone. Approved employees will be able to choose from an identified list of cell phones that the district will provide. The monthly service charge will be paid by the district based upon the negotiated agreement with the cell phone service provider. Approved employees wishing to hold their own cell phone contract will be reimbursed a \$50.00 monthly stipend and a \$100.00 equipment stipend every two years. If an approved employee holds their own cell phone contract and is paid a stipend, they must supply their phone number to RPS so they can be contacted. All approved employees will have to sign a cell phone user agreement before being supplied with a district provided cell phone.

**Charging on District Accounts:**

At no time shall any employee charge items to a revolving account registered to the Ralston Public Schools unless advanced permission has been granted by a supervisor or school administrator. Charging any items for personal business on school district revolving accounts is strictly prohibited.



APPENDIX B

**Ralston Public Schools  
District Professional Development Guidelines**

**Requesting Professional Development:**

1. Teachers: Please get approval from building administrator.
2. Building Administrator: Please align requests with goals and mission and identify appropriate funding prior to making arrangements.
3. District Administrator: Please align requests with goals and mission and identify appropriate funding prior to making arrangements. Communication with building principals is also essential prior to making arrangements.

**Professional Development Requests from Buildings/Teachers:**

Professional development requests that originate from building principals or teachers must be arranged and organized at the building level. Steps that are required for appropriate planning are:

1. Identify if the professional development meets the District/Building goals and mission
2. Identify appropriate funding in advance
3. Complete any required registration process
4. Organize any needed transportation or lodging arrangements
5. Schedule substitute teachers as needed
6. Submit costs, reimbursement, and expenses for payment as needed to the Business Office
7. Prior to the event check that all details are covered

**Professional Development Requests from District Administration:**

Professional development requests that originate from Central Office or District administration must be arranged and organized at the Central Office level. Steps that are required for appropriate planning are:

1. Identify if the professional development meets the District/Building goals and mission
2. Identify appropriate funding in advance
3. Communicate with building principals and teachers about the training opportunity
4. Complete any required registration process
5. Organize any needed transportation or lodging arrangements
6. Schedule substitute teachers as needed
7. Submit costs, reimbursement, and expenses for payment as needed to the Business Office
8. Communicate to all stakeholders details of arrangements and expectations
9. Prior to the event check that all details are covered

**Requests for Payment:**

Any requests for payment that would accompany reservations or registrations should be submitted well in advance of the deadline (at least 3 business days) to the Business Office so that a check can be mailed. In all cases detailed documentation should accompany requests so that accurate records may be kept and registrations and reservations are made in a timely manner.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **TEACHING PROFESSION**

#### **STATE OF NEBRASKA**

#### **STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES**

##### **Introduction**

It is the responsibility of the Commission to provide advice and counsel to the State Board of Education in developing standards of professional practices in areas including, but not limited to, (1) ethical and professional performance, (2) competency, (3) continuance in professional service, and (4) contractual obligations.

Standards applicable to professional practices have been adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education. The Code of Ethics, Standards for Continuance in Professional Service, and Contractual Obligations are presented in this pamphlet. The Commission shall adhere to these standards in making recommendations of whatever nature in accordance with its statutory authority.

The State Board of Education shall request the Commission or a special committee of members thereof to hold hearings and make recommendations to the State Board of Education concerning alleged violations of standards of professional ethics and practices by holders of public school certificates. Each educator can be aided by this publication in developing and continuing the use of professional practices that are in the best interest of the students, the profession, and the public.

##### **CODE OF ETHICS**

###### **Preamble**

The educator shall believe in the worth and dignity of human beings. Recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, the devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic citizenship, the educator shall regard as essential to these goals the protection of the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator shall accept the responsibility to practice the profession to these ethical standards.

The educator shall recognize the magnitude of the responsibility they have accepted in choosing a career in education, and engages, individually and collectively with other educators, to judge their colleagues, and to be judged by them, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

The standards listed in this section are held to be generally accepted minimal standards for public school certificate holders in Nebraska with respect to ethical and professional conduct and are,

therefore, declared to be the criteria of ethical and professional performance adopted pursuant to the provisions of Section 79-868 R.R.S. for holders of public school certificates.

If the certificate holder is employed in a nonpublic school, that context shall be taken into account in the application of these standards.

### **Principle I - Commitment as a Professional Educator**

Fundamental to the pursuit of high educational standards is the maintenance of a profession possessed of individuals with high skills, intellect, integrity, wisdom, and compassion. The educator shall exhibit good moral character, maintain high standards of performance, and promote equality of opportunity.

In fulfillment of the educator's contractual and professional responsibilities, the educator:

1. Shall not interfere with the exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities of students, colleagues, parents, school patrons, or school board members.
2. Shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, marital status, age, national origin, ethnic background, or handicapping condition.
3. Shall not use coercive means, or promise or provide special treatment to students, colleagues, school patrons, or school board members in order to influence professional decisions.
4. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact for which the educator is responsible.
5. Shall not exploit professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, school patrons, or school board members for personal gain or private advantage.
6. Shall not sexually harass students, parents or school patrons, employees, or board members.
7. Shall not have had revoked for cause in another state a teaching certificate, administrative certificate, or any certificate enabling a person to engage in any of the activities for which a special services counseling certificate is issued in Nebraska.
8. Shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties.
9. Shall report to the Commissioner any known violation of Principle I, number 7; Principle III, number 5; or Principle IV, number 2.
10. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported a violation of this chapter.

### **Principle II - Commitment to the Student**

Mindful that a profession exists for the purpose of serving the best interest of the client, the educator shall practice the profession with genuine interest, concern, and consideration for the student. The educator shall work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator:

1. Shall permit the student to pursue reasonable independent scholastic effort and shall permit the student access to varying points of view.
2. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter for which the educator is responsible.
3. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions which interfere with the learning process or are harmful to health or safety.
4. Shall conduct professional educational activities in accordance with sound educational practices that are in the best interest of the student.
5. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes, or is required by law.
6. Shall not tutor for remuneration students assigned to their classes, unless approved by the local board of education.
7. Shall not discipline students using corporal punishment.

### **Principle III - Commitment to the Public**

The magnitude of responsibility inherent in the education process requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage. The educator bears particular responsibility for instilling an understanding of and confidence in the rule of law, a respect for individual freedom, and a responsibility to promote respect by the public for the integrity of the profession.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the public, the educator:

1. Shall not misrepresent an institution with which the educator is affiliated and shall take added precautions to distinguish between the educator's personal and institutional views.
2. Shall not use institutional privileges for private gain or to promote political candidates, political issues, or partisan political activities.
3. Shall neither offer nor accept gifts or favors that will impair professional judgment.
4. Shall support the principle of due process and protect the political, citizenship, and natural rights of all individuals.
5. Shall not commit any act of moral turpitude or commit any felony under the laws of the United States or any state or territory.
6. Shall with reasonable diligence, attend to the duties of their professional position.

### **Principle IV - Commitment to the Profession**

In the belief that the quality of the services to the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to improve service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education. The educator shall believe that sound professional relationships with colleagues are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator:

1. Shall provide upon the request of an aggrieved party, a written statement of specific reasons for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
2. Shall not misrepresent their professional qualifications, or those of colleagues.
3. Shall practice the profession only with proper certification and shall actively oppose the practice of the profession by persons known to be unqualified.

### **Principle V - Commitment to Professional Employment Practices**

The educator shall regard the employment agreement as a pledge to be executed both in spirit and in fact. The educator shall believe that sound personnel relationships with governing boards are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.

In fulfillment of the obligation to professional employment practices, the educator:

1. Shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or responsibility on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.
2. Shall not knowingly withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or employer or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
3. Shall give prompt notice to the employer of any change in availability of service.
4. Shall conduct professional business through designated procedures, when available, that have been approved by the employing agency.
5. Shall not assign to unqualified personnel, tasks for which an educator is responsible.
6. Shall permit no commercial or personal exploitation of their professional position.
7. Shall use time on duty and leave time for the purpose for which intended.

## **STANDARDS FOR CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS FOR ALL CERTIFICATE HOLDERS**

Members of the teaching profession shall adhere fully to the terms of a contract or appointment.

### **Summary**

Teaching in the public schools of Nebraska and related administrative and supervisory services are recognized as a profession by the Legislature.

In recognition of the professional status of educators, the Governor is authorized to appoint a Professional Practices Commission representative of elementary and secondary teachers, administrators, and higher education. The goal of the Commission is to develop, promote and enforce standards of professionalism for Nebraska educators.

## APPENDIX D

### **Supplemental policies and procedures for Sign Language Interpreters**

#### **Code of professional conduct:**

The Code of Professional Conduct for the Suburban Schools' Program is based on the Code of Professional Conduct of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) with the perspective of an educational setting. The RID Code of Professional Conduct referenced is in parenthesis following each principle.

1. The EI/T shall be dedicated to providing competent interpreting services in a manner befitting a professional. (RID tenet 2)
  - 1.1. Professional appearance: EI/Ts must always keep in mind their role to facilitate communication and their responsibilities as visual representatives of the consumers involved in any given interpreting assignment. EI/Ts should dress in a manner that will be as unobtrusive as possible and assure the best background for signing. Avoid highly visible jewelry, excessive makeup and other characteristics of physical appearance that are distracting.
  - 1.2. Personal Qualities: The EI/T must be dependable, responsible and reliable at all times. The EI/T must use tact when interacting with others, remaining diplomatic and perceptive. The EI/T must maintain an acceptable demeanor, exhibiting self-confidence and self-control.
2. The EI/T judiciously safeguards assignment-related information of a confidential nature. The obligation to protect confidences does not prevent an educational interpreter from revealing information to their employer or member of the IEP professional team for record keeping, program management and supervision. (RID tenet 1)
3. The EI/T provides parents and other members of the educational team on the student's use of interpreting service when requested. The EI/T will redirect parents and other team members to the deaf educator/resource teacher for parental/team member questions that are not related to the student's use of an interpreter within the educational setting. (RID tenets 1, 2, 3, and 4)
4. The EI/T and deaf educator/resource teacher shall provide information, when necessary, to educate the consumers about the role and appropriate use of the interpreter. (RID tenets 2 and 3)
5. The EI/T conveys the content, spirit and affect of the speaker using the language system approved by the educational team. (RID tenet 2)
6. The EI/T will not counsel nor interject personal opinion during interpretations/transliterations. (RID tenet 3)
7. The EI/T will maintain an appropriate adult-student relationship with all children/students (deaf and hearing). This is the ability to maintain "Professional Distance" or professional boundaries. (RID tenet 3)

#### **Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct**

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. has set forth the following principles of ethical behavior to protect and guide interpreters and transliterators and hearing and deaf consumers. Underlying these principles is the desire to insure for all the right to communicate.

This Code of Professional Conduct applies to all members of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. and to all certified non-members.

**Tenets (updated 2008)**

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
7. Interpreters engage in professional development.

**Educational Interpreter Roles and Responsibilities**

1. The IEP team, not an individual EI/T, has the responsibility to determine any alternative modes of communication to be used in order to meet the needs of an individual student.
2. The EI/T will use an English-based system such as Signing Exact English System during subjects such as Reading, Writing, or English where the focus is learning to read and/or write English.
3. The EI/T will interpret any and all information presented in a classroom situation: formal instruction, individual instruction, informal social interaction between peers and conversation in classroom when appropriate.
4. The EI/T will voice interpret and relay information to non-signers.
5. The EI/T will rephrase information or simplify to aid understanding without providing the student with answers. If time does not permit during class time, the EI/T will inform the resource or deaf education teacher that extra help is needed and be willing to tutor if requested.
6. The EI/T will interpret at school functions during the school day.
7. The EI/T will tutor students when requested by deaf educators.
8. The EI/T will use any preparation time to prepare for future classes. It is the responsibility of the EI/T to know the assignments in advance so that any unknown vocabulary can be learned prior to class.
9. The EI/T will notify the deaf education teacher of tests, reviews, special assignments and any other concerns that impact the student's performance.
10. The EI/T will remain in the assigned classroom until the end of the class period, even when the student is doing independent seatwork. S/he should be available to interpret at all times.
11. Clarify routine points for the student, but do not assume the teacher's role. Repeat the interpretation of instruction only when it is needed, not routinely.
12. The EI/T will make sure students understand their interpreting, requesting feedback from the student as age or maturity allows. The EI/T will help the student develop their ability to provide appropriate feedback as a consumer of the service.

13. The EI/T will interpret all information presented in the class. Do not make indiscriminate decisions to leave out some class information.
14. The EI/T will use fingerspelling to convey key vocabulary, as method to emphasize a word/concept, and as a sign; do not invent signs without prior discussion with the student. The fingerspelling presentation must contain **all** the letters of the word and be presented

at a rate at which the student can receptively comprehend the word. EI/TVs need to be aware of the students' challenges with which they work. Some students may be poor spellers or have memory problems; therefore, reading a word sign may be more meaningful, faster, and provide a clearer message for students to key into than fingerspelling.

15. The EI/T will obtain information on the day's goals, tests, review, projects, extra credit work, special assignments, etc. for the deaf educator. Students are also responsible for all afore stated information.
16. The EI/T will refer any questions from parents regarding their child to the appropriate teacher(s). The EI/T **will not** discuss student's performance.
17. The EI/T will request to review student folders of those individuals for whom the EI/T will provide service. This review will help better prepare the EI/T to meet the language and learning demands of the students. This information may also be acquired from the deaf education teacher or the student's IEP case manager. All information learned during the review or conversation should be kept strictly confidential.
18. The EI/T will complete a sub folder. This folder should be prepared within the first week of school and be updated accordingly. These folders will be housed in the interpreter's desk/office or in the deaf education room. Sub folders should contain the following information and need to be kept up to date with schedule changes and appropriate forms:
  - Opening letter from director
  - Schedules
  - Positioning information
  - Equipment needs of students such as Alpha Smart, FM
  - Communication mode and other special information
  - Building map with key rooms/locations highlighted
  - Substitute Interpreter Time Sheet
  - Sub notes (use form appropriate for the grade level and class schedule)

### **Educational Interpreter Attendance**

In order to ensure consistency and to maximize progress of the students who are deaf or hard of hearing, it is crucial for the EI/T to be at work. Punctuality is essential. If an absence from work is necessary, follow these guidelines.

1. All EI/TVs must call the designated interpreter or program director at 402-496-1419 (morning) or 402-339-2090 (during school hours) to report an absence.
  - a. Must call between 6:00 am-7:15 am – **DO NOT** send a text message and **DO NOT** leave a message
  - b. Also leave a message with Diane Meyer at 402-339-2090 or notify Diane via e-mail: [diane\\_meyer@ralstonschools.org](mailto:diane_meyer@ralstonschools.org)
2. The ill/absent EI/T will contact their assigned building also.

If you are at school and become ill:

  - a. You must notify the building's deaf education teacher.
  - b. You must contact the designated interpreter/program director at 402-339-2090

- c. Also leave a message with Diane Meyer at 402-339-2090 or notify Diane via e-mail: [diane\\_meyer@ralstonschools.org](mailto:diane_meyer@ralstonschools.org)
3. The EI/T will document the beginning and end of their workday through the electronic timecard system as required by Ralston Public Schools.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Suburban Schools' Program offers many opportunities for extra-duty pay to interpreters. Extra-curricular activities include: sports, meetings, clubs, Open house, National Honor Society, parent conferences, etc. EI/T duty time is seven and one-half hours of which 30 minutes is a paid lunch, an additional benefit. Any activity outside of assigned duty time is considered extra-curricular and is done for extra pay. Overtime pay (time and one half) begins after you reach 40 hours in one week. The 40 hours does not include the paid lunch benefit but does include negotiated leaves.

The amount of time interpreted must be rounded to the nearest quarter hour. For example, if an activity runs ten minutes, the EI/T is to charge for fifteen. If the activity runs for 25 minutes, the EI/T is to charge for thirty minutes.

Please sign-up if you are interested in covering extra-curricular activities. The activities are posted via email to all the EI/T staff. Job assignments are based on order of interest. Any individual accepting an activity must locate his/her own substitute for the activity in the event of illness. Recurrent activities such as sport practices may be split between interpreters.

Mileage can be claimed for extra-curricular activities under certain circumstances. The mileage form can be found in Ralston's Cloud. See the section on mileage included in the forms section for details on completing the document. Conditions for mileage reimbursement for Extra-curricular activities:

- Mileage cannot be claimed for driving back to school for a club, sport, or evening activity (i.e., open house, parent-teacher conferences, etc.) in which you will be paid for your time. Example: drama rehearsal starts at 7:00 pm; the interpreter goes home between school and rehearsal—no mileage can be claimed.
- Mileage cannot be claimed for driving to a school or competition site for sports when the event occurs on the weekend such as practice or a meet/game.
- Interpreters are to facilitate communication with any non-signers (coach or fellow students), which include drive times to off-campus events. The only exception to this is when there is no room on the district vehicle for the interpreter. The program director must be notified of this situation prior to the event for approval to drive a personal vehicle and request reimbursement.

### **Educational Interpreter/Transliterater Performance Appraisals**

#### **Observations**

The director will observe EI/Ts twice a year. Evaluations are also sent to the personnel office. This will provide for documentation of skills as well as professionalism. The director will complete the evaluation. Copies of the format are included so the EI/T can be aware of expectations. A Ralston Public Schools' general evaluation of employee skills is also completed by the program director with input from the deaf educator.

Any areas deemed unsatisfactory or "in need of improvement" will be addressed initially through informal interventions between the interpreter and the Director. If performance is not improved in a stated period of time, the interpreter will be placed on formal intervention, which can lead to termination.

**Continuing Education**

The Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51 outlines the rules and regulations governing employment of EI/Ts in the state of Nebraska. The guidelines can be view at <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/SPED/sped.html>. It is under the Policy and Procedures section. To maintain employment in the state, educational interpreters will obtain 20 clock hours of educationally related continuing education every two years. The RID Code of Professional Conduct, tenet 7, also requires continued professional development.

APPENDIX E

## **Supplemental policies and procedures for Drivers**

### **Dress Code**

Drivers are expected to present a neat, clean, and professional appearance at all times. The following minimum Transportation Department dress code standards are based on professional image, safety, and health.

- a. Drivers will wear Transportation shirts provided by the district of them or Ralston shirts.
- b. Drivers will wear enclosed shoes. No open-toed shoes are allowed. Sandals and flip-flops are not safe in the event of a bus evacuation.

### **Minimum Acceptable Conduct**

Driving school children is an awesome responsibility. Consequently, drivers are held accountable for the safety of their passengers. Ralston Public Schools drivers must be above reproach at all times. The following guidelines reflect the minimum acceptable standards of conduct and dress expected of all drivers while on duty.

- a. Smoking in or around any school district vehicle is prohibited.
- b. Eating or drinking on the bus while students are present or while the vehicle is in motion is prohibited.
- c. Drivers will not use inappropriate language or engage in inappropriate conversations while on duty and/or while on Ralston Public School property.
- d. Unauthorized connections of electronic equipment (i.e., radios, tape decks, CDs...) to any district vehicle is prohibited. Drivers must be able to hear sirens and train signals.
- e. Inappropriate conduct or conversations with students is strictly prohibited. Inappropriate conversation or comments about students is strictly prohibited.
- f. Failure to wear seat belts in district vehicles.
- g. Regular and predictable attendance is a required condition for employment.
- h. While on duty, drivers should treat parents, community members, students, patrons, and all individuals in a respectful manner. Incidents involving dissatisfaction with Ralston's transportation department should be reported to the transportation supervisor immediately.

### **Termination and/or Suspension**

Serious infraction, including but not limited to the following, may be cause for immediate termination and/or suspension:

- a. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- b. Destruction of school property
- c. Failure to stop at railroad crossings
- d. Failure to report an accident involving a district vehicle
- e. Failure to report an accident involving a personal vehicle
- f. Carrying unauthorized passengers: In accordance with Nebraska Department of Education, Title 92, "No one except school personnel, supervisory personnel, monitoring personnel, and pupils assigned to a pupil transportation vehicle for a particular route schedule or for an activity trip as defined in 92 NAC 92-002.02 , may ride such vehicles" Essentially, this rule means no one other than students, sponsors,

- and chaperones may ride a school bus.
- g. Failure to pick up a student
  - h. Leaving a student on the vehicle after returning to the Transportation Center or other final destination
  - i. Unauthorized use of the district vehicles or using the vehicle for personal errands
  - j. Failure to be punctual
  - k. Deviating, without approval, from the assigned route unless there are unforeseen traffic circumstances
  - l. Failure to pre-trip a vehicle properly. Arrive early enough to complete the pre-trip before leaving the lot. The time clock will show if you had time to do the pre-trip.
  - m. Inappropriate language, comments, or touching towards students, staff, and/or other adults
  - n. Tampering with any cameras and/or recording devices located inside the vehicle.

### **Basic Loading and Unloading Policies**

Bus drivers should adhere to the following procedures:

- a. If a parent wishes to change a pick-up/drop-off time/location, advise them to contact the Coordinator of Transportation. Drivers are not authorized to make changes.
- b. When running more than 10 minutes late for the schedule pick-up or drop-off, contact the Coordinator of Transportation who will pass on that information as appropriate.
- c. Pick-ups should be curbside at the student's residence. If this is not possible, park the vehicle so the student does not have to walk on the roadway.
- d. If a student is not at the authorized stop at the scheduled time, drivers will wait 3 minutes and then leave. Call the Coordinator of Transportation at the soonest opportunity.
- e. Drivers are responsible for ensuring all students are properly seated on the bus with the appropriate restraint system secured, except if a parent/aide assisted/seated the child.
- f. After arriving at the school of attendance, drivers or the para are responsible for removing students from the seat and assisting students in leaving the vehicle, if needed.
- g. After all students have departed the vehicle, immediately check the vehicle for any students or items that may have been left behind.
- h. When drivers are given route changes, new student information, or when a student has been dropped from the route, all outdated information is to be shredded at the Central Office.
- i. If no one is at the student's home or the student cannot enter their home at the end of the day, the driver will continue the route and then, return to the student's home and call the Coordinator of Transportation. If after the second attempt, there is still no one at the home, then the student will be returned to school of attendance. If the child is an open enrolled student, call the Coordinator of Transportation.

### **Emergency Procedures**

The following procedures will be used in the event of an accident involving a district vehicle, other emergencies, when experiencing mechanical problems, or during inclement weather.

**Accidents (Vehicle contact with any moving or stationary object)**

All accidents will be reported to the Coordinator of Transportation immediately. Drivers will call immediately, and drivers will initiate a 911 call if appropriate. The following procedures will be followed for all accidents.

- a. Stop the vehicle as soon as possible
- b. Drivers involved in an accident must take and maintain control of the situation. This is especially important when injuries are involved.
- c. Notify the Coordinator of Transportation of the situation. Give the following information:
  - Vehicle number
  - Location
  - Number of vehicles involved
  - Number of students on board and what school they are from
  - Number of injured
- d. Check for injuries and administer and/or direct first aid if required
- e. Evacuate passengers to a safe area if necessary
- f. Set up “breakdown” reflectors to protect accident scene and warn motorists
- g. Complete accident forms in driver route book
- h. Make no statements or comments to anyone other than law enforcement and/or district representatives

**Mechanical Problems**

If a non-safety mechanical problem arises while en-route, annotate the problem on the pre-trip vehicle inspection form. If unsure of the seriousness of the mechanical problem, contact the Coordinator of Transportation. If a safety related mechanical problem or a breakdown occurs, contact the Coordinator of Transportation and wait for further instructions.

**Inclement Weather Procedures**

Drivers will provide the Coordinator of Transportation and the Central Office with home phone numbers, addresses, and emergency contact phone numbers to facilitate contact in the event of inclement weather.

If weather is threatening during the day, drivers must provide the Coordinator of Transportation with a phone number (or some other piece contact information) in case of early dismissal.

If inclement weather occurs while en-route, the following procedures will be used:

- a. Contact the Coordinator of Transportation only when delayed more than 10 minutes or completely immobilized by weather or traffic
- b. In the case of disabled/immobilized vehicle, drivers will remain with the students to supervise and ensure their safety
- c. Students are to remain onboard a disabled/immobilized vehicle until an alternate vehicle has arrived, unless remaining on the vehicle creates a safety concern
- d. Under no circumstances will drivers release students without the permission of the Coordinator of Transportation
- e. Vehicle windows and roof hatches will be closed after the last daily run, and whenever there is the possibility of inclement weather
- f. During cold weather operations, all diesel vehicles will be plugged in at night.

- g. On mornings that are 20 degrees or below, the early start crew may start vehicles
- h. Drivers will not leave vehicles unattended while the engine is running at any time, including warm-up, except during the pre-trip inspection

### **Tornado/Severe Weather Procedures**

A tornado watch indicates an area in which atmospheric conditions exist from which a tornado could develop.

A tornado warning is issued when a tornado has actually been sighted in the area or is indicated by radar.

The following procedures are designed to ensure the safety of passengers when the threat of or actual severe weather is experienced. Drivers must be familiar with these procedures and able to respond appropriately in the event of deteriorating weather conditions. Students are not to board a district vehicle while under a tornado warning.

### **Tornado Warning While on Route**

Every situation involving a tornado/severe weather will be different. Drivers must always consider the following factors when dealing with a tornado warning/severe weather:

- a. ALWAYS maintain control of the situation and accountability of all passengers.
- b. Proceed immediately to the nearest safe location for evacuation. If there is immediate danger and no shelter is available, evacuate students from the vehicle and into the nearest ditch or culvert at least 100 feet away from the vehicle or any other vehicle.
- c. In most instances, the driver will be the last off the bus as they will direct the evacuation and ensure all passengers have exited the vehicle. There may be instances, however, that it would be more appropriate for the driver to be the first out of the vehicle in order to direct passengers to the appropriate safe location. In this case, drivers must assign a responsible passenger to assist in the evacuation by ensuring all passengers have exited the vehicle.
- d. Make certain all students go to the safe location and are accounted for.
- e. Drivers should make every effort to keep the Coordinator of Transportation apprised of the evacuation location to include the number of passengers onboard. Once the tornado warning has been lifted, drivers will advise Dispatch when they are 10-8 and reaffirm the number of passengers.
- f. Do not release passengers without the Coordinator of Transportation's permission.

APPENDIX F

## Title IX

**Nondiscrimination.** The school district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the school district’s Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, or both. The school district’s Title IX Coordinator may be contacted at Title IX Coordinator, 8545 Park Drive, Ralston, NE, or by email at [ryan\\_pivonka@ralstonschools.org](mailto:ryan_pivonka@ralstonschools.org), or via phone at 402-331- 4700. The school district’s nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures are included this policy, or can be accessed at:

[https://www.ralstonschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=1169&dataid=9780&FileName=3053\\_-\\_Nondiscrimination.pdf](https://www.ralstonschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=1169&dataid=9780&FileName=3053_-_Nondiscrimination.pdf). To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please contact the Title IX Coordinator.

**Retaliation Prohibited.** Retaliation, including peer retaliation, is prohibited in the school district’s education program or activity. If the school district has information about conduct that reasonably may constitute retaliation under Title IX, it may be required to treat it as an allegation of sex discrimination. Upon receiving a complaint alleging retaliation, the school district will initiate its grievance procedures or informal resolution process.

**Definitions.** As used in this policy, the following terms are defined as follows:

**Complainant** means an employee, a student, or a parent, guardian, or other individual with the legal right to act on behalf of a complainant who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment; or any other person who may have been subjected to sex discrimination when that person was participating or attempting to participate in the school district’s education program or activity.

**Complaint** means an oral or written request to the school district that objectively can be understood as a request for the school district to investigate and make a determination about alleged sex discrimination under Title IX.

**Consent** for purposes of this policy means the willingness in fact for conduct to occur. An individual may, as a result of age, incapacity, disability, lack of information, or other circumstances be incapable of providing consent to some or all sexual conduct or activity. Neither verbal nor physical resistance is required to establish that an individual did not consent. School district officials will consider the totality of the circumstances in determining whether there was consent for any specific conduct. Consent may be revoked or withdrawn at any time.

**Respondent** means a person who is alleged to have violated the school district’s prohibition on sex discrimination. When a sex discrimination complaint alleges that the school district’s policy or practice discriminates on the basis of sex, the school district is not considered a respondent.

**Sex-based harassment** prohibited by this part is a form of sex discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex that is:

**Quid pro quo harassment.** An employee, agent, or other person authorized by the school district to provide an aid, benefit, or service under the school district's education program or activity explicitly or impliedly conditioning the provision of such an aid, benefit, or service on a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;

**Hostile environment harassment.** Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the school district's education program or activity (i.e., creates a hostile environment).

Whether a hostile environment has been created is a fact-specific inquiry that includes consideration of the following:

- The degree to which the conduct affected the complainant's ability to access the school district's education program or activity;
- The type, frequency, and duration of the conduct;
- The parties' ages, roles within the school district's education program or activity, previous interactions, and other factors about each party that may be relevant to evaluating the effects of the conduct;
- The location of the conduct and the context in which the conduct occurred; and
- Other sex-based harassment in the school district's education program or activity.

**Sexual assault** meaning an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

**Sex Offenses, Forcible**—Any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent.

- **Rape**—(Except Statutory Rape) The carnal knowledge of a person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- **Sodomy**—Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity
- **Sexual Assault with an Object**—To use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity
- **Fondling**—The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

**Sex Offenses, Non-forcible**—(Except Prostitution Offenses) Unlawful, non-forcible sexual intercourse.

- Incest—Non-Forcible sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law
- Statutory Rape—Non-Forcible sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent

**Dating violence** meaning violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the length and type of relationship and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship;

**Domestic violence** meaning felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a person who:

- Is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction of the school district, or a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim;
- Is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
- Shares a child in common with the victim; or
- Commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction

**Stalking** meaning engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

### **Response to Sex-based Harassment.**

**All Employees.** All school district employees must notify the Title IX Coordinator when the employee has information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX.

**Title IX Coordinator.** The school district will designate and authorize at least one employee as the school district’s “Title IX Coordinator,” to coordinate the school district’s efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX and this policy. The superintendent or Title IX Coordinator is authorized to delegate specific duties to one or more designees.

For conduct that could constitute sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator must take the following actions:

- Offer and coordinate supportive measures for the complainant and for the respondent;
- Notify the complainant or the individual who reported the conduct of the grievance procedures and, if appropriate, the informal resolution process.
- Take other appropriate steps to avoid the recurrence of sex discrimination and restore or maintain equal access to the school district’s programs and activities.

**Supportive Measures.** The school district will provide supportive measures, as appropriate, in cases involving sex-based harassment. These measures may include but are not limited to: counseling; extending deadlines; increased supervision; no-contact directives; leaves of absence; changes in class, work, or activities, regardless of whether there is a comparable alternative; and training and education programs related to sex-based harassment. Supportive measures may be continued, modified, or discontinued at the conclusion of any grievance process. Supportive measures will not be disclosed to anyone other than the person to whom they apply and others, including school officials, who need to know the supportive measures to implement them.

**Requests to Modify Supportive Measures.** A complainant or respondent may request modification or reversal of the school district’s decision to provide, deny, change, or terminate supportive measures applicable to them. Requests must be made to the Title IX Coordinator in writing, and an impartial individual will review the request.

**Students with Disabilities.** If the complainant or respondent is a student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator will consult with one or more members of the student’s IEP or Section 504 team to determine compliance with those laws while implementing supportive measures and all other requirements of this policy and Title IX.

**Emergency Removal.** The school district is authorized to remove a respondent from the school district’s education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the school district undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis; determines that an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of a complainant or other persons arising from the allegations of sex discrimination justifies removal; and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

**Administrative Leave.** The school district is authorized to place an employee respondent on administrative leave from employment responsibilities during the pendency of the school district’s grievance procedures.

**Informal Resolution.** The school district may offer an informal resolution process unless the complaint includes allegations that an employee engaged in sex-based harassment of a student or informal resolution would be contrary to law. Prior to initiating informal resolution, the parties will be provided with notice of the allegations. Participation in informal resolution is voluntary, and any informal resolution will include consent from the complainant and respondent, the ability to withdraw from the process, and the right to resume the grievance process. If an agreement is reached, it precludes the parties from initiating or resuming the grievance process.

The informal resolution facilitator will not be the same person as the investigator or the decisionmaker in the school district’s grievance procedures. Potential terms that may be included in an informal resolution agreement include but are not limited to restrictions on contact, restrictions on participation in programs or activities, and disciplinary sanctions.

If informal resolution is offered, the school district will maintain all evidence gathered, communications about the informal resolution process, and the agreement reached. This information will be disclosed to outside individuals only as permitted by law and if required to

implement the requirements of the agreement or Title IX. If no agreement is reached, only relevant and permissible evidence received during the informal resolution process will be considered during the grievance process.

**Grievance Procedures to Resolve Complaints of Sex Discrimination.** Any person designated as Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decision maker will not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against any party, generally or specifically. The decisionmaker may be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or investigator.

**Complaint.** Complaints of sex-based harassment may only be made by a complainant; a parent, guardian, or other individual with the legal right to act on behalf of a complainant; or the Title IX Coordinator. Complaints of sex discrimination (excluding complaints of sex-based harassment) may be made by any person who was participating or attempting to participate in the school district's education program or activity at the time of the alleged sex discrimination.

**Complaint by Coordinator.** In the absence of a complaint made by any other individual, the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether to initiate a complaint of sex discrimination. The Title IX Coordinator must consider, at a minimum, the following factors:

- The complainant's request not to proceed with the initiation of a complaint;
- The complainant's reasonable safety concerns regarding the initiation of a Complaint;
- The risk that additional acts of sex discrimination would occur if a complaint is not initiated;
- The severity of the alleged sex discrimination, including whether the discrimination, if established, would require the removal of a respondent from campus or imposition of another disciplinary sanction to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence;
- The age and relationship of the parties, including whether the respondent is an employee of the school district;
- The scope of the alleged sex discrimination, including information suggesting a pattern, ongoing sex discrimination, or sex discrimination alleged to have impacted multiple individuals;
- The availability of evidence to assist a decisionmaker in determining whether sex discrimination occurred; and
- Whether the school district could end the alleged sex discrimination and prevent its recurrence without initiating its grievance procedures.

If the Title IX Coordinator initiates a complaint, they will notify the complainant prior to doing so and address reasonable concerns about the complainant's safety or the safety of others, including by providing supportive measures.

**Consolidation of Complaints.** The school district may consolidate complaints of sex discrimination against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against another party, when the allegations of sex discrimination arise out of the same facts or circumstances. When more than one complainant or more than one respondent is involved, references in this section to a party, complainant, or respondent include the plural, as applicable.

**Basic Procedures.** This grievance procedure is governed by the following basic requirements:

- A respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged sex discrimination until a determination is made at the conclusion of the grievance procedure;
- The school district will treat the complainant and respondent equitably throughout the grievance process;
- The school district will take reasonable steps to protect the privacy of individuals participating in the grievance process in a manner that does not restrict the parties from obtaining and presenting evidence, speaking to witnesses, consulting with family members or advisors, or otherwise participating in the grievance process;
- The District will use the following timelines for each complaint, but the Title IX Coordinator or designee may extend them as needed:

Major Stage	Target Duration (calendar days)
Completion of the school district’s decision whether to dismiss or investigate a complaint of sex discrimination	1-15
Investigation	1-30
Determination	1-30
Appeal	1-20

**Notice of Allegations.** Upon initiation of the grievance procedure, the school district will provide notice of the allegations to the parties whose identities are known. The notice will include a copy of this policy; the parties involved in the incident(s); the conduct alleged to constitute sex discrimination; and the date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s), if available. Retaliation is prohibited.

If the school district decides to investigate additional allegations of sex discrimination that are not included in the initial notice, the school district will provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties.

**Complaint Investigation.** The burden is on the school district to conduct an investigation that gathers sufficient evidence to determine whether sex discrimination occurred. The individual investigating and deciding the complaint will:

- Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present fact witnesses and relevant and permissible evidence;
- Objectively review all evidence gathered through the investigation and determine what evidence is relevant and permissible;
- Provide each party with an accurate description of the relevant and permissible evidence, and upon request, copies of this evidence;
- Provide the parties a reasonable opportunity to respond to the evidence;
- Use a process that enables the decision maker to question parties and witnesses to adequately assess a party’s or witness’s credibility, but credibility will not be based upon any individual’s status as a complainant, respondent, or witness; and

- Take reasonable steps to prevent and address the parties' unauthorized disclosure of information and evidence obtained solely through the grievance procedures. For purposes of this paragraph, disclosures of such information and evidence for purposes of administrative proceedings or litigation related to the complaint of sex discrimination are authorized.

**Relevant and Permissible Evidence.** The school district will consider relevant and permissible evidence. Relevant evidence is evidence related to the allegations of sex discrimination under investigation as part of the grievance procedure. Questions are relevant when they seek evidence that may aid in showing whether the alleged sex discrimination occurred, and evidence is relevant when it may aid a decisionmaker in determining whether the alleged sex discrimination occurred.

Generally relevant evidence is permissible, but does not include:

- Evidence that is protected under a privilege as recognized by Federal or State law;
- A party's or witness's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychologist, or other recognized professional in connection with the provision of treatment to the party or witness unless the school district obtains that party's or witness's voluntary, written consent for use in this grievance procedures; and
- Evidence that relates to the complainant's sexual interests or prior sexual conduct, unless that evidence is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged conduct or is evidence about specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual conduct with the respondent that is offered to prove consent to the alleged sex-based harassment. The fact of prior consensual sexual conduct between the complainant and respondent does not by itself demonstrate or imply the complainant's consent to the alleged sex-based harassment or preclude a determination that sexbased harassment occurred.

**Determining Whether Sex Discrimination Occurred.** The school district will:

- Use the preponderance of the evidence standard of proof, that it is more likely than not, to determine whether sex discrimination occurred;
- Use only relevant and permissible evidence to reach a determination;
- Notify the parties in writing of the determination whether sex discrimination occurred, including the rationale for such determination, and the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal, if applicable;
- If there is a determination that sex discrimination occurred, coordinate and provide remedies to restore equal access, coordinate the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions on a respondent, including notification to the complainant of any such disciplinary sanctions, and require the Title IX Coordinator to take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur;
- Not discipline a party, witness, or others participating in a school district's grievance procedures for making a false statement or for engaging in consensual sexual conduct based solely on the school district's determination whether sex discrimination occurred.

**Dismissal of a Complaint.** A complaint of sex discrimination made through the grievance procedure may be dismissed for any of the following reasons:

- The school district is unable to identify the respondent after taking reasonable steps to do so;
- The respondent is not participating in the school district’s education program or activity and is not employed by the school district;
- The complainant voluntarily withdraws any or all of the allegations in the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator declines to initiate a complaint, and the school district determines that without the complainant’s withdrawn allegations, the remaining alleged conduct would not constitute sex discrimination even if proven;
- The school district determines the conduct alleged in the complaint, even if proven, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX. Before dismissing the complaint under this paragraph, the school district must make reasonable efforts to clarify the allegations with the complainant.

Upon dismissal, the school district will promptly notify the complainant of the basis for the dismissal. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then the school district must also notify the respondent of the dismissal and the basis for the dismissal promptly following notification to the complainant, or simultaneously if notification is in writing.

The school district will notify the complainant that a dismissal may be appealed and provide the complainant with an opportunity to appeal the dismissal. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then the school district must also notify the respondent that the dismissal may be appealed on the bases set out in this policy. Upon the dismissal of a complaint, at a minimum, the school district will:

- Offer supportive measures to the complainant, and offer supportive measures to the respondent if the respondent has been notified of the complaint;
- Require its Title IX Coordinator to take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the school district’s education program or activity.

**Appeal.** The school district will provide the parties the opportunity to appeal the decision-maker’s written determination or a dismissal of a complaint, on the grounds identified below. The school district will implement appeal procedures equally for the parties, including a reasonable and equal opportunity to make a statement in support of or challenging the outcome being appealed. Appeals under Title IX, like other comparable proceedings, will be handled consistent with the school district’s general complaint policy.

**Time for Appeal.** Appeals may only be initiated by submitting a written Notice of Appeal to the superintendent within three (3) calendar days of the party’s receipt of (1) the written determination of whether sex discrimination occurred from which the appeal is taken, or (2) the written dismissal of the complaint from which the appeal is taken.

**Notice of Appeal Filed By Party.** The Notice of Appeal must include (a) the name of the party or parties appealing, (b) the determination, dismissal, or portion thereof being appealed, and (c) a concise statement of the specific grounds (from the following subsection) upon which the appeal is based. A party’s failure to timely submit a Notice of

Appeal will be deemed a waiver of the party's right to appeal under this policy and Title IX.

**Appeals of Dismissals.** If a dismissal is appealed, the school district will provide notice of the allegations to the complainant and respondent if not provided previously.

**Appeal Decision.** The decision maker for the appeal will be an individual who did not take part in the investigation, determination, and/or decision to dismiss the complaint. The appeal decision maker will notify the parties of the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result.

**Disciplinary Sanctions and Remedies.** If it is determined that sex-based harassment occurred, the school district may impose disciplinary sanctions that may include suspension, expulsion, mandatory reassignment, adverse employment action up to and including termination, or any other actions regarding student behavior that are reasonably necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or prevent interference with the educational process. Such actions may include counseling of students, parent conferences, referral to restorative justice practices or services, rearrangement of schedules, requirements that a student remain in school after regular hours to do additional work, restriction of extracurricular activity, or requirements that a student receive counseling, psychological evaluation, or psychiatric evaluation upon the written consent of a parent or guardian to such counseling or evaluation.

**Superintendent Authorized to Contract.** The board authorizes the Superintendent to contract for, designate, and appoint individuals to serve in the roles of the school district's investigator(s), decision-maker(s), informal resolution facilitator(s), or appellate decision-maker(s) as contemplated by this policy.

**Recordkeeping.** The school district will maintain the following documents for a period of at least seven years:

- For each complaint of sex discrimination, records documenting the informal resolution process or grievance procedures and the outcome.
- Records documenting the actions the school district took to meet its obligations under Title IX for any allegation of sex discrimination.
- All materials used to provide training as required by this policy. The school district will make these training materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.

## RPS Staff Handbook redline proposed changes 2025-2026

### Page 8 - Update to staffing/name changes

### Page 20 - Travel -

- New paragraph to clarify when hotels will be approved for conference/event travel

### TRAVEL

All out-of-district travel must be pre-approved by a supervisor. A travel and expense form is available [online](#) or on the [Ralston Forms](#) website. All receipts being submitted for reimbursement (especially transportation, lodging, and meals) must be kept and submitted with the completed travel and expense form to the Accounts Payable Department. Receipts must be itemized, or the district may not be able to reimburse expenses. It is the responsibility of the employee to collect itemized receipts. Please see Appendix A for reimbursement guidelines.

When travel exceeds 150 miles, employees can request hotel accommodations for the day(s) which the purpose/program for travel occurs. If the purpose/program begins prior to 9:00 am, employees can request hotel accommodations for the night prior to the purpose/program for travel starts.

Air travel will be approved by a supervisor when deemed necessary, and/or the cost of mileage reimbursement exceeds the cost of airfare.

### Page 59 Mileage

- Delete sentence to reflect updated practice

### Mileage:

Mileage will be reimbursed at the standard IRS mileage allowance. The IRS updates the rate annually. ~~The district publishes a mileage reimbursement form that is to be used for mileage reimbursement. This document can be found in the essential documents section on Google drive, or on the Ralston Forms website.~~ Mileage requests shall be submitted using the [online form](#). Please remember to check on the availability of the Ralston Public Schools vehicles for trips in which several staff members will be attending. When available, the district vehicles must be used

for travel. Mileage will only be reimbursed from your place of work to the activity location identified and back. Mileage will not be paid from your home or residence.

## Page 60 Meals

- **Update the practice to align with the Government per diem rate (which varies by state)**

### **Meals:**

When traveling away from Ralston, and it is necessary to have a meal while on duty, it is expected that care is used in selecting an appropriate price level restaurant. ~~Per diem rate for meals is capped at \$60 per day. If only one meal is required during a trip, amount is capped at \$25.~~ **Meal expenses are only reimbursed up to the [government per diem rate](#), including the reduced amount for the first and last day of travel. Gratuities are only reimbursed up to 20% of the charges. It is the employee's responsibility to know and abide by the per diem rate for their dining location. Any charges above these amounts will not be reimbursed. Please use care and discretion in your dining choices.** It is also expected that detailed documentation and itemized receipts are kept to ensure reimbursement. Meal reimbursement is for RPS staff members only unless the event is hosted by the Ralston Public Schools and you are doing the business of the Ralston Public Schools.

**5041**  
**Student Government**

Students are encouraged to formulate and participate in student government activities. The organization, operation and scope of the student government shall be administered by the superintendent or their designee.

Adopted on: July 25, 2016

Revised on:

Reviewed on: February 13, 2023

## **Policy 5042**

### **Bulletin Boards/Electronic Publishing Space**

Bulletin board or electronic publishing space may be provided for the use of students and student organizations for notices relating to matters of general interest to students. The following general limitations apply to all posting or publishing:

1. All postings must be approved by the appropriate building principal or their designee.
2. Students may not post any material containing any statement or expression that is libelous, obscene, or vulgar; that would violate board of education policies, including the student code of conduct; or that is otherwise inappropriate for the school environment.
3. All postings must identify the student or the student organization posting or publishing the notice.
4. Material shall be removed after a reasonable time established by an expiration date to assure full access to the bulletin boards or electronic publishing media.
5. Digital signage will be maintained by the school.

Adopted on: July 25, 2016

Revised on:

Reviewed on: February 13, 2023

## **5043**

### **School-Sponsored Publications**

School-sponsored student publications and electronic media productions are part of the school district's instructional program. The board of education supports the development of student communication skills through school-sponsored newspapers, annuals, magazines, and electronic media including computer, video and digital productions.

Student publications and productions must conform to all good scholastic and professional journalistic standards. The board delegates to the superintendent of schools or their designee the right to prohibit dissemination of any school-sponsored publication or media production that does not conform to these standards, or which the superintendent or their designee deems inappropriate for the school environment.

Adopted on: July 25, 2016

Revised on:

Reviewed on: February 13, 2023

**5046**  
**Secret Organizations**

Secret organizations are prohibited. School officials shall not allow any person or representative of any such organization to enter upon school grounds or school buildings for the purpose of rushing or soliciting students to participate in any secret fraternity, society or association.

Adopted on: July 25, 2016

Revised on:

Reviewed on: February 27, 2023

**5047**  
**Press Releases**

All press releases regarding school-related activities and events must have administrative approval prior to being given to the media. The superintendent may delegate responsibility for communicating with the media to building principals, the activities director, event sponsors, and other staff on an ad hoc basis.

Adopted on: July 25, 2016

Revised on:

Reviewed on: February 27, 2023

Bill Review Schedule for 2025

**January 13**

Carrie  
Mary

**February 10**

Samantha  
Katie

**March 10**

Robin  
Liz

**April 14**

Mary  
Samantha

**May 12**

Katie  
Liz

**June 9**

Robin  
Carrie

**July 14**

Mary  
Samantha

**August 11**

Carrie  
Liz

**September 8**

Samantha  
Katie

**October 13**

Robin  
Liz

**November 10**

Mary  
Carrie

**December 8**

Robin  
Katie