2026-27 Certified Staff Handbook

Board Approved 7/28/26

NORTHWEST OHIO EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

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DIRECTORY

WHO TO CONTACT

Vision
Providing Quality Services-Building Valued Partnerships

Mission
Our mission is to provide quality services and build valued partnerships through: specialized services; innovative programs; responsiveness; collaboration.

Values & Beliefs
Partnership: We believe that partnership is the ongoing process of forming relationships between our NwOESC family and our customers and community.

Credibility: We believe that anyone representing our organization will be honest, professional, trustworthy and accountable.

Respect: We believe in each person by respecting and valuing individual beliefs and points of view as they relate to the goals of the organization.

Student Success: We believe student success is nurtured by the joint cooperation of students, educators, parents and the community.

Communication: We believe that timely and purposeful communication among all members of the organization and our partners is vital.

INTRODUCTION

The Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center (NwOESC) acts to support and encourage all staff members in building a strong educational system for our youth. In addition, NwOESC desires that each employee's years of service to education in the communities of Northwest Ohio be both successful and rewarding.

To further those ends, NwOESC has prepared this handbook of policies and procedures. Please note the following:

1. The information is divided into five main sections, each followed by several subsections.
2. Unless otherwise stated, "the Board" refers to the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center Governing Board and "the Superintendent" refers to the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center Superintendent.
3. If at any time an employee has personnel questions or concerns beyond the scope of this handbook, please consult with the Superintendent.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it available for reference.

1.1 PROCESS

The NwOESC Board shall approve the employment, fix the compensation, and establish the terms of employment for each person employed by NwOESC.

Any employee's misstatement of pertinent material regarding qualifications for employment or the determination of salary is considered by the Board to constitute grounds for dismissal.

The employment of certified employees prior to approval by the Board is authorized when their employment is required to maintain continuity of services in NwOESC. Retroactive employment shall be recommended to the Board at its next regular meeting.

All candidates shall be recruited specifically for a position with equal opportunity given to all in compliance with all state and federal laws.

1.2 CONTRACTS

Contracts are issued to encompass the school year as established by the official Board calendar. Contracts for service are issued in accordance with the position for which the individual is employed.

No teacher or administrator shall terminate his/her contract after July 10 and before the termination of the next succeeding school year without Board approval.

The progression from one contract to the next is contingent upon the results of the evaluation process. Any certified staff employed under an alternative, temporary, or supplemental license or conditional permit will only be issued one (1) year contracts.

Teachers:

The employment contract for teachers shall include:

A. Time for which employment is contracted including beginning and ending dates,
B. Salary according to the salary schedule, and
C. Such other matters as may be necessary to provide a full and complete understanding of the contract.

Contracts for teachers shall be granted in accordance with the requirements of Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 3319.08 and any applicable Board Policies.

Initial employment contracts for teachers will be one (1) year contracts for two (2) successive years followed by a two (2) year contract and then a four (4) year contract. Transition from a limited contract to a continuing contract is set forth in State law and Policy 3142.

Staff eligible for continuing contract status shall request a continuing contract application from the personnel coordinator in the Business Office. The completed application must be received in the Business Office by January 31 of the school year in which eligibility occurs. The required information (i.e. transcripts) must be on file by March 1 of the school year eligibility occurs.

Administrators:

Each administrative employment contract governed by ORC 3319.02 shall include:

A. An employee's position,
B. The wage and other compensation to be paid,
C. The term for which employment is contracted, including beginning and ending dates, and
D. Such other matters as may be necessary to provide a full and complete understanding of the contract.

Individuals may be employed as administrators pursuant to a limited contract for a term not to exceed three (3) years, unless the individual has been employed by the Board as an administrator in the District for three (3) or more years, in which case his/her term of the contract shall be for not more than five (5) years and, unless the Superintendent recommends otherwise, not less than two (2) years. If, however, the Superintendent so recommends, the term of the contract of an individual who has been employed as an administrator in the District for three (3)

years or more may be one (1) year. All subsequent contracts granted to such individuals must be for a term of not less than two (2) years and not more than five (5) years.

1.3 PREVIOUSLY RETIRED EMPLOYEES

Persons who are receiving benefits through an Ohio or other State retirement system may apply to be hired by the NWOESC. The Superintendent is directed to determine the appropriate salary schedule placement based on experience, certification, and availability of employees in the job classification being filled.

For employees of the NWOESC seeking re-employment for the same position that the person held with NWOESC prior to retirement, NWOESC must give public notice 60 days prior to the date re-employment is to occur that the person is or will be, retired and is seeking re-employment with the NWOESC. A public hearing must also be held at between 15 and 30 days prior to the date re-employment is to occur to discuss the re-employment.

Employees of the NWOESC re-employed under these conditions shall receive a one-year limited contract, which shall automatically expire at the end of the contract, per the terms of that contract. Persons so employed shall be placed at Step 1 on the applicable schedule, however, the Superintendent, with approval of the NWOESC Board of Education may grant additional service credit based upon the nature of the position and needs of the NWOESC. Should a person be rehired for subsequent years, there will be no advancement on the salary schedule.

Person employed under this policy shall not be entitled severance or retirement incentive benefits upon leaving the employment of NWOESC. Additionally, persons employed pursuant to this policy shall not be eligible for benefits, e.g., insurance, except as required by any applicable State or Federal law.

This policy is not intended to create an expectation that any person, whether a former employee or not, will be offered employment under this policy and NWOESC reserves the right to offer, or not offer, employment based solely upon the needs of NWOESC.

1.4 EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Verification of Employment Eligibility

Federal law requires that all employers and employees, hired after November 6, 1986, complete an Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) provided by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. All such employees must provide documents that establish both identity and employment eligibility in order for Form I-9 to be completed and signed by both the employee and an NwOESC official. Form I-9 must then be retained for three (3) years or for one (1) year past the end of the employment of an individual, whichever is longer.

Criminal History Records Check

In accordance with State law, each applicant being recommended for employment as well as current employees on a periodic basis must complete a criminal background check. Guidelines require a criminal background check including information from the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) and a criminal history records check, which will include criminal history information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). After initial employment, an employee who holds a license, certificate or permit issued by the Ohio Department of Education will be required to complete a records check from the Federal Bureau of Investigation upon renewal of a teaching certificate, license, or permit, and, for professional staff members with a permanent teaching certificate the records check must be completed as required by law, no less then every five (5) years. Employees not living continuously in Ohio during the five (5) year period will also be required to complete a records check from the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation.

Newly employed persons will be deemed conditionally employed pending receipt of satisfactory report(s). If the records check is unsatisfactory, the applicant shall be released immediately. Any information obtained by the Board under this policy shall be considered strictly confidential and shall not be made public. The information may be released to the State Department of Education, Division of Teacher Certification, should the Superintendent determine that convictions noted could be cause for the revocation of the individual's ODE certificate, license, or permit. Records of an applicant not subsequently employed shall be destroyed.

NwOESC will pay the cost of the initial records check for part-time and full-time employees (except for substitute employees). NwOESC will also pay the cost of the records check for employees who hold a supplemental, conditional, or alternative license who are transitioning to a standard license (if required for assignment or at the request of the superintendent), for employees who need a current background check to apply for a

temporary/supplemental/alternative license (if required for assignment or at the request of the superintendent), and for all NwOESC bus and van drivers upon hire or assignment of the driving duties and then every six (6) years thereafter for recertification.

Staff Training and Requirements
Staff employed are required to complete trainings, professional development, and other requirements necessary to their position. Staff required to complete trainings shall do so within a timely manner or risk disciplinary action. Trainings may include CPI, Public School Works, HQT, Preschool trainings, Bus and/or Van Driver trainings, physicals, and other such trainings or requirements. **Failure to complete as directed may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.**

Staff Professional Conduct
All staff should immediately notify the superintendent of any pending criminal action for which he/she has been arrested, summoned and/or indicted for any crimes listed under ORC 3319.31(C).

Van and/or bus drivers convicted of a traffic violation or having their commercial driver's license (CDL) suspended must file a written notice of the conviction or suspension immediately with the Superintendent, irrespective of whether the traffic violation occurred while operating a Board-owned vehicle or a private vehicle or during school or non-school hours. Failure to file the required written notice of conviction or suspension will result in the revocation of the driver's certificate and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Physical Examination
All preschool teachers will be required to undergo physical examinations. The cost of the physical will be reimbursed according to Board approved rates.

1.5 ASSIGNMENT AND TRANSFER (po 3130)

The Board believes that the appropriate placement of qualified and competent staff is essential to the successful functioning of the Center.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for the proper assignment and transfer of all teaching and other professional staff members and shall attempt to affect the optimum assignment of professional staff to positions based on the best interest of students enrolled in the Center. Consideration shall also be given to legal and contractual requirements. Seniority or continuing contract status may not be used as the primary factor in assigning, reassigning, or transferring teachers.

1.6 TERMINATION / RESIGNATION / NON-RENEWAL / REDUCTION IN FORCE

3140 - TERMINATION AND RESIGNATION

Termination

The employment contract of a professional staff member may be suspended and/or terminated in accordance with law, upon a majority vote of the Governing Board, for good and just cause, including disclosing a question to a student on a State-mandated assessment. In such cases, the Board shall abide by due process, statutory procedures, and the applicable terms set forth in any collectively-bargained agreement.

Any professional staff member who fails to maintain a required license, certificate, or permit throughout the term of employment will be immediately suspended without pay and such failure is grounds for termination.

Termination of certified staff members shall be governed by ORC 3319.16 and Board Policies.

Notice of termination shall be given by regular mail with a certificate of mailing, electronic mail with proof of delivery, or other method with proof of delivery.

Resignation

A holder of a valid contract may resign at any time prior to July 10; otherwise, an official release must be sought from the Board. A teacher desiring to resign should do so in writing as early as possible. A certified staff member desiring to resign should submit an original, signed letter of resignation to the Business Office. A certified employee's resignation, once accepted by the Superintendent on behalf of the Board, and subject to Board ratification, shall be deemed effective as of the date and time of the Superintendent's acceptance. The resignation will terminate such contract by the individual. Resignations between contract years for classroom personnel shall be effective August 1 for those employed on August 1 through July 31 contract years, and for extended contract personnel (beyond nine (9) months in length) shall be effective July 1 for those on July 1 through June 30 contract years.

Reporting Professional Misconduct

The Superintendent (or Board President where either the Superintendent and/or Treasurer has engaged in misconduct) will file a report to the State Board of Education, on forms provided by the Department for that purpose, matters of professional misconduct on the part of licensed professional staff members in those specific circumstances set forth in State law and Policy 8141, including a conviction of the professional staff member of certain enumerated crimes and/or for conduct which is determined to be unbecoming to the teaching profession in conjunction with the non-renewal or termination of a professional staff member, or resignation by a professional staff member under threat of same and/or during the course of an investigation of conduct reasonably determine to be unbecoming the teaching profession.

Reports of any investigation regarding whether or not a professional staff member has committed an act or offense for which the Superintendent or Board President is required to make a report to the State Board of Education shall be kept in the personnel file of the professional staff member. Should the State Board of Education determine that the results of that investigation do not warrant initiating an action suspending, revoking, or otherwise limiting that professional staff member's license or permit, the report(s) of any investigation will be moved to a separate public file.

<u>Non-Renewal</u>

A. The Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, may exercise its option under law not to renew the contract of a teacher under a limited contract provided all provisions in statute have been observed with regard to the evaluation of the employee.

   A teacher employed under a limited contract, but not eligible for consideration for employment under a continuing contract, shall be considered to be reemployed unless the Board, acting on the Superintendent's recommendation, gives the teacher notice of its intention not to reemploy in accordance with ORC 3319.11.

B. The Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, may exercise its option under law not to renew the contract of an administrator under a limited contract provided all provisions in statute have been observed with regard to the evaluation of the employee. Nonrenewal of an administrator's contract shall be done in accordance with ORC 3319.02.

<u>Reduction In Force (Non-Administrative)</u>
It is the responsibility of the Board to provide appropriate staffing levels for the implementation of the educational program of NwOESC and the operation of the schools and to do so efficiently and economically.

The Board reserves the right to reduce positions and to suspend the contracts of staff members pursuant to the requirements of Ohio law.

<u>Reduction In Force (Administrative)</u>
This policy pertains to the reduction in force of administrators, supervisors, management level employees, and all other employees whose contracts of employment are governed by ORC 3319.02 (hereafter collectively referred to as "administrator"). The Board may suspend an administrator's contract of employment for the following reasons:

A. Declining enrollment of students served by NwOESC, in a particular school building or a particular grade level;
B. A return to duty of an administrator from an approved leave of absence;
C. The suspension of schools or other changes affecting the number of school districts and/or students served by NwOESC;
D. A change in the financial condition of NwOESC;
E. The reorganization of the management structure of NwOESC;
F. Any other financial reason that the Board, in its sole discretion, determines warrants a reduction in force;
G. Loss of funding for a particular program, project or grant;
H. Changes in the curriculum or academic programs of NwOESC;
I. Territorial changes affecting NwOESC;
J. Those actions necessitated or mandated by virtue of the No Child Left Behind Act, also known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and any State or Federal Regulation relating to that Act;
K. Needs of the Board.

In determining the order in which an administrator's contract will be suspended, the Board **may** consider the following factors:

A. Administrators who have retired and returned to employment;
B. Staffing and personnel needs of the Board;
C. Seniority or inverse seniority of the administrators employed by the Board;
D. Experience, qualifications and/or licensure/certification of the administrator;
E. Present administrative and/or job assignment;
F. Performance of the administrator, including but not limited to, job evaluations;
G. Any other factor(s) the Board, in its sole discretion, determines relevant.

None of the aforementioned factors are dispositive of the determination of the order of suspension.

All employees whose contracts are suspended pursuant to this policy shall be placed on a recall list for reemployment for a period of up to six (6) months, beginning with the effective date of the suspension. If a vacancy occurs, all of the administrators on the recall list shall be notified, by certified mail, of said vacancy. The Board will have fulfilled its notice requirements if the notice is sent to the last address left by the administrator. Unclaimed, refused or undelivered notices shall constitute a refusal of the vacancy. The administrator is responsible for keeping the Board apprised of the administrator's most current address. The administrator must, within seven (7) days of the receipt of the notice, notify the Board of the administrator's interest in the vacancy. Failure to notify the Board within the stated time period shall result in the removal of the administrator from the recall list and shall be deemed a waiver of any future notices. Upon receipt of the notices from the responding administrators, the Board shall recall the most qualified candidate. The most qualified candidate shall be determined in the sole discretion of the Board. If an administrator refuses to accept an offered vacancy, the administrator shall be removed from the recall list and any obligation of the Board under this policy shall cease.

In the event of an administrative reduction in force, administrators who have a continuing contract of employment as a teacher with the NwOESC will be offered a teaching position on a seniority basis if they are certified to teach in a particular assignment currently vacant.

1.7 EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

The Governing Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and transgender identity), disability, age, religion, military status, ancestry, genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes"), or any other legally protected category, in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities.

The Superintendent shall appoint and publicize the name of the Compliance Officer(s) who is/are responsible for coordinating the NwOESC's efforts to comply with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including the NwOESC's duty to address in a prompt and equitable manner any inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination or denial of equal access. The Compliance Officer(s) shall also verify that proper notice of nondiscrimination for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended), Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act is provided to staff members and the general public.

Rights of Staff with Disabilities

No otherwise qualified person shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by the Board.

No employee or candidate for employment shall be discriminated against in recruitment, employment, promotion, training, or transfer solely because of his/her disabling condition. A complaint regarding a violation of law and this policy in an employment decision shall be subject to a complaint procedure that provides for the prompt and equitable resolution of disputes. Refer to the complaint procedure in this handbook.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Grievance Procedure

The Board has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by the U.S. Department of Justice regulations implementing Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Title II states, in part, that "no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of such disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in programs or activities sponsored by a public entity."

Reporting Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment

Conduct constituting sexual harassment may take different forms, including but not limited to the following:

Sexual Harassment

A. Verbal...The making of offensive written or oral sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, threats, or proposition toward or by a fellow staff member, student, or other person associated with the Board, or third parties (visiting speaker, athletic team member, volunteer, parent, etc.)
B. Nonverbal...Causing the placement of offensive sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or graphic commentaries in the school/work environment or the making of offensive sexually suggestive or insulting gestures, sounds, leering, whistling, and the like to or by a fellow staff member, student, or other person associated with the Board, or third parties.
C. Physical Contact...Threatening or causing unwanted touching, contact, or attempts at same, including patting, pinching, brushing the body, or coerced sexual activity with or by a fellow staff member, student, or other person associated with the Board, or third parties.

Gender/Ethnic/Religious/Disability/Height/Weight Harassment

A. Verbal...Written or oral innuendoes, comments, jokes, insults, threats, or disparaging remarks concerning a person's gender, national origin, religious beliefs, etc. that are offensive to or by a fellow staff member, student, or other person associated with the Board, or third parties.
B. Nonverbal...Placing objects, pictures, or graphic commentaries in the school/work environment or making insulting or threatening gestures that are offensive to or by a fellow staff member, student, or other person associated with the Board, or third parties.
C. Physical Contact...Any intimidating or disparaging action such as hitting, pushing, shoving, hissing, or spitting on by a fellow staff member, student, or other person associated with the Board, or third parties.

Any staff member who believes that s/he is the victim of any of the aforementioned actions or has observed such actions taken by a supervisor, coworker, student, or other person associated with the Board or third parties should promptly take the following steps:

A. If the alleged harasser is the staff member's supervisor, the affected employee should, as soon as possible after the incident, contact the NwOESC Compliance Officer (see listing in back pages of this handbook).
B. If the alleged harasser is not the staff member's supervisor, the affected staff member should, as soon as possible after the incident, contact his/her supervisor. The supervisor is directed to then contact the NwOESC Compliance Officer.
C. If the alleged harasser is a student, the supervisor should immediately inform the student's principal of the alleged harassment, and also the NwOESC Compliance Officer.

The staff member may make contact either by a written report or by telephone or personal visit. During this contact, the reporting staff member should provide the name of the person(s) whom s/he believes to be responsible for the harassment and the nature of the harassing incident(s). A written summary of each such report is to be prepared promptly by the staff member receiving the report and forwarded as indicated above.

Each report received by the NwOESC Compliance Officer, as provided above, shall be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. While a charge is under investigation, no information is to be released to anyone who is not involved with the investigation, except as may be required by law or in the context of a legal or administrative proceeding. No one involved is to discuss the subject outside of the investigation. The purpose of this provision is to:

A. Protect the confidentiality of the staff member who files a complaint;
B. Encourage the reporting of any incidents of harassment;
C. Protect the reputation of any party wrongfully charged with harassment.

Investigation of a complaint will normally include conferring with the parties involved and any names of apparent witnesses. All staff members and others involved are to be protected from coercion, intimidation, retaliation, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Compliance Officer or designee will prepare and deliver to the Superintendent a written report summarizing the evidence gathered during the investigation and providing his/her recommendations regarding whether or not the complaint of unlawful harassment has been substantiated. The written report must be based on the totality of the circumstances involved in the complaint, the nature of the alleged conduct, the context in which the alleged conduct occurred, and the ages and maturity of the individuals involved.

If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, then prompt, appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action will be taken immediately to prevent the continuance of the harassment or its recurrence.

The Board recognizes that determining whether a particular action or incident is harassment or, conversely, is reflective of a social relationship without a discriminatory or intimidating intent or effect must be based on all of the facts in the matter. Given the nature of this type of intimidation, the Board recognizes that false accusations of harassment can have serious effects on innocent individuals. Accordingly, all staff members are expected to act responsibly, honestly, and with the utmost candor whenever they present harassment allegations or charges against fellow staff members, students, or others associated with the Board or third parties.

Genetic Information

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits employers and other entities covered by GINA Title II from requesting or requiring genetic information of an employee or their family members. In order to comply with this law, the District will direct employees not to provide any genetic information in response to requests for medical information, including but not limited to, FMLA certification or recertification. "Genetic information," as defined by GINA, includes an individual's family medical history, the results of an individual's family member's genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual's family sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

Safety and Occupational Health

The policy of the Board is to provide a safe work environment, safe work practices, and safety equipment for its employees to the extent it is possible to do so within the limitations of NwOESC's resources and the limitations of human error and considering that some employees must abide hazardous working conditions inherent in the nature of their jobs.

To that end, the Board will endeavor to comply with existing applicable safety and occupational health Federal, State, and local laws and to promote safety in the workplace. To affect this policy:

A. It is the responsibility of all employees to prevent injury to themselves and to others, not only at work, but also off the job, to comply with NwOESC's safety policies and standard operating procedures, and to assist fellow employees to achieve the same goal.
B. It is the responsibility of all supervisors to provide for the safety of the employees working under their supervision, and for the effective administration of the Board's safety program in their area of authority.
C. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to formulate, coordinate, and direct NwOESC's safety program and to assist employees and management in achieving their safety goals and objectives.
D. It is the responsibility of all supervisors to support this safety policy and to participate actively in the safety program.

E. It is the responsibility of any employee to report any unsafe condition or any unsafe act by anyone in the workplace. Such situations should be reported to a supervisor or superintendent or designee.

This policy is a general statement of NwOESC's goals with certain instructions to supervisors and employees. However, the safety program encompasses a broader range of safety policies, administrative guidelines, and standard operating procedures too voluminous to include in this handbook.

1.8 DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

Disciplinary Action

The Board, through the administration, may take disciplinary action against an employee which may include oral reprimand, written reprimand, suspension without pay, or termination.

At the employee's request, a representative of their choosing may be present whenever disciplinary action is taken.

Disciplinary action without pay is subject to the grievance procedure set forth in board policy. A suspension shall be held in abeyance until any grievance has been heard.

Nothing herein shall preclude the Board from instituting suspension or termination proceedings pursuant to Board Policies and the Ohio Revised Code. (ORC 3319.16)

In the event that it is necessary to take disciplinary action against an employee, a notice in ordinary and concise language shall be sent to the employee specifying:

A. The specific acts upon which the disciplinary action is based, and
B. A date when the employee may be heard if he/she so wishes.

1.9 ALCOHOL / DRUGS / TOBACCO

Drug-Free Workplace

No employee shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or any other controlled substance, as defined in Federal and State law, in the workplace.

"Workplace" is the site for the performance of any work done in connection with NwOESC. The workplace includes any school building, school property, any vehicles used for school business, or any school-sponsored or school-related activity, event, or function, such as a field trip or athletic event (wherever the location), which is under the jurisdiction of Board employees.

As a condition of employment, each employee shall notify his/her supervisor, in writing, of his/her conviction of any drug or alcohol statute for a violation occurring in the workplace, as defined above, not later than five (5) days after such conviction.

Employees who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with prescribed NwOESC administrative regulations, local, State, and Federal laws up to and including termination. Any employee in violation of this policy may be required to participate in a drug or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved by the Board.

NwOESC does not maintain a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program, but there are programs within area communities available to employees who need help with a drug or alcohol problem.

Substance Abuse

The Board recognizes alcoholism and drug abuse as treatable illnesses. Such illnesses may impair the performance of staff members. When appropriate, the Board may assist such employees in a manner recommended by appropriate specialists in the treatment of those illnesses.

A staff member having an illness or other problem relating to the use of alcohol or other drugs will receive the same careful consideration and offer of assistance that is presently extended to staff members having any other illness.

The responsibility to correct unsatisfactory job performance or behavior resulting from a suspected health problem rests with the staff member. Failure to do so will result in appropriate corrective or disciplinary action as determined by the Board.

No staff member will have his/her job security or promotion opportunities jeopardized by his/her request for counseling or referral assistance.

Staff members who suspect they may have an alcohol or other drug abuse problem are encouraged to seek counseling and information on a confidential basis by contacting resources available for such service.

1.10 STAFF COMMUNICATION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Each staff member is encouraged to communicate necessary information or concerns to the appropriate individuals. Because of the size and scope of NwOESC, the following guidelines are suggested:

A. Notify your immediate supervisor within NwOESC. Though some employees operate with day-to-day guidance from the local school administrations, concerted effort should be given to communicating issues to your immediate supervisor within NwOESC as well as your building administrator when appropriate.
B. If you have a situation that needs immediate attention from the NwOESC supervisor, they may be contacted through the office phone, or cell phone.
C. In non-emergency situations, when your immediate supervisor cannot be contacted by office phone or cell phone, use electronic mail to let your supervisor know you have questions or concerns.
D. When you need to have a discussion on several items or one that may take more than a few minutes, arrange for a conference that will give both parties time to communicate. Remember all employees strive to schedule their time wisely, just like you.
E. If one or more staff members have a concern about the behavior of a fellow staff member or about some aspect of the operation of NwOESC or local district that is not functioning:
    1. As it should,
    2. In accordance with an agreed-upon plan, or
    3. Because an informal commitment by the administration is not being fulfilled, the staff member(s) should make arrangements to discuss the matter with the immediate NwOESC supervisor as soon as feasible.

If the matter is not or cannot be rectified satisfactorily by the supervisor, the staff member(s) may request a meeting with the Director of Special Education or the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. The request should be in writing and include:

1. The specific nature of the problem and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it,
2. A brief statement explaining how the staff member(s) are affected by it, and
3. The action which the staff member(s) wishes to be taken and how such action would rectify the problem.

The Director of Special Education or the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, after reviewing the request, will either meet with the staff member(s) or provide a written decision explaining the District's position on the matter.

A written appeal of the Director of Special Education's decision or the decision of the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development may be submitted to the Superintendent with final appeal to the Board if the problem remains unresolved.

1.11 CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS AND INFORMATION

In order to provide appropriate educational services and programming, the Governing Board must collect, retain, and use information about individual students. Simultaneously, the Board recognizes the need to safeguard students' privacy and restrict access to students' personally identifiable information.

Student "personally identifiable information" ("PII") includes, but is not limited to: the student's name; the name of the student's parent or other family members; the address of the student or student's family; a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or

information requested by a person who the Educational Service Center reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

The Board is responsible for the records of all students who attend or have attended Center programs. Only records mandated by the State or Federal government and/or necessary and relevant to the function of the Educational Service Center or specifically permitted by this Board will be compiled by Board employees.

In all cases, permitted, narrative information in student records shall be objectively-based on the personal observation or knowledge of the originator.

Student records shall be available only to students and their parents, eligible students, designated school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information, or to other individuals or organizations as permitted by law.

The term "parents" includes legal guardians or other persons standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child). The term "eligible student" refers to a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older or a student of any age who is enrolled in a postsecondary institution.

Both parents shall have equal access to student records unless stipulated otherwise by court order or law. In the case of eligible students, parents may be allowed access to the records without the student's consent, provided the student is considered a dependent under section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code.

A school official is a person employed by the Board as an administrator, supervisor, teacher/instructor (including substitutes), or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); and a person serving on the Board. The Board further designates the following individuals and entities as "school officials" for the purpose of FERPA:

A. persons companies with whom the Board has contracted to perform a specific task (such as an attorney, auditor, insurance representative, or medical consultant), and

B. contractors, consultants, volunteers or other parties to whom the Board has outsourced a service or function otherwise performed by the Board employees (e.g. a therapist, authorized information technology (IT) staff, and approved online educational service providers)

The above-identified outside parties must (a) perform institutional services or functions for which the Board would otherwise use it employees, (b) be under the direct control of the Board with respect to the use and maintenance of education records, and (c) be subject to the requirements of 34 C.F.R. 99.33(a) governing the use and re-disclosure of PII from education records.

Finally, a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks (including volunteers) is also considered a "school official" for purposes of FERPA provided s/he meets the above-referenced criteria applicable to other outside parties.

"Legitimate educational interest" is defined as a "direct or delegated responsibility for helping the student achieve one (1) or more of the educational goals of the Center" or if the record is necessary in order for the school official to perform an administrative, supervisory, or instructional task or to perform a service or benefit for the student or the student's family. The Board directs that reasonable and appropriate methods (including but not limited to physical and/or technological access controls) are utilized to control access to student records and to make certain that school officials obtain access to only those education records in which they have legitimate educational interest.

The Board authorizes the administration to:

A. forward student records, including disciplinary records with respect to suspensions and expulsions, upon request to a private or public school or school center in which a student of this Center is enrolled, seeks or intends to enroll, or is instructed to enroll, on a full-time or part-time basis, upon condition that:

1. a reasonable attempt is made to notify the student's parent or eligible student of the transfer (unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student; or the Board's annual notification includes a notice that the Board will forward education records to other agencies or

institutions that have requested the records and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer);

2. the parent or eligible student, upon request, receives a copy of the record; and

3. the parent or eligible student, upon request, has an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the record;

B. forward student records, including disciplinary records with respect to suspensions and expulsions, upon request to a juvenile detention facility in which the student has been placed, or a juvenile court that has taken jurisdiction of the student;

C. forward student records, including disciplinary records with respect to suspensions and expulsions, upon request to a public school or school district in which a student in foster care is enrolled. Such records shall be transferred within one (1) school day of the enrolling school's request;

D. provide "personally-identifiable" information to appropriate parties, including parents of an eligible student, whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals, if there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, considering the totality of the circumstances;

E. report a crime committed by a child to appropriate authorities, with respect to reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability, and to transmit copies of the student's special education and disciplinary records to the authorities for their consideration;

F. release de-identified records and information in accordance with Federal regulations;

G. disclose personally identifiable information from education records, without consent, to organizations conducting studies "for, or on behalf of" the Center for purposes of developing, validating or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs, or improving instruction;

Information disclosed under this exception must be protected so that students and parents cannot be personally identified by anyone other than representative of the organization conducting the study and must be destroyed when no longer needed for the study. In order to release information under this provision, the Center will enter into a written agreement with the recipient organization that specifies the purpose of the study. (See Form 8330 F14.) Further, the following personally identifiable information will not be disclosed to any entity: a student or his/her family member's social security number(s); religion; political party affiliation; voting history; or biometric information.

While the disclosure of personally identifiable information (other than social security numbers, religion, political party affiliation, voting record, or biometric information) is allowed under this exception, it is recommended that de-identified information be used whenever possible. This reduces the risk of unauthorized disclosure.

H. disclose personally identifiable information from education records without consent, to authorized representatives of the Comptroller General, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of Education, as well as state and local educational authorities. The disclosed records must be used to audit or evaluate a federal or state supported education program, or to enforce or comply with federal requirements related to those education programs. A written agreement between the parties is required under this exception.

The Center will verify that the authorized representative complies with FERPA regulations.

I. request each person or party requesting access to a student's record to abide by Federal regulations and State laws concerning the disclosure of information.

The Board will comply with a legitimate request for access to a student's records within a reasonable period of time but not more than forty-five (45) days after receiving the request or within such shorter period as may be applicable to students with disabilities. Upon the request of the viewer, a record shall be reproduced, unless said record is copyrighted, or otherwise restricted, and the viewer may be charged a fee equivalent to the cost of handling and

reproduction. Based upon reasonable requests, viewers of education records will receive explanation and interpretation of the records.

The Board shall maintain a record of each request for access and each disclosure of personally identifiable information. Such disclosure records will indicate the student, person viewing the record, their legitimate interest in the information, information disclosed, date of disclosure, and date parent/eligible student consent was obtained (if required).

Only "directory information" regarding a student shall be released to any person or party, other than the student or his/her parent, without the written consent of the parent, or, if the student is an eligible student, without the written consent of the student, except to those persons or parties stipulated by the Board's policy and administrative guidelines and/or those specified in the law.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Each year the Superintendent shall provide public notice to students and their parents of the Center's intent to make available, upon request, certain information known as "directory information." The Board designates as student "directory information": a student's name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially-recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; or awards received.

School-assigned e-mail accounts shall not be released as directory information beyond this/these limited purpose(s) and to any person or entity but the specific online educational service provider.

Directory information shall not be provided to any organization for profit-making purposes.

Parents and eligible students may refuse to allow the Board to disclose any or all of such "directory information" upon written notification to the Board.

In accordance with Federal and State law, the Board shall release the names, addresses, and telephone listings of secondary students to a recruiting officer for any branch of the United States Armed Forces or an institution of higher education who requests such information. A secondary school student or parent of the student may request in writing that the student's name, address, and telephone listing not be released without prior consent of the parent(s)/eligible student. The recruiting officer is to sign a form indicating that "any information received by the recruiting officer shall be used solely for the purpose of informing students about military service and shall not be released to any person other than individuals within the recruiting services of the Armed Forces. The Superintendent is authorized to charge mailing fees for providing this information to a recruiting officer.

Whenever consent of the parent(s)/eligible student is required for the inspection and/or release of a student's health or education records or for the release of "directory information," either parent may provide such consent unless agreed to otherwise in writing by both parents or specifically stated by court order. If the student is under the guardianship of an institution, the Superintendent shall appoint a person who has no conflicting interest to provide such written consent.

The Board may disclose "directory information," on former students without student or parental consent, unless the parent or eligible student previously submitted a request that such information not be disclosed without their prior written consent.

The Board shall not permit the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose).

INSPECTION OF INFORMATION COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The parent of a student or an eligible student has the right to inspect upon request any instrument used in the collection of personal information before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student. Personal information for this section is defined as individually identifiable information including a student or parent's first and last name, a home or other physical address (including street name and the name of the city or town), a

telephone number, or a Social Security identification number. In order to review the instrument, the parent or eligible student must submit a written request to the building principal at least five (5) business days before the scheduled date of the activity. The instrument will be provided to the parent or eligible student within three (3) business days of the principal receiving the request.

The Superintendent shall directly notify the parent(s) of a student and eligible students, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when such activities are scheduled or expected to be scheduled.

This section does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions, such as the following:

A. college or other postsecondary education recruitment, or military recruitment

B. book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literary products

C. curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary and secondary schools

D. tests and assessments used by elementary and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about students (or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments) and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate data from such tests and assessments

E. the sale by students of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities

F. student recognition programs

The Superintendent is directed to prepare administrative guidelines so that students and parents are adequately informed each year regarding their rights to:

A. inspect and review the student's education records;

B. request amendments if the parent believes the record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the student's privacy rights;

C. consent to disclosures of personally-identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to those disclosures allowed by the law;

D. challenge Board noncompliance with a parent's request to amend the records through a hearing;

E. file a complaint with the United States Department of Education;

F. obtain a copy of the Board's policy and administrative guidelines on student records.

The Superintendent shall also develop procedural guidelines for:

A. the proper storage and retention of records including a list of the type and location of records;

B. informing Board employees of the Federal and State laws concerning student records.

The Board authorizes the use of the microfilm process or electromagnetic processes of reproduction for the recording, filing, maintaining, and preserving of records.

No liability shall attach to any member, officer, or employee of this specifically Board as a consequence of permitting access or furnishing student records in accordance with this policy and regulations.

Any entity receiving personally identifiable information pursuant to a study, audit, evaluation or enforcement/compliance activity must comply with all FERPA regulations. Further, such an entity must enter into a written contract with the Governing Board delineating its responsibilities in safeguarding the disclosed information. Specifically, the entity must demonstrate the existence of a sound data security plan or data stewardship program and must also provide assurances that the personally identifiable information will not be redisclosed without prior

authorization from the Board. Further, the entity conducting the study, audit, evaluation or enforcement/compliance activity is required to destroy the disclosed information once it is no longer needed or when the timeframe for the activity has ended, as specified in its written agreement with the Governing Board.

SAFE AT HOME/ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

If a parent (or adult student), presents information to the Center certifying that the parent (or adult student), his/her child, or a member of the parent's household is a participant in the Safe at Home/Address Confidentiality Program administered by the Secretary of State, the Board shall refrain from including the student's actual/confidential residential address in any student records or files (including electronic records and files) or disclosing the student's actual/confidential residential address when releasing student records. Since student records are available to non-custodial parents, designated school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information, and other individuals or organizations as permitted by law (including the public in some situations), the Board shall only list the address designated by the Secretary of State to serve as the student's address in any student records or files, including electronic records and files. Further, the Board shall use the student's designated address for any and all communications and correspondence between the Board and the parent(s) of the student (or adult student). The student's actual/confidential residential address shall be maintained in a separate confidential file that is not accessible to the public or any employees without a legitimate purpose.

Although the student's actual/confidential address will not be available for release as directory information, the parent (or adult student) may also request that the student's name and telephone number be withheld from any release of directory information. Additionally, if applicable, the student's parent's school, institution of higher education, business, or place of employment (as specified on an application to be a program participant or on a notice of change of name or address) shall be maintained in a confidential manner.

If a non-custodial parent presents a subpoena or court order stating that s/he should be provided with copies or access to a student's records, the Center will redact the student's confidential address and telephone number from the student's records before complying with the order or subpoena. The Center will also notify the custodial/residential parent of the release of student records in accordance with the order or subpoena.

The intentional disclosure of student's actual/confidential residential address is prohibited. Any violations could result in disciplinary action or criminal prosecution.

1.12 WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

The Board expects all its employees to be honest and ethical in their conduct, and to comply with applicable State and Federal law, Board policies and administrative guidelines. The Board encourages staff to report possible violations of these Board expectations to their immediate supervisors.

It is the responsibility of an employee who is aware of conduct on the part of any Board member or employee that possibly violates Federal or State law, or Board policy, to call this conduct to the attention of his/her immediate supervisor. If the employee's immediate supervisor is not responsive or is the employee whose behavior is in question, the employee may report to the Superintendent. If the reported conduct relates to the Superintendent, the report may be filed directly with the Board President.

After such a report is made, the immediate supervisor will ask that the employee's report be put in writing. Any employee making such a report shall be protected from discipline, retaliation, or reprisal for making such report as long as the employee made a reasonable and good faith effort to determine the accuracy of any information reported. Employees are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for purposely, knowingly, or recklessly making a false report under this policy. Conversely, employees are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, if they are aware of a violation of Federal, State, or local law that the Board has the authority to correct and they do not make a report confirmed in writing to their immediate supervisor.
In the case of reporting suspected fraud or fraudulent activity, an employee may file a report using the Auditor of State's system for reporting of fraud. This reporting mechanism may be used either in addition to or instead of filing a written report with the employee's supervisor or other NwOESC authority.

2.1 ATTENDANCE

The privilege of NwOESC employment imposes on each staff member the responsibility to be on the job on time every scheduled workday. This responsibility requires that the employee maintain good health standards, take intelligent precautions against accidents, both on and off the job, and manage personal affairs in order to satisfy NwOESC attendance requirements.

The Superintendent is required, because of the high costs of absences and disrupted work schedules, to give continuing attention to the maintenance of regular attendance by employees.

The periods of work required of the certified staff shall be clearly specified. The Superintendent or designee shall specify the working hours for certified employees.

A staff member who fails to give prompt notice of his/her absence, misuses sick leave, fails to verify his/her absence in accordance with Board policy, falsifies the reason for an absence, is absent without authorization, is repeatedly tardy, or accumulates an excessive number of absences without good cause may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

The Board reserves the right to assess an employee's salary for failure to perform contracted services for situations not specified herein, or for gross violations of this policy. The Superintendent is authorized to direct properly warned employees who are repeatedly tardy not to report at all on those days when they cannot report on time, and to suffer such wage penalties as may be appropriate.

NwOESC Offices

NwOESC office staff shall ordinarily report for work when schools are closed for bad weather or other calamity. During vacation days for students and teaching staff, NwOESC office staff shall work per their assigned calendars. Typical office hours are 8:00 – 4:00 pm Monday – Friday, unless otherwise noted. Each staff person shall follow their assigned calendar. Summer hours of operation may be designated upon recommendation of the Superintendent and determined on an annual basis.

Hazardous Weather/Emergency

On hazardous weather days, instructional staff assigned to a specific site will operate according to their assigned school schedule for the day (i.e. delays, cancelations). It is the expectation that applicable make up time (extended days, additional days) will be followed as well, dependent upon the assigned school site schedule. Related service staff, staff who travel to multiple locations, and school psychology staff will operate according to their overall assignment, however will be required to make up days when school is canceled if extending beyond 5 (five) days per year. These staff should consult with the Director of Special Education to approve their make-up plan.

Employees with NwOESC office hours (Superintendent, Directors, Supervisors, Consultants, etc.) will typically be expected to work on hazardous weather days, even if the local districts are closed due to the weather. Late arrivals or early dismissals due to weather conditions may be permitted (in connection with the amount of travel time required). Employees shall contact their direct Supervisor if they anticipate a late arrival. On rare occasions, the Superintendent may delay or close the office due to inclement weather or other conditions. Notice will be provided via email to building staff, and via office phone system recording and WTOL Channel 11 to the general public. During Hazardous Weather/Emergency, some essential personnel may be required to report to work.

Remote Work

There may be occasion for staff to work from home on a case-by-case basis with appropriate approval. Work from home requests shall be submitted ahead of time in writing to the appropriate Administrative Team member (Superintendent, CFO, or Director), including the specific request and reason. Supervisors may facilitate this communication regarding their direct staff; however, approvals can only be granted by an Administrative Team member (Superintendent, CFO, or Director). Staff requesting work from home shall ensure that appropriate work space/equipment is available, that appropriate childcare is secured if applicable, and that a log of activities is maintained and provided upon request.

2.2 STAFF DRESS AND GROOMING (po3216)
The Board believes that professional staff members set an example in dress and grooming for their students to follow. A professional staff member who understands this precept and adheres to it enlarges the importance of his/her task, presents an image of dignity, and encourages respect for authority. These factors act in a positive manner toward the maintenance of discipline.

The Board retains the authority to specify the following dress and grooming guidelines for staff that will prevent such matters from having an adverse impact on the educational process. When assigned to Center duty, all professional staff members shall:

A. be physically clean, neat, and well-groomed;

B. dress in a manner consistent with their professional responsibilities; Proper footwear must be worn for the staff assignment and activity (i.e. wear gym shoes for PE/recess/gross motor, avoid shoes that are hazardous for slips and trips)

C. dress in a manner that communicates to students a pride in personal appearance;

D. dress in a manner that does not cause damage to Center property;

E. be groomed in such a way that their hairstyle or dress does not disrupt the educational process nor cause a health or safety hazard.

The Board recognizes professional staff members' right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the constraints of the preceding dress and grooming guidelines.

2.3 DUTIES
Pupil Supervision
The following standards of pupil supervision are to be maintained:
A. A teacher must maintain a standard of care for supervision, control and protection of students commensurate with assigned duties and responsibilities.
B. A teacher must provide proper instruction in the safety matters presented in assigned curriculum guides.
C. A teacher must not send students on personal errands.
D. A teacher must immediately report to the principal an accident or safety hazard he/she detects.
E. A pupil shall not be required to perform work or services that may be detrimental to his/her health.

Each teacher must report immediately any sign of suspected child abuse or drug abuse to the public children services agency or a municipal or county peace officer in the county in which the child resides or in which the abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred.

Instructional Plans
Teachers shall prepare instructional plan books in advance of the class period of their implementation. Guidelines provide for the following:
A. The format(s) for lesson plans shall be decided at the building level and may include school-wide formats or any combination of these.
B. Lesson plans shall include information pertinent to the effective implementation of a lesson. When commercially prepared plans are in use, lesson plans shall simply refer to the appropriate phase or aspect of the program under study.
C. Lesson plans for individualized program shall implement the philosophy and purposes of the instructional program.
D. Teacher lesson plans shall provide adequate directions for substitutes, and plan books must remain in the teacher desk overnight to be available for substitute teachers at all times.

Supervisory Services
The Board provides professional supervisory services to local systems and other systems and/or agencies on a contract basis to aid in the improvement of staff performances. Supervision of local staff members by NwOESC personnel shall accomplish the following:
A. Involve the local administrator or his/her delegate,

B. Be in accordance with local district procedures and NwOESC procedures,
C. Be reported to the local district administrator as well as the NwOESC administrator,
D. Be conducted periodically for all local district staff, and
E. Be on the request of an administrator.

2.4 STUDENT SUPERVISION AND WELFARE (po3213)
Professional staff members shall maintain a standard of care for the supervision, control, and protection of students commensurate with their assigned duties and responsibilities, and are expected to establish and maintain professional staff/student boundaries that are consistent with their legal, professional, and ethical duty of care for students.

The Superintendent shall maintain and enforce the following standards:

A. A professional staff member shall report immediately to a building administrator any accident, safety hazard, or other potentially harmful condition or situation the staff member detects.

B. A professional staff member shall provide proper instruction in safety matters as presented in the assigned course guides.

C. Each professional staff member shall immediately report to a building administrator knowledge of threats of violence by students.

D. A professional staff member shall not send students on any personal errands.

E. A professional staff member shall not engage in grooming as defined by State law, or otherwise associate or fraternize with students at any time in a manner that may give the appearance of impropriety including, but not limited to, the creation or participation in any situation or activity that could be considered abusive or sexually suggestive or involve harmful substances such as illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. Any sexual or other inappropriate conduct with a student by any staff member will subject the offender to potential criminal prosecution and disciplinary action by the Governing Board, up to and including termination of employment.

F. If a student approaches a staff member to seek advice or to ask questions regarding a personal problem related to sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental or physical health, and/or family relationships, etc., the staff member may attempt to assist the student by facilitating contact with certified or licensed individuals in the Educational Service Center who specialize in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of the student's stated problem. However, under no circumstances should a staff member attempt, unless properly licensed and authorized to do so, to counsel, assess, diagnose, or treat the student's problem or behavior, nor should such staff member inappropriately disclose personally identifiable information concerning the student to third persons not specifically authorized by law. Consistent with State law, the staff member shall promptly notify the Principal of any such communications with a student so the Principal can determine whether a notice needs to be provided to the student's parent pursuant to R.C. 3313.473 and Policy 5780.01 - Parents' Bill of Rights.

G. A professional staff member shall not transport students in a private vehicle without the approval of the Principal.

H. A student shall not be required to perform work or services that may be detrimental to the student's health.

I. Staff members shall only engage in electronic communication with students via email, texting, social media, and/or online networking media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, Skype, blogs, etc., when such communication is directly related to curricular matters or co-curricular/extracurricular events or activities with prior approval of the Principal.

J. Staff members are prohibited from electronically transmitting any personally identifiable image of a student(s), including video, photographs, streaming video, etc. via email, text message, or through the use of social media and/or online networking media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, Skype, blogs, etc. unless such transmission has been made as part of a pre-approved curricular matter or co-

curricular/extracurricular event or activity such as a school-sponsored publication or production in accordance with Policy 5722.

Since most information concerning a child in school, other than directory information described in Policy 8330, is confidential under Federal and State laws, any staff member who shares confidential information with another person not authorized to receive the information may be subject to discipline and/or civil liability. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning assessments, grades, behavior, family background, and alleged child abuse.

Pursuant to the laws of the State and Board Policy 8462, each professional staff member shall report to the proper legal authorities immediately any sign of suspected child abuse or neglect.

2.5 STUDENT ABUSE AND NEGLECT (PO8462 SUMMARY)

Student Abuse and Neglect Reporting

The Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all students. All employees are mandated reporters and are required by Ohio law to immediately report any known or suspected child abuse or neglect.

Any employee who, in connection with their position, knows of or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report to the appropriate county public children services agency or local law enforcement agency. This obligation applies regardless of the identity of the alleged offender, including situations involving another employee, volunteer, or school official.

After making the required report, employees shall notify the appropriate supervisor or administrator in accordance with NwOESC reporting procedures. Reporting concerns to a supervisor does not replace the legal requirement to make a report directly to children services or law enforcement.

Information related to suspected child abuse or neglect is confidential and shall be shared only with individuals authorized by law or policy. Employees who fail to report suspected abuse or neglect, or who improperly disclose confidential information, may be subject to disciplinary action and may incur civil or criminal penalties.

NwOESC provides ongoing training to staff regarding child abuse prevention, recognition, and reporting requirements, as well as other school safety and student well-being topics required by law.

2.6 - SCHOOL SAFETY (PO 8400 SUMMARY)

The Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center is committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and drug-free learning and working environment for all students, staff, and visitors. Creating and sustaining a safe school climate is a shared responsibility that requires the cooperation of employees, students, families, community partners, and law enforcement agencies.

All employees are expected to support and follow established safety procedures, emergency protocols, and security practices. Staff members play an important role in promoting student well-being, preventing unsafe behavior, and promptly reporting safety concerns, threats, suspicious activity, accidents, or violations of Center policies.

The NwOESC recognizes that school safety requires a coordinated and proactive approach. Administrators, professional staff, support staff, and law enforcement officials work collaboratively to help ensure the safety and welfare of students and employees during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, and while participating in NwOESC programs and services.

Maintaining a safe environment is essential to supporting student learning, employee well-being, and the overall mission of the NwOESC.

2.7 STUDENT HAZING (po5516)

Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with and disruptive to the educational process, and prohibited at any time in school facilities, on school property, and/or off school property if the misconduct is connected to or associated with Governing Board-sponsored activities (e.g., extracurricular teams, clubs, or groups) or incidents that have occurred on school property. No administrator, employee, faculty member, teacher, consultant, alumnus, or volunteer of the Center shall encourage, permit, authorize, condone, or tolerate any hazing activities. The preceding prohibition includes recklessly permitting the hazing of any person associated with the Center. Additionally, no student shall plan, encourage, or engage in any hazing.

Hazing is defined as doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any class, team, or organization or any act to continue or reinstate membership in or affiliation with any class, team, or organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person, including coercing another to consume alcohol or a drug of abuse. No person shall recklessly participate in the hazing of another. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing shall not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

Administrators, employees, faculty members, teachers, or volunteers of the Center shall be alerted to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include hazing. If hazing or planned hazing is discovered, the students involved shall be informed by the discoverer of the prohibitions contained in this policy and shall be ordered to end all hazing activities or planned activities immediately. All hazing incidents shall be reported immediately to the Superintendent. Additionally, no administrator, employee, faculty member, teacher, consultant, alumnus, or volunteer of the Center who is acting in an official and professional capacity shall recklessly fail to immediately report the knowledge of hazing to a law enforcement agency in the county in which the victim of hazing resides or in which the hazing is occurring or has occurred. Students, administrators, employees, faculty members, and teachers who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be held personally liable for civil and criminal penalties in accordance with law. Likewise, consultants, alumni, and volunteers associated with the Center who fail to abide by this policy may be prohibited from continuing their involvement and/or participation in activities associated with the Center and may be held personally liable for civil and criminal penalties in accordance with law.

The Superintendent shall distribute this policy to all students, Board employees, consultants, and volunteers, and shall incorporate it into building, staff, and student handbooks. It shall also be posted on the Center's website. This policy shall be the subject of discussion at employee staff meetings or in-service programs.

Board employees, consultants, and volunteers shall not intentionally remain ignorant of hazing or potential hazing activities.

2.8 PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS (po5780.01)

The Governing Board recognizes that parents have a fundamental right to make decisions concerning the upbringing, education, and care of their children and promotes parental involvement in the Educational Service Center's ("Center") public school system. In addition, parents have certain rights in the school system to know about their student's educational experience. Specific rights are listed in the topic areas of these policies.

Sexuality Content/Mental, Emotional, or Physical Health or Well Being/Health Care Services

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy:

"Age-appropriate" and "developmentally appropriate" content refers to activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity or that are determined to be developmentally appropriate for a child, based on the development of cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities that are typical for an age or age group.

"Student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being" includes, at a minimum, any of the following:

A. A student's academic performance;

B. Any significant sickness or physical injury, or any psychological trauma suffered by a student;

C. Any harassment, intimidation, or bullying, as defined in section 3313.666 of the Revised Code, by or against a student in violation of Center policy;

D. Any request by a student to identify as a gender that does not align with the student's biological sex;

E. Exhibition of suicidal ideation or persistent symptoms of depression or severe anxiety, or other mental health issues.

"Sexuality content" means any oral or written instruction, presentation, image, or description of sexual concepts or gender ideology provided in a classroom setting. "Sexuality content" does not mean any of the following:

A. Instruction or presentations in sexually transmitted infection education, child sexual abuse prevention, and sexual violence prevention education provided under division (A)(5) of section 3313.60 or section 3314.0310 or 3326.091 of the Revised Code;

B. Instruction or presentations in sexually transmitted infection education emphasizing abstinence provided under section 3313.6011 of the Revised Code;

C. Incidental references to sexual concepts or gender ideology occurring outside of formal instruction or presentations on such topics, including references made during class participation and in schoolwork.

Sexuality Content and Parental Notification

The Board will ensure that any sexuality content is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate for the age of the student receiving the instruction, regardless of the age or grade level of the student. The Board will not permit instruction that includes sexual content in grades kindergarten through grade three (3).

Prior to providing instruction that includes sexuality content or permitting a third party to provide such instruction on behalf of the Center, the Board will provide parents the opportunity to review any instructional material that includes sexuality content. Upon request of the student's parent, a student shall be excused from instruction that includes sexuality content and shall be permitted to participate in an alternative assignment.

Student Services/Mental, Emotional, Physical Health or Well-Being/Safe and Supportive Learning Environment and Parental Notification

The Board will promptly notify a student's parent of any substantial change in the student's services, including counseling services or monitoring related to the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the student. Such notification will be provided by the student's building administration through email and/or a telephone conference. The Board will not inhibit parental access to the student's education and health records maintained by the school.

Center personnel will not directly or indirectly encourage a student to withhold from a parent information concerning the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being, or a change in related services or monitoring.

Center personnel will not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in decisions affecting a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.

Procedure for Authorization From Parents for Health Care Services

Authorization of parents must be obtained by the Board prior to providing any type of health care service to students, including physical, mental, and behavioral health care services. Parents may choose whether to authorize the Board to provide a health care service to the parent's child.

To facilitate parental involvement and decision-making on such authorization, at the beginning of each school year, the Board will notify parents of each health care service offered at, or facilitated in cooperation with, their student's school of attendance and of the parents' option to withhold consent or decline any specified service. If granted,

parental consent to health care services does not waive the parent's right to access their child/children's educational or health records or to be notified about a change in the student's services or monitoring as set forth herein.

Prior to providing a health care service to a student, the building administration of the student's school of attendance will notify a parent whether the service is required to be provided by the Center under State law and if other options for a student to access the service exist.

These notification requirements do not apply to emergency situations, first aid, other unanticipated minor health care services, or health care services provided pursuant to a student's IEP or the Center's obligation under section 504 of the "Rehabilitation Act of 1973," 29 U.S.C. 794.

Process for Resolving Parental Concerns

Parents may file written concerns with the Principal or other building administrator of the student's school of attendance regarding any topics addressed in the above Parental Rights and Parental Involvement section of this policy. Parents will be notified at the beginning of each school year of their right to file a written concern. The Principal or other building administrator will take steps with parent(s) to resolve the concern within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written concern. If not satisfied with the outcome of the resolution by the Principal or building administrator, the parent(s) may appeal a decision at that level to the Superintendent.

If a parent appeals the Principal's or building administrator's decision, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will conduct a hearing on the decision. Based on the findings of that hearing, the Superintendent shall decide whether to affirm the Principal's or building administrator's decision. If the Superintendent determines not to affirm the decision, the Superintendent shall determine a resolution to the parent's concern and communicate the decision to the parent. A parent may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Governing Board.

If the Superintendent's decision is appealed, the Board shall review the Superintendent's decision and, if the Board determines it necessary, hold a hearing on the decision and, based on that hearing, either affirm the Superintendent's decision or determine a new resolution to the parent's concern.

Nothing in this policy shall be read to prevent a parent from contacting a member of the Board regarding a concern with the operation of a school under the supervision of the Governing Board.

Parent Right to Inspect Instructional Materials

In addition, parents have the right to inspect any instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum for their student. Instructional materials mean instructional content, regardless of format, that is provided to the student, including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials available in electronic or digital formats (such as materials accessible through the Internet). Instructional material does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

The Superintendent shall, in consultation with parents, develop a procedure addressing the right of parents as described herein and procedures to assure a timely response to parental requests to review instructional material. The procedure shall also address reasonable notification to parents and students of their rights to review these materials. See AG 9130A and Form 9130 F3.

Right to Inspect Technology Provider Contract

The Center shall provide parents and students with an opportunity to inspect a complete copy of each technology provider contract.

This policy shall not supersede any rights under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

2.9 OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Staff members should avoid situations in which their personal interests, activities, and associations conflict with the interests of NwOESC. If such situations threaten a staff member's effectiveness within the school system, the

Superintendent and/or Board shall evaluate the impact of such interest, activity, or association upon the staff member's responsibilities.

A. Staff members may not dedicate work time to an outside interest, activity, or association.
B. Staff members may not use school property or school time to solicit or accept customers for private enterprises.
C. Staff members may not engage in business transactions on behalf of private enterprises in which s/he may profit by virtue of his/her official position or authority or benefit financially from confidential information that the employee has obtained or may obtain by reason of his/her position or authority.
D. Staff members may not campaign on school property during working hours on behalf of any political issue, or candidate for local, State, or National office. The constitutional right to express political and other opinions as citizens is reserved to all employees.
E. Staff members should refrain from expressions that disrupt the efficient operation of the school and/or interfere with the maintenance of discipline by school officials.
F. Unless expressly approved by the Superintendent, staff members may not accept fees for tutoring when such tutoring is conducted during the normal work day.
G. Similarly, unless expressly approved by the Superintendent, staff members may not accept fees for tutoring of students currently enrolled in one (1) or more of their classes.

Work Stoppage

Recognizing the fact that a local district, for various reasons, could have a work stoppage, this Board remains committed to providing services to the schools and will fulfill its obligations. Members of the NwOESC staff are required at all times to perform their normal duties as assigned by the Superintendent and his/her administration. Employees who fail to perform their duties when so required will be subject to disciplinary measures.

Public Solicitation

No person will sell or offer for sale articles or services within district buildings or on district property unless prior approval has been secured from the Superintendent, CFO/Treasurer, and/or the Board. There will be no solicitation of money from local industry, businesses, district residents, or students by any employee or NwOESC organization without the expressed approval of the Superintendent, CFO/Treasurer, and/or the Board. Salespeople representing educational companies may be granted the opportunity to speak to staff by making arrangements through the Superintendent or Business Offices.

2.10 CONFLICT OF INTEREST(po3113)

The proper performance of school business is dependent upon the maintenance of unquestionably high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and professional conduct by the Governing Board's members, and the Educational Service Center's ("Center's") employees, officers, and agents. Further, such characteristics are essential to the Board's commitment to earn and keep the public's confidence in the Center. For these reasons, the Board adopts the following guidelines to assure that conflicts of interest do not occur. These guidelines apply to all Center employees, officers, and agents, including members of the Board. These guidelines are not intended to be all inclusive, nor to substitute for good judgment on the part of all employees, officers, agents, and Board members.

- No employee, officer, agent, or Board member shall engage in or have a financial or other interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties and responsibilities in the school system.

- Employees, officers agents, and Board members shall not engage in business, private practice of their profession, the rendering of services, or the sale of goods of any type where advantage is taken of any professional relationship they may have with any student, client, or parents of such students or clients in the course of their employment or professional relationship with the Center.

  Included, by way of illustration rather than limitation are the following:

  - the provision of any private lessons or services for a fee

  - the use, sale, or improper divulging of any privileged information about a student or client gained in the course of the employee's, officer's agent's, or Board member's employment or professional relationship with the Center through the employee's, officer's, agent's, or Board

member's access to Center records

- the referral of any student or client for lessons or services to any private business or professional practitioner if there is any expectation of reciprocal referrals, sharing of fees, or other remuneration for such referrals

- the requirement of students or clients to purchase any private goods or services provided by an employee, officer, agent, or Board member or any business or professional practitioner with whom any employee, officer, agent, or Board member has a financial or other relationship, as a condition of receiving any grades, credits, promotions, approvals, or recommendations

Employees, officers, agents, or Board members shall not make use of materials, equipment, or facilities of the Center in private practice. Examples would be the use of facilities before, during, or after regular business hours for service to private practice clients, or the checking out of items from an instructional materials center for private practice.

A. Exceptions to Part A of this policy shall be approved by the Superintendent before entering into any private relationship.

B. No employee, officer, agent, or Board member with a real or apparent conflict of interest may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by the Federal award. A conflict of interest includes when the employee, officer, agent, or Board member, any member of their immediate family, their partner, or an organization that employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from an entity considered for a contract.

An employee, officer, agent, and Board member of the Center may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors.

C. If the Center has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a State, local government, or Indian tribe, the Center may not conduct a procurement action involving the parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization if the Center is unable, or appears to be unable, to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization.

D. Employees, officers, agents, and Board members must promptly disclose any potential conflict of interest which may lead to a violation of this policy to the Center. Upon discovery of any potential conflict of interest, the Center will promptly disclose, in writing, the potential conflict of interest to the appropriate Federal agency or, if applicable, the pass-through entity.

The Center will also promptly disclose whenever, in connection with the Federal award (including any activities or subawards thereunder), it has credible evidence of the commission of a violation of Federal criminal law involving fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, or gratuity violations found in Title 18 of the United States Code or a violation of the civil False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. 3729–3733). The disclosure must be made in writing to the Federal agency, the agency's Office of Inspector General, and pass-through entity. The Center is also required to report matters related to recipient integrity and performance in accordance with Appendix XII of 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

E. Employees, officers, agents, and Board members found to be in violation of this conflict of interest policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as permitted by applicable Board policy and may also face criminal charges and/or risk loss of State-issued licenses/permits.

2.11 PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Professional Meetings

A professional meeting is defined as any meeting that is related to the activities, duties, or responsibilities of the Board employees as determined by the Superintendent or designee. No more than five (5) professional days can be approved per employee by a Supervisor. Employees requesting in excess of five (5) professional days will require approval from the appropriate departmental Director or Superintendent.

An employee may be excused from the performance of their duties and may receive compensation during the days they are excused for attendance at the following professional meetings:

A. Conferences involving other personnel from NwOESC, counties, state, region, or nation, and
B. Committees drawing personnel from such sources.

The following conditions must be met for an employee attending professional meetings:

A. All requests to attend professional meetings shall be made ten (10) days in advance of the meeting for which approval to attend is sought. If payment of advanced registration is requested to be paid by NwOESC, requests need to be submitted one month before the registration deadline on a requisition submitted through the on-line approval system with a scanned copy of the approved professional travel form e-mailed to business@nwoesc.org.
B. Determination of appropriateness and authority to grant permission for attendance at a meeting will rest with the Superintendent or designee.
C. The Superintendent or designee has the authority, when he/she considers the meeting to be of sufficient importance, to request representation from the staff to attend a meeting.
D. The professional meeting to be attended must be related to the work of the employee.
E. The Board will provide for substitute personnel as needed.
F. Employees' travel and professional meeting expenses will be reimbursed within board approved rates.
G. Anyone requesting to attend a professional meeting at personal expense shall submit a request and secure the approval of the superintendent or designee.

2.12 EVALUATION

NwOESC believes that employee evaluations are an important component of professional growth, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Teachers - The evaluation and observation of teachers will be conducted in accordance with applicable Ohio law, Board policy, and the NwOESC locally developed teacher evaluation framework. Teachers will receive feedback designed to support professional growth and enhance student outcomes.

Administrators - Administrators are evaluated in accordance with Board policy and applicable legal requirements. Evaluations are intended to assess performance, recognize strengths, identify areas for growth, and support continuous improvement. The evaluation process may include conferences, observations, the collection of performance data from multiple sources, goal setting, and written feedback. Administrators are afforded the opportunity to respond to evaluation findings in writing. Administrators whose contracts are approaching expiration will receive evaluations within the timelines established by law and Board policy. These evaluations may include recommendations regarding future contract status.

Other Staff - Non-teaching certified staff are evaluated using procedures appropriate to their positions and job responsibilities. Evaluations are designed to provide constructive feedback, support professional development, and promote effective job performance. The Superintendent may make recommendations to the Board regarding employment actions, including changes in assignment, retention, contract renewal, nonrenewal, or dismissal, as appropriate.

2.13 PERSONNEL RECORDS (8320 - PERSONNEL FILES)

It is necessary for the orderly operation of the Center to prepare a personal information system for the retention of appropriate files bearing upon an employee's duties and responsibilities to the Center and the Center's responsibilities to the employee.

The Board requires that sufficient records exist to ensure an employee's qualifications for the job held, compliance with Federal, State, and local benefit programs, conformance with Center rules, and evidence of completed evaluations. Such records will be kept in compliance with the laws of the State of Ohio.

The Board delegates the maintenance of an employee personal information system to the Superintendent.

Only that information which pertains to the professional role of the employee and submitted by duly authorized school administrative personnel and the Board may be entered in the official record file. The employee shall be informed whether requested information is legally required or whether s/he may decline to supply the information.

A copy of each such entry shall be given to the employee upon request except for matters pertaining to pending litigation.

The employee shall have access to their files upon request. Personnel records are held at multiple sites.

Personnel records are predominantly public records and to that extent must be made available for inspection and copying in accordance with State and Federal laws pertaining to same. In accordance with the Federal Privacy Act and case law, the Board shall refrain from disclosing an employee's social security number when releasing personnel records. Further, if an employee presents to the Center a valid confidentiality program authorization issued by the Secretary of State certifying that the employee is a participant in the Safe at Home/Address Confidentiality Program, the Board shall refrain from including the employee's actual/confidential residential address in any personnel records, personnel files, or staff directories (including electronic records and files) or disclosing the employee's actual/confidential residential address when releasing personnel records. The Board shall only list the address designated by the Secretary of State to serve as the employee's address in any personnel records, personnel files, or staff directories. Further, the Board shall use the employee's designated address for any and all communications and correspondence between the Board and the employee. The employee's actual/confidential residential address shall be maintained in a separate confidential file that is not accessible to the public or any employees without a legitimate purpose. Additionally, if applicable, the employee's school, institution of higher education, business, or other place of employment (as specified on an application to be a program participant or on a notice of change of name or address) shall be maintained in a confidential manner. The intentional disclosure of an employee's actual/confidential residential address is prohibited. Any violations could result in disciplinary action or criminal prosecution.

Personnel records shall be monitored regularly to assure compliance with this policy and the law. Records deemed no longer accurate, relevant or necessary under this policy may be submitted to the Center Records Commission for disposal in accordance with law.

2.14 PUBLIC RECORDS (po8310)

The Governing Board is responsible for maintaining the public records of this Educational Service Center("Center") and to make such records available to residents of Ohio for inspection and reproduction in strict adherence to the State's Public Records Act.

The Board will utilize the following procedures regarding the availability of public records. "Public records" are defined as any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, including an electronic record created or received by or coming under the jurisdiction of the Board or its employees, which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Center. "Electronic record" is defined as a record created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means. "Public records" do not include medical records, trial preparation records, confidential law enforcement investigatory records, educational support services data as defined by R.C. 3319.32, records the release of which is prohibited by State or Federal law, and any other exceptions set forth in R.C. 149.43. Confidential law enforcement investigatory records, medical records, and trial preparation records are as defined in R.C. 149.43. No public records, including but not limited to personnel records, personnel files, staff directories, and student records, shall include the actual/confidential addresses of students, parents, or employees who are participating in the Safe at Home/Address Confidentiality Program administered by the Secretary of State. Such public records and student records shall only contain the address designated by the Secretary of State to serve as the student's, parent's or employee's address.

The Center's public records shall be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying. As such, public records will be available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. The Center's public records shall be promptly prepared and made available for inspection. A reasonable period of time may be necessary due to the volume of records requested, the proximity of the location where the records are stored, and/or for the Center to review and redact non-public/confidential information contained in the record. Upon request, a person may receive copies of public records, at cost, within a reasonable period of time.

Each request for public records shall be evaluated for a response at the time it is made. Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must minimally identify the record(s) requested with sufficient clarity to allow the Center to identify, retrieve, and review the record(s). If a requestor makes an ambiguous or overly broad request or has difficulty in making a request for inspection or copies of public records such that the Center's Record Officer cannot reasonably identify what public records are being requested, the Center Record Officer or designee may deny the request but shall provide the requestor with an opportunity to revise the request by informing the requestor of the manner in which records are maintained by the Center and accessed in the ordinary course of business. The request for records need not be in writing. The requestor shall not be required to provide their identity or the intended use of the requested public record(s).

At the time of the request, the records custodian shall inform the person making the request of the estimated length of time required to gather the records. All requests for public records shall be satisfied or acknowledged by the Center promptly following the receipt of the request. If the request for records was in writing, the acknowledgement by the Center shall also be in writing.

Any request deemed significantly beyond routine, such as seeking a voluminous number of copies and/or records, or requiring extensive research, the acknowledgement shall include the following:

A. an estimated number of business days necessary to satisfy the request

B. an estimated cost if copies are requested

C. any items within the request that may be exempt from disclosure

The Superintendent is authorized to grant or refuse access to the records of this Center in accordance with the law. Any denial, in whole or in part, of a public records request must include an explanation, including legal authority. If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the rest released. If there are redactions, the requester must be notified of the redaction and/or the redaction must be plainly visible, and each redaction must be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including legal authority. If the request for records was in writing, the explanation shall also be in writing.

A person may obtain copies of the Center’s public records upon payment of a fee. A person who requests a copy of a public record may request to have said record duplicated on paper, on the same medium on which the Center keeps the record, or on any other medium in which the custodian of records determines that said record reasonably can be duplicated as an integral part of normal operations. A person who requests a copy of a public record may also choose to have that record sent to him/her by United States mail or by other means of delivery or transmission provided the person making the request pays in advance for the said record as well as the costs for postage and the mailing supplies.

Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies.

The charge for paper copies is for the first twenty-five (25) pages the fee will be twenty-five cents ($.25) per page. Pages twenty-six (26) – seventy-five (75) the fee will be twelve cents ($.12) per page. Pages seventy-six (76) – up the fee will be six cents ($.06) per page.

The charge for downloading computer files to a compact disk is $1.00 per disc.

There is no charge for documents e-mailed.

Documents in electronic mail format are records as defined by the Ohio Revised Code when their content relates to the business of the Center (i.e., they serve to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Center). E-mail shall be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats and shall follow the same retention schedule.

Records in private e-mail accounts are subject to disclosure if their content relates to public business, and all employees or representatives of the Center are responsible for retaining e-mails that meet the definition for public records and copying them to their Center e-mail account(s) and/or to the records custodian.

The records custodian shall treat such e-mail/records from private accounts as records of the Center. These records shall be filed appropriately, retained in accordance with the established schedules, and made available for inspection and copying in accordance with the Public Records Act.

Private e-mail, electronic documents, and documents ("private records") that do not serve to document the Center's organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities are not public records. Although private records do not fall under Policy 8310 or AG 8310A, they may fall under Policy 8315 – "Information Management" and/or AG 8315 – "Litigation Hold Procedure".

No public record may be removed from the office in which it is maintained except by a Board officer or employee in the course of the performance of their duties.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as preventing a Board member, in the performance of the Board member's official duties, from inspecting any record of this Center, except student records and certain confidential portions of personnel records.

A School Center Records Commission shall be established consisting of the Board President, Treasurer/CFO, and Superintendent of Schools in accordance with law to judge the advisability of destroying Center records. Record retention schedules shall be updated regularly and posted prominently. The Commission shall meet at least once every twelve (12) months.

The Superintendent shall provide for the inspection, reproduction, and release of public records in accordance with this policy and with the Public Records Law. Administrative guidelines shall be developed to provide guidance to Center employees in responding to public records requests. The Superintendent shall require the posting and distribution of this policy in accordance with statute.

215 LOCAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LPDC)
The Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC) has developed procedures and guidelines to facilitate professional development of the employees of the NwOESC. The LPDC Employee Handbook is designed to give you guidance through the process of renewal of your license.

The committee members encourage you to fully read and understand these procedures. The emphasis is on quality professional development, directly linked to student achievement, with results-driven programming.

The committee is implementing a phase-in process to align their professional development with state mandates. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact any member.

The LPDC handbook is also available on the NwOESC website: nwoesc.org/PoliciesHandbooks.aspx

2.16 BOARD-OWNED TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES USED FOR COMMUNICATION (po7530.01)
The Governing Board will provide technology resources (as defined by Bylaw 0100) for communication purposes ("TR communication devices") to employees who by the nature of their job have a routine and continuing business need for the use of such devices for official Board business. TR communication devices are provided as tools to conduct Board business and to enhance business efficiencies. Board-owned cellular telephones ("cell phones") are not a personal benefit and shall not be a primary mode of communication, unless they are the most cost-effective means to conduct Board business (i.e., because some cellular telephone services plan are billed on a time-used basis, Board-owned cell phones should not be used if a less costly alternative method of communication is safe, convenient and readily available).

The Superintendent is responsible for verifying:

A. the need for each Board-owned cell phone and related service plan is clearly justified for Board business purposes;

B. alternative solutions for work production and communication are considered;

C. employees provided with cellular and/or wireless Internet/data service plans are notified of the purpose and limitations of usage;

D. cellular telephone and wireless Internet/data service plan invoices outlining the details of usage are received and reviewed for conformance with this policy;

E. employees reimburse the Board for non-business use; and

F. a Board-owned cell phone is returned and the corresponding cellular telephone and/or wireless Internet/data service plan is terminated when it is no longer justified by business requirements, the employee leaves the Board's employment, and/or when the employee has demonstrated a disregard for the limitation of this policy.

Cellular and wireless Internet/data service plans are expected to be set at the minimum level that fulfills the business need for the position in question. The service plan that is selected for an employee should be the one that provides a combination of services including number of minutes, coverage, and local call zone most nearly matching the employee's recurring business needs as well as whether the service plan includes text messaging, instant message and/or e-mail capability, and ability to access the Internet. If the service plan is based on minutes used for calls made or includes a charge regarding e-mail or instant messages, the smallest plan available to accommodate the particular business need shall be utilized.

Possessing a Board-owned cell phone and/or other TR communication device is a privilege and all employees are expected to use them appropriately and responsibly. Employees are responsible for managing the cost effectiveness of their cell phone and/or TR communication device use by utilizing assigned landline and/or designated computers as available and appropriate. Employees should know that using a cell phone to place calls outside the immediate area might result in roaming charges, in addition to long distance and regular charges, and that the Board is charged for both outgoing and incoming calls.

Safe and Appropriate Use of Board-Owned TR Communication Devices, Including Cell Phones

Employee safety is a priority of the Board, and responsible use of Board-owned TR communication devices, including cell phones, requires safe use. See Policy 7530.02 - Staff Use of Personal Communication Devices.

Employees may not use a TR communication device in a way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed, or intimidated.

Duty to Maintain Confidentiality of Student Personally Identifiable Information; Public and Student Record Requirements

Employees are subject to all applicable policies and guidelines pertaining to protection of the security, integrity and availability of the data stored on their Board-owned TR communication devices. See Policy 7530.02 - Staff Use of Personal Communication Devices.

When the Board intends to dispose of, or otherwise stop using, a Board-owned TR communication device on which an employee has maintained public records, student records, and/or ESI that is subject to a Litigation Hold, the Center's IT department/staff shall verify such records are properly transferred to an alternative storage device, before disposing of, or otherwise ceasing to use, the TR communication device. The IT department/staff is responsible for securely deleting such records/ESI before disposing of, or ceasing to use, the Board-owned TR communication device. The IT department/staff is responsible for maintaining documentation concerning the actions it takes to comply with this requirement.

Employee's Responsibilities

Reasonable precautions should be taken to prevent theft, loss, or damage to, or misuse or unauthorized use/access to, Board-owned TR communication devices. Upon resignation or termination of employment, or at any time upon request, an employee may be asked to produce the Board-owned TR communication device issued to the employee for return or inspection. Employees unable to present the device in good working condition within the time period requested (e.g., twenty-four (24) hours) might be expected to bear the cost of a replacement. Employees who

separate from employment with outstanding debts for equipment loss or unauthorized charges will be considered to have left employment on unsatisfactory terms and may be subject to legal action for recovery of the loss.

Each employee issued a Board-owned cell phone will receive a detailed monthly statement for all charges. The employee must review the monthly statement for billing accuracy.

The Board reserves the right to audit all Board-owned cell phones, which will include, but not be limited to, a review of the detailed monthly statement upon submission after the requisite review by the employee. The detailed monthly service statements for all Board-owned cell phones, as well as invoices and payment documents related to these accounts, are public records and, as such, may be subject to disclosure and review.

Use of Board-owned Cell Phones for Personal Calls

The Board will seek reimbursement for any additional charges resulting from personal calls. The Board recognizes that in rare circumstances it may be necessary for an employee to use a Board-owned cell phone for personal business. The Board generally prohibits such conduct as emphasized by this policy, but realizes there may be limited situations when such use is justified. Employees are advised not to take advantage of this provision and that repeated use of a Board-owned cell phone for personal business will result in disciplinary action.

Potential Disciplinary Action/Cancellation of Board-Owned TR Communication Device

Violation of this policy may constitute just cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Use of the Board-owned TR communication device in any manner contrary to local, State, or Federal laws will constitute misuse, and will result in the Board canceling the employee's privilege to use the TR communication device and requiring the employee to immediately return the device.

2.17 STAFF USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES (po7530.02)
Use of personal communication devices ("PCDs") (as defined in Bylaw 0100) has become pervasive in the workplace. Regardless of whether the Governing Board pays an employee an allowance for the employee's use of their PCD, the Board reimburses the employee on a per use basis for their business-related use of the employee's PCD, or the employee receives no remuneration for the employee's use of their PCD, the employee is responsible for using the device in a safe and appropriate manner.

Safe and Appropriate Use of Personal Communication Devices, Including Cell Phones/Smartphones

Using a cellular phone or other PCD while operating a vehicle is strongly discouraged. Employees should plan their work accordingly so that calls are placed, text messages/instant messages/e-mails read and/or sent, GPS-navigation destination set/modified, and/or the Internet browsed either prior to traveling or while on rest breaks. In the interest of safety for both Board employees and other drivers, employees are required to comply with all applicable laws while driving (including any laws that prohibit texting or using a cellular phone or other PCD while driving).

Employees may not use a PCD in a way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed or intimidated.

Duty to Maintain Confidentiality of Student Personally Identifiable Information - Public and Student Record Requirements

Employees are subject to all applicable policies and guidelines pertaining to protection of the security, integrity, and availability of the data stored on their PCDs.

Cellular and wireless communications, including calls, text messages, instant messages, and e-mails sent from PCDs, may not be secure. Therefore, employees should use discretion in relaying confidential information, particularly as it relates to students.

At the conclusion of an individual's employment (whether through resignation, nonrenewal, or termination), the employee is responsible for informing the Superintendent of all public records, student records, and ESI subject to a Litigation Hold that is maintained on Center technology resources that were provided by the Center (i.e. assigned) to

the employee during their employment. The Center's IT department/staff will then transfer the records/ESI to an alternative storage device.

If the employee also utilized a PCD for work-related communications, and the device contains public records, students records, and/or ESI subject to a Litigation Hold, the employee must transfer the records/ESI to the Center's custody (e.g., server, alternative storage device) prior to the conclusion of the employee's employment. The Center's IT department/staff is available to assist in this process. Once all public records, student records and ESI subject to a Litigation Hold are transferred to the Center's custody, the employee is required to delete the records/ESI from the employee's PCD. The employee will be required to sign a document confirming that all such records/information has been transferred to the Center's custody and deleted from the employee's PCD before the Board will issue any final compensation that is owed to the individual.

If a PCD is lost, stolen, hacked, or otherwise subjected to unauthorized access, the employee must immediately notify the Superintendent so a determination can be made as to whether any public records, students records and/or ESI subject to a Litigation Hold has been compromised and/or lost. The Superintendent shall determine whether any security breach notification laws may have application to the situation. Appropriate notifications will be sent unless the records/information stored on the PCD was encrypted.

It is required that employees lock and password-protect their PCDs when not in use.

Employees are responsible for making sure no third parties (including family members) have access to records and/or information, which is maintained on a PCD in their possession, that is confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected by State and/or Federal law.

Privacy Issues

Except in emergency situations or as otherwise authorized by the Superintendent or as necessary to fulfill their job responsibilities, employees are prohibited from using PCDs to capture, record, and/or transmit the words or sounds (i.e., audio) and/or images (i.e., pictures/video) of any student, staff member or other person in the school or while attending a school-related activity. Using a PCD to capture, record, and/or transmit audio and/or pictures/video of an individual without proper consent is considered an invasion of privacy and is not permitted.

PCDs, including but not limited to those with cameras, may not be activated or utilized at any time in any school situation where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. These locations and circumstances include, but are not limited to, classrooms, gymnasiums, locker rooms, shower facilities, rest/bathrooms, and any other areas where students or others may change clothes or be in any stage or degree of disrobing or changing clothes. The Superintendent and building principals are authorized to determine other specific locations and situations where use of a PCD is absolutely prohibited.

Personal Use of PCDs While at Work

During work hours personal communications made or received, regardless of whether on a PCD or a regular telephone or Center technology resource (e.g. network computer), can interfere with employee productivity and distract others. Employees are expected to use discretion in using PCDs while at work for personal business. Employees are asked to limit personal communications to breaks and lunch periods, and to inform friends and family members of the Board's policy in this regard.

Potential Disciplinary Action

Violation of this policy may constitute just cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Use of a PCD in any manner contrary to local, State, or Federal laws may also result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2.18 TECHNOLOGY (po7540)

The Governing Board is committed to the effective use of technology to both enhance the quality of student learning and the efficiency of Educational Service Center operations.

Students' use of Center Information & Technology Resources (see definitions in Bylaw 0100) is a privilege, not a right. Students and their parents must sign and submit a Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety form. (See also, Policy 7540.03)

The Superintendent shall develop and implement a written Center Technology Plan (CTP). One (1) of the primary purposes of the CTP is to evaluate new and emerging technologies and how they will play a role in student achievement and success and/or efficient, effective, and secure Center operations. The Board will financially support, as the budget permits, the CTP, including recommendations to provide new and developing technology for students and staff.

The DTP shall set forth procedures for the proper acquisition of technology. The DTP shall also provide guidance to staff and students about making safe, secure, appropriate, and ethical use of Center Information & Technology Resources, as well as inform both staff and students about disciplinary actions that will be taken if its Information & Technology Resources are abused in any way or used in an inappropriate, illegal, or unethical manner. See Policy 7540.03 and AG 7540.03 - Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety, and Policy 7540.04 and AG 7540.04 – Staff Technology Acceptable Use and Safety.

The Superintendent shall review the DTP and report any changes, amendments, or revisions to the Board.

This policy, along with the Student and Staff Technology Acceptable Use and Safety policies and the Student Code of Conduct, further govern students' and staff members' use of their personal communication devices (see Policy 5136 and Policy 7530.02). Users have no right or expectation of privacy when using Center Information & Technology Resources (including, but not limited to, privacy in the content of their personal files, e-mails, and records of their online activity when using Center Information & Technology Resources).

Further safeguards shall be established so that the Board's expenditure of public funds to acquire, operate, and maintain Center Information & Technology Resources achieves the desired benefits and inhibits negative side effects. Accordingly, students shall be educated about appropriate online behavior including, but not limited to, using social media, which is defined in Bylaw 0100, to interact with others online; communicating with other individuals in chat rooms or using other messenger apps, or through blogs, audios (e.g., podcasts), and videos; and recognizing what constitutes cyberbullying, understanding cyberbullying is a violation of Board policy, and learning appropriate responses if they experience cyberbullying.

The Board prohibits students from using Center Information & Technology Resources to access and/or use social media for other than instructional purposes.

Staff may use Center-approved social media platforms/sites in accordance with Policy 7540.02, may use web content, apps, and services for one-way communication with the Center's constituents. Authorized staff may use Center Information & Technology Resources to access and use Center-approved social media platforms/sites to increase awareness of Center programs and activities, as well as to promote achievements of staff and students, provided the Superintendent approves, in advance, such access and use. Use of Center-approved social media platforms/sites for business-related purposes is subject to Ohio's public records laws and, as set forth in Policy 7544, staff members are responsible for archiving their social media and complying with the Center's record retention schedule. See Policy 8310 - Public Records and AG 8310A - Public Records.

Staff must comply with Policy 7540.04, and Policy 7530.02 when using Center Information & Technology Resources or personally-owned personal communication devices to access and/or use social media for personal purposes.

2.19 TECHNOLOGY PRIVACY (po7540.01)

The Governing Board recognizes its staff members' right to privacy in their personal lives. This policy serves to inform staff members of the Board's position with respect to staff member privacy in the educational and workplace setting and to protect the Board's interests.

All Educational Service Center Information & Technology Resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) are considered the Board's property (whether physical objects or digital assets, including those accessible online) and intended to be used for business purposes. The Board retains the right to access and review all Information & Technology Resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) including, but not limited to, electronic and voice mail, computer files,

databases, and any other electronic transmissions contained in or used in conjunction with the Board's computer system/network, telephone system, electronic mail system, and voice mail system. Staff members shall be notified that they have no expectation that any personal information/data maintained, stored, or transmitted on or through such systems is confidential or private, regardless of whether the Board owns said systems or acquires them as a service.

Review of such information may be done by the Board with or without the staff member's knowledge. The use of passwords and/or other means of securing such information (e.g., use of multifactor authentication (MFA) tools or techniques) does not guarantee confidentiality and the Board retains the right to access information in spite of the information being protected by a password and/or other means of verifying the user's identity (e.g., MFA or biometric data). A staff member's refusal to permit or otherwise facilitate such access may be grounds for discipline, up to and including discharge.

Center Information & Technology Resources are to be used only for business and educational purposes.

Personal messages/emails, images, audios, and videos sent via Center Information & Technology Resources should be limited in accordance with the Superintendent's guidelines. Staff members are encouraged to keep their personal records and personal business separate and distinct from Center Information & Technology Resources. Because Center Information & Technology Resources are to be used primarily for business and educational purposes, staff members are prohibited from sending offensive, discriminatory, or harassing messages/emails, images, audios, or videos.

Center Information & Technology Resources must be used properly. Review of Center Technology & Information Resources will only be done in the ordinary course of business and will be motivated by a legitimate business reason. If a staff member's personal information is discovered, the contents of such discovery will not be reviewed by the Board, except to the extent necessary to determine if the files/messages/emails/voice mails constitute a public record or if the Board's interests have been compromised. Any personal information/data discovered will be limited to those who have a specific need to know that information.

The administrators and supervisory staff members authorized by the Superintendent shall have the authority to search and access electronic/digital information/data maintained, stored, and/or transmitted on or through Center Information & Technology Resources.

All Center Information & Technology Resources are considered the property of and/or under the jurisdiction of the Board. Staff members shall not copy, delete, or remove any information/data contained on Center Information & Technology Resources without the express permission of the Superintendent or communicate any such information to unauthorized individuals. In addition, staff members may not download, copy, or install software onto any Center Information & Technology Resources and may not bring or access software from outside sources for use on Center Information & Technology Resources without the prior approval of the Superintendent or designee. Such pre-approval shall include a review of any security, privacy, copyright infringements, or virus problems associated with such outside software.

2.20 STAFF TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE AND SAFETY (po7540.04)

Technology directly affects the ways in which information is accessed, communicated, and transferred in society. Educators are expected to continually adapt their means and methods of instruction and the way they approach student learning to incorporate the latest technologies. The Governing Board provides Educational Service Center ("Center") Information & Technology Resources (as defined by Bylaw 0100) (collectively, "Center Information & Technology Resources") to support the educational and professional needs of its staff and students. The Board provides staff with access to the Internet for educational purposes only and utilizes apps and services (apps/services) (as defined by Bylaw 0100) to enhance the instruction delivered to its students and to facilitate the staff's work. The Center's computer network and Internet system do not serve as a public access service or a public forum and the Board imposes reasonable restrictions on its use consistent with its stated educational purpose.

The Board regulates the use of Center Information & Technology Resources by principles consistent with applicable local, State, and Federal laws, and the Center's educational mission. This policy and its related administrative guidelines and any applicable employment contracts and collective bargaining agreements govern the staff's use of Center Information & Technology Resources and personal communication devices when they are connected to the

Center's Information & Technology Resources, including apps/services, regardless of whether such use takes place on or off school property (see Policy 7530.02).

Staff members are prohibited from using Center Information & Technology Resources to engage in illegal conduct (e.g., libel, slander, vandalism, harassment, theft, plagiarism, inappropriate access, etc.) or conduct that violates this Policy and its related administrative guidelines (e.g., making personal attacks and injurious comments, invading a person's privacy, etc.). Nothing herein, however, shall infringe on a staff member's First Amendment rights. Because Center Information & Technology Resources are not unlimited, the Board may institute restrictions aimed at preserving these resources, such as placing limits on use of bandwidth, storage space, and printers.

Staff members have no right or expectation to privacy when using Center Information & Technology Resources (including, but not limited to, privacy in the content of their personal files, messages/e-mails, and records of their online activity).

Staff members are expected to use Center Information & Technology Resources to promote educational excellence in our schools by providing students with the opportunity to develop resource-sharing, innovation, and communication skills and tools that are essential to both life and work. The Board encourages the faculty to develop the appropriate skills necessary to effectively access, analyze, evaluate, and utilize these resources in enriching educational activities. The instructional use of the Internet and apps/services will be guided by Board Policy 2520 - Selection of Instructional Materials and Equipment.

The Internet is a global information and communication network that brings incredible education and information resources to our students. Through the Internet, students and staff can access relevant information that will enhance their learning and the education process. Further, Center Information & Technology Resources provide students and staff with the opportunity to communicate with people throughout the world. Access to such an incredible quantity and diversity of information and resources brings with it, however, certain unique challenges and responsibilities.

While the Board uses various technologies to limit the use of Center Information & Technology Resources to only use/access apps/services and resources that have been pre-approved for the purpose of instruction, study, and research related to the curriculum, it is impossible to prevent users from accessing and/or coming in contact with online content that has not been pre-approved for use by students of certain ages. It is no longer possible for educators and community members to review and screen all materials to assess their appropriateness for supporting and enriching the curriculum according to adopted guidelines and reasonable selection criteria (taking into account the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities, and developmental levels of the students who would be exposed to them) when significant portions of students' education take place online or through the use of apps/services.

Pursuant to Federal law, the Board has implemented technology protection measures that protect against (e.g., filter or block) access to visual displays/depictions/materials that are obscene, constitute child pornography, and/or are harmful to minors, as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). At the discretion of the Board or Superintendent, the technology protection measures may also be configured to protect against access to other material considered inappropriate for students to access. The Board also utilizes software and/or hardware to monitor online activity of staff members to restrict access to child pornography and other material that is obscene, objectionable, inappropriate, and/or harmful to minors. The technology protection measures may not be disabled at any time that students may be using Center Information & Technology Resources if such disabling will cease to protect against access to materials that are prohibited under CIPA. Any staff member who attempts to disable the technology protection measures without express written consent of an appropriate administrator will be disciplined, up to and including termination.

The Superintendent or Technology Coordinator may temporarily or permanently unblock access to websites or apps/services containing appropriate material if access to such sites has been mistakenly, improperly, or inadvertently blocked by the technology protection measures. The determination of whether material is appropriate or inappropriate shall be based on the content of the material and the intended use of the material, not on the protection actions of the technology protection measures. The Superintendent may also disable the technology protection measures to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Directors are responsible for providing training so that staff under their supervision are knowledgeable about this policy and its accompanying guidelines.

Staff members will participate in professional development programs in accordance with the provisions of law and this policy. Training shall include:

A. the safety and security of students while using e-mail, chat rooms, social media, and other forms of direct electronic communications;

B. the inherent danger of students disclosing personally identifiable information online;

C. the consequences of unauthorized access (e.g., "hacking", "harvesting", "digital piracy", "data mining", etc.), cyberbullying, and other unlawful or inappropriate activities by students or staff online; and

D. unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personally-identifiable information ("PII") regarding minors.

Staff members shall provide guidance and instruction to their students regarding the appropriate use of Center Information & Technology Resources and online safety and security as specified above. Additionally, such training shall include, but not be limited to, education concerning appropriate online behavior including interacting with others on social media, including in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response. Further, staff members shall monitor students' online activities while the students are at school.

Monitoring may include, but is not necessarily limited to, visual observations of online activities during class sessions or use of specific monitoring tools to review browser history and network, server, and computer logs. The Center will provide parents with appropriate notice – to the extent required by State law – when such monitoring takes place.

The disclosure of personally identifiable information about students online is prohibited.

All staff members who use Center Information & Technology Resources are required to sign a written agreement to abide by the terms and conditions of this policy and its accompanying guidelines. See Form 7540.04 F1.

In order to keep Center Information & Technology Resources operating in a safe, secure, efficient, effective, and beneficial manner to all users, staff members are required to comply with all Center-established cybersecurity procedures including, but not limited to, the use of multi-factored authentication (MFA), for which they have been trained. Principals are responsible for providing such training on a regular basis and measuring the effectiveness of the training.

Staff members are responsible for good behavior when using Center Information & Technology Resources - i.e., behavior comparable to that expected when they are in physical classrooms and school buildings and at school-sponsored events. Because communications on the Internet are often public in nature, general rules for professional behavior and communication apply. The Board does not approve any use of Center Information & Technology Resources that is not authorized by or conducted strictly in compliance with this policy and its accompanying guideline.

Staff members may only use Center Information & Technology Resources to access or use social media if it is done for educational or business-related purposes.

An employee's personal or private use of social media may have unintended consequences. While the Board respects its employees' First Amendment rights, those rights do not include permission to post inflammatory comments that could compromise the Center's mission, undermine staff relationships, or cause a substantial disruption to the school environment. This warning includes staff members' online conduct that occurs off school property including from the employee's personal communication device. Postings to social media should be done in a manner sensitive to the staff member's professional responsibilities.

Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Staff are permitted to use Artificial Intelligence ("AI") tools to accomplish their job responsibilities so long as the use is ethical, responsible, and does not violate any provisions of this policy – e.g., it does not infringe on students' or staff members' privacy rights, violate their duty to maintain confidentiality related to PII, etc.

To ensure the integrity of the educational process and to promote fair and equal opportunities for all students, except as outlined below, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is strictly prohibited for the completion of school work. The use of AI tools, without the express permission/consent of a teacher, undermines the learning and problem-solving skills that are essential to academic success and that the staff is tasked to develop in each student. Students are encouraged to develop their own knowledge, skills, and understanding of course material rather than relying solely on AI tools and they should ask their teachers when they have questions and/or need assistance. Unauthorized use of AI tools is considered a form of plagiarism, and any student found using these tools without permission or in a prohibited manner will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. (See Policy 7540.09 - Artificial Intelligence ("AI"))

Notwithstanding the preceding, students can use AI tools in the school setting if they receive prior permission/consent from their teacher, so long as they use the AI tools in an ethical and responsible manner. Teachers have the discretion to authorize students to use AI tools for the following uses:

A. Research assistance: AI tools can be used to help students quickly and efficiently identify background information, including locating relevant information and sources for their school projects and assignments, suggesting research questions, providing opposing viewpoints, identifying blind spots, and suggesting other perspectives.

B. Data Analysis: AI tools can be used to help students with pattern identification and to analyze, understand, and interpret large amounts of data, such as text documents or social media posts. This can be particularly useful for research projects or data analysis assignments – e.g., scientific experiments and marketing research.

C. Language translation: AI tools can be used to translate texts or documents into different languages, which can be helpful for students who are learning a new language or for students who are studying texts written in a different language. AI tools can also remove abstract language from a text, adjust text complexity, and provide background information about a culture to help a student understand texts.

D. Writing assistance: AI tools can provide feedback on a student's writing, including grammar and spelling corrections, as well as suggest alternative word choices and sentence structure, to help students improve their writing skills. Similarly, AI tools can offer suggestions to modify tone and voice, organize a student's thinking, identify bias, suggest additional topics, and ask questions to expand the student's thinking on a topic.

E. Accessibility: AI tools can be used to help students with disabilities access and understand written materials. For example, text-to-speech software can help students with specific learning disabilities or visual impairments to read texts and AI-powered translation tools can help students with hearing impairments understand spoken language (e.g., create transcripts or provide closed-captioning for spoken material).

When AI tools are used responsibly and effectively, they can supplement, not replace, traditional learning methods. If a student has any questions about whether they are permitted to use AI tools for a specific class assignment, they should ask their teacher.

In accordance with their teacher's direction, students are required to cite/identify work generated/created with the use of AI tools and explain/demonstrate how the AI tools were used in the creation of the work.

Users who disregard this policy and its accompanying guidelines may have their use privileges suspended or revoked, and disciplinary action taken against them. Users are personally responsible and liable, both civilly and criminally, for uses of Center Information & Technology Resources that are not authorized by this policy and its accompanying guidelines.

The Board designates the Superintendent and Administrative Team as the administrator(s) responsible for initiating, implementing, and enforcing this policy and its accompanying guidelines as they apply to staff members' use of Center Information & Technology Resources.

In addition, Federal and State confidentiality laws forbid schools and their employees from using or disclosing student education records without parental consent. See Policy 8330. Education records include a wide variety of information; posting PII about students is not permitted. Staff members who violate State and Federal confidentiality and/or privacy laws related to the disclosure of student or employee PII may be disciplined.

Staff members retain rights of communication for collective bargaining purposes and union organizational activities.

2.21 EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER-ISSUED STAFF E-MAIL ACCOUNT (po7540.05)
Staff

The Governing Board is committed to the effective use of electronic mail ("e-mail") by all Educational Service Center staff and Board members in the conduct of their official duties. This policy and any corresponding guidelines are intended to establish a framework for the proper use of e-mail for conducting official business and communicating with colleagues, students, parents and community members.

When available, the Center's e-mail system must be used by employees for any official Center e-mail communications. Personal e-mail accounts on providers other than the Center's e-mail system may be blocked at any time if concerns for network security, SPAM, or virus protection arise. Furthermore, Center staff are expected to exercise reasonable judgment and prudence and take appropriate precautions to prevent viruses from entering the Center's network when opening or forwarding any e-mails or attachments to e-mails that originate from unknown sources.

Center staff shall not send or forward mass e-mails, even if the e-mails concern Center business, without prior approval of the Technology Coordinator.

Center staff may join list servs or other e-mail services (e.g. RSS feeds) that pertain to their responsibilities in the Center, provided these list servs or other e-mail services do not exceed the staff member's e-mail storage allotment. If a staff member is unsure whether s/he has adequate storage or should subscribe to a list serv or RSS feed, s/he should discuss the issue with his/her Building Principal or the Center's Technology Coordinator.

Staff members are encouraged to keep their inbox and folders organized by regularly reviewing e-mail messages, appropriately saving e-mails that constitute a public record or student record and e-mails that are subject to a litigation hold (see Policy 8315 – Information Management), and purging all other e-mails that have been read. If the staff member is concerned that his/her e-mail storage allotment is not sufficient, s/he should contact the Center's Technology Coordinator.

Public Records

The Center complies with all Federal and State laws pertaining to electronic mail. Accordingly, e-mails written by or sent to Center staff and Board members may be public records if their content concerns Center business, or education records if their content includes personally-identifiable information about a student. E-mails that are public records are subject to retention and disclosure, upon request, in accordance with Policy 8310 – Public Records. E-mails that are student records must be maintained pursuant to Policy 8330 – Student Records. Finally e-mails may constitute electronically stored information ("ESI") that may be subject to a litigation hold pursuant to Policy 8315 – Information Management.

State and Federal law exempt certain documents and information within documents from disclosure, no matter what their form. Therefore, certain e-mails may be exempt from disclosure or it may be necessary to redact certain content in the e-mails before the emails are released pursuant to a public records request, the request of a parent or eligible student to review education records, or a duly served discovery request involving ESI.

E-mails written by or sent to Center staff and Board members by means of their private e-mail account may be public records if the content of the e-mails concerns Center business, or education records if their content includes personally-identifiable information about a student. Consequently, staff shall comply with a Center request to

produce copies of e-mail in their possession that are either public records or education records, or that constitute ESI that is subject to a litigation hold, even if such records reside on a computer owned by an individual staff member, or are accessed through an e-mail account not controlled by the Center.

Retention

Pursuant to State and Federal law, e-mails that are public records or education records, and e-mails that are subject to a litigation hold shall be retained.

The Center maintains archives of all e-mails sent and/or received by users of the Center's e-mail service. Staff members are required to forward copies of any e-mails received in their personal e-mail account(s) not affiliated with the Center server to their Center e-mail account so that these records are also archived for future retrieval, if necessary.

Unauthorized E-mail

The Board does not authorize the use of its Technology Resources, including its computer network ("network"), to accept, transmit, or distribute unsolicited bulk e-mail sent through the Internet to network e-mail accounts. In addition, Internet e-mail sent, or caused to be sent, to or through the network that makes use of or contains invalid or forged headers, invalid or non-existent domain names, or other means of deceptive addressing will be deemed to be counterfeit. Any attempt to send or cause such counterfeit e-mail to be sent to or through the network is unauthorized. Similarly, e-mail that is relayed from any third party's e-mail servers without the permission of that third party, or which employs similar techniques to hide or obscure the source of the e-mail, is also an unauthorized use of the network. The Board does not authorize the harvesting or collection of network e-mail addresses for the purposes of sending unsolicited e-mails. The Board reserves the right to take all legal and technical steps available to prevent unsolicited bulk e-mail or other unauthorized e-mail from entering, utilizing, or remaining within the network. Nothing in this policy is intended to grant any right to transmit or send e-mail to, or through, the network. The Board's failure to enforce this policy in every instance in which it might have application does not amount to a waiver of its rights.

Unauthorized use of the network in connection with the transmission of unsolicited bulk e-mail, including the transmission of counterfeit e-mail, may result in civil and criminal penalties against the sender and/or possible disciplinary action.

2.22 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ("AI") - (po7540.09 summary)

NwOESC recognizes the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support teaching, learning, communication, and operational efficiency. Employees may use approved AI tools to enhance their work while maintaining professional judgment, ethical standards, and compliance with all applicable laws and Board policies.

Employees who use AI tools are expected to:

- Use only approved AI applications and platforms.
- Maintain the confidentiality and security of student, staff, and organizational information.
- Never enter personally identifiable information (PII), confidential records, protected student information, or sensitive organizational data into unapproved AI systems.
- Review, verify, and take responsibility for the accuracy and appropriateness of all AI-generated content before use or distribution.
- Comply with FERPA, IDEA, copyright laws, data privacy requirements, and all applicable Board policies.
- Use AI as a tool to support professional responsibilities, not as a substitute for professional judgment, decision-making, or required human interaction.
- Model ethical, responsible, and transparent use of AI technologies.

The use of AI to create misleading, deceptive, harassing, discriminatory, or inappropriate content is prohibited. Employees shall not use AI-generated content in a manner that violates Board policy, professional standards, or applicable law.

Questions regarding approved AI tools, acceptable use, data privacy, or implementation should be directed to a supervisor or the Superintendent's office.

For additional information, employees should refer to Board Policy 7540.09 – Artificial Intelligence (AI), Board Policy 7540.04 – Staff Technology Acceptable Use and Safety, and other related Board policies and administrative guidelines.

2.23 COPYRIGHT WORKS

The Board directs its staff and students to use copyrighted works only to the extent that Title 17 of the United States Code permits.

Works created by employees for the NWOESC shall be considered works for hire and shall be owned by the Board.

Because the Board hosts a website and stores information on it at the direction of users, it is classified as an on-line service provider for copyright purposes. In order to limit the Board's liability relating to material/information residing, at the direction of a user, on its system or network, the Board directs the Superintendent to receive notification of claimed infringement.

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3.1 SALARY SCHEDULES

The Board will review salary schedules annually and shall inform all teachers/administrators of their salaries in accordance with Ohio laws.

The Superintendent is authorized to credit, for placement on the salary schedule, past service of an applicant for employment in NwOESC in accordance with Ohio laws.

According to Policy 3411, the Superintendent shall arrange credit for past service of each new staff member for proper placement on the salary schedule on the following basis:

A. all years of service in school districts or educational service centers with each year consisting of at least one hundred twenty (120) days;
B. not more than ten (10) years of service in a chartered, nonpublic school in Ohio or in another public school, with each year consisting of at least one hundred twenty (120) days under a teacher's contract;
C. not more than ten (10) years in a chartered school or institution or a school or institution that subsequently became chartered or a chartered, special-education program or a special-education program that became chartered operated by the State or by a subdivision or other local government unit of this State. Each year must consist of at least one hundred twenty (120) days;
D. not more than four (4) years for active military experience which must be eight (8) continuous months of service to be recognized as a year of authorized experience.

The total credit for years of service specified in B-D above shall not be more than ten (10) years, unless so approved by the Superintendent, and may vary depending upon the Superintendent's evaluation of the staff member's background and previous experience.

The Superintendent is also authorized to credit, to a maximum of ten (10) years, past service in:

A. a school approved by a State Department of Education or operated by a State Agency;
B. an overseas dependent school operated by the U.S. Armed Forces;
C. a college, university, or related work experience.

Initial salary schedule placement for all staff will be based on a review of the application materials. Receipt of college credit documentation and verification of employment forms from previous employers will initiate movement to the appropriate level on the salary schedule (placement beyond step #11 is at superintendent discretion). New employees have sixty (60) days from their first assigned day of work to provide previous experience information and college transcripts for adjustment in salary schedule placement.

One (1) year of experience is defined as at least 120 days of service in a contract year; or 120 days accumulated in two (2) or more consecutive years with the same employer with no days from a single contract year counted towards more than one year of experience (cannot add days from multiple years and divide by 120 days). For NwOESC employees completing less than 120 paid days in a contract year, salary schedule movement will be based on the accumulation of a total of 120 paid days in two (2) or more consecutive contract years with NwOESC.

Each teacher who has completed training which would qualify him/her for a higher salary bracket shall file original transcripts with the Business Office by the last business day of September for a first half of the year adjustment or by the last business day of February for a second half of the year adjustment. Graduate courses must have a grade of 'C' or better to be accepted toward movement on the salary schedule. Also, a letter may be sent by the employee to the NwOESC Business Office indicating eligibility for revision of salary schedule placement due to the completion of coursework.

3.2 WORK RELATED ILLNESS OR INJURY

Any work-related illness or injury shall be reported immediately to the NwOESC Business Office.

If you are injured or become ill and do not choose to seek medical attention, you are still required to complete the NwOESC Work Related Illness or Injury form and forward it within 24 hours of the incident to the Business Office.

If your injury or illness requires medical treatment:

1. Immediately notify your Supervisor and/or the Business Office that you have become ill or injured.
2. Complete the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation First Report of Injury (FROI) form and give it to the medical provider giving initial treatment.
3. Within twenty-four (24) hours complete the NwOESC Work Related Illness or Injury form, which is available on our website, under staff links, Accident Reporting.
4. Following any medical treatment, a return-to-work slip from your medical provider is required stating the date you are able to return to work and listing any types of limitations or restrictions that may be in effect.

If your injury requires **emergency** *medical attention, call 9-1-1 immediately and seek medical care.*

Section 4123.54 of the Ohio Revised Code requires notice of rebuttable presumption. Rebuttable presumption means that an employee may dispute or prove untrue the presumption (or belief) that alcohol or a controlled substance not prescribed by the employee's physician is the proximate cause (main reason) of the work-related injury.

The burden of proof is on the employee to prove that the presence of alcohol or a controlled substance was not the proximate cause of the work-related injury. An employee who tests positive or refuses to submit to chemical testing may be disqualified for compensation and benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act.

3.3 SEVERANCE PAY

All employees who present evidence of retirement from active service with the Board shall be granted severance pay in accordance with Ohio law and Board policy.

For purposes of this policy, "retirement" means retirement under any state retirement system.

A. In order to qualify for severance pay, an employee shall:
    1. Have served ten (10) or more years of active service covered by SERS or STRS, with the State, a political subdivision, or a combination thereof and the last three (3) consecutive years of employment must have been with NwOESC, and
    2. Express his/her intention to retire on or before his/her last day of service.
B. Severance pay will be made by the Board in the following manner:
    1. Payment shall be made on the second payroll in January following the effective date of retirement. All employees of the NwOESC who are currently fifty-five (55) years of age or older, or who will attain this age during the calendar year of retirement, will have the option to make contributions to a retirement plan such as a 403(b) plan, a 457 plan, or payroll deductions. Contact the Business Office for additional details.
    2. A written application for severance pay must be submitted by the employee certifying that he/she qualifies as a retiree.
    3. Such payment shall be made only once to an employee.
    4. Payments shall be determined by the employee's daily rate of base pay based on the days of service at the time of retirement exclusive of overtime or any supplemental pay.

Payment of severance pay shall eliminate all sick leave accumulation and none shall be credited upon reemployment or transferred to another state agency.

3.4 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Benefits based on service for a public school district shall not be paid to any individual for any week of unemployment which begins during the period between two (2) successive academic years or terms of the employing school district provided the individual was in employment with the school district at the termination of the first such academic year or term and has reasonable expectation of continued employment in the succeeding academic year or term.

3.5 GROUP INSURANCE

Eligibility

The Board shall provide group insurance for health, dental, and life coverage for eligible employees. Employees must work a minimum of twenty-five (25) hours per week in at least a nine (9) month position to be eligible for

group insurance coverage. The employee should elect coverage within the first thirty (30) days of employment. Employees are responsible for reporting any change in dependent eligibility within thirty (30) days of the qualifying event. All questions regarding insurance plans must be addressed through the Business Office.

3.6 JOB-RELATED EXPENSES (po3400

The Board may provide for the payment of the actual and necessary expenses, including traveling expenses, of any professional staff member of the Center incurred in the course of performing services for the Center, whether within or outside the Center, under the direction of the Board and in accordance with the Superintendent's administrative guidelines.

The validity of payments for job-related expenses shall be determined by the Superintendent.

The Board may pay the expenses of professional staff members when they attend professional meetings approved in accordance with the policy of this Board and in accordance with the administrative guidelines of the Superintendent.

Accrual and use of frequent flyer miles, credit card rewards, hotel points, or other rewards earned during official business in their personal life is permitted, provided that these rewards are earned the same way as members of the public would earn them; and they do not impose additional costs to the Center. Such accrual and use shall be in accordance with Policy 6465 - Affinity, Awards, and Other Discount Programs.

The Board shall pay the expenses of employees when they attend pre-approved professional meetings in accordance with the following conditions:

A. Approval for attendance at the meeting, including estimated amounts of reimbursement for registration and expenses, must be secured from the immediate supervisor and Superintendent or designee prior to attendance.
B. Reimbursement shall be made according to Board approved rates only upon the presentation of original receipts for all expenses submitted for reimbursement. No reimbursement shall be made unless original receipts are presented for all costs except mileage. Tips for meals can be reimbursed up to 20% or if they are not discretionary. Alcoholic beverages are not allowable expenses for reimbursement. The Superintendent, in consultation with the CFO/Treasurer, may grant reasonable additional allowances for lodging and meal expenses for National Conference attendance outside of Ohio.
C. Mileage must be computed as actual miles driven at the rate currently approved by the Board for its employees. Mileage will be paid to only one driver to a given destination on a given date unless specific approval is given in advance by the Superintendent or designee.
D. The staff mileage reimbursement rate will be established based on the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) mileage rate as of January 1 of each calendar year. The rate will be reduced during the calendar year if the IRS mileage rate is reduced for any period of the calendar year until the next January 1 effective date.
E. Grant programs with specified reimbursement rates will follow those rates to maintain compliance.

Local travel expenses incurred in the execution of duties shall be defined as official business trips required during a working day to commute from a professionally related appointment to another or following a normal working day, to travel to a location for the purpose of fulfilling one's work-oriented obligations as approved by the employee's supervisor.

3.7 TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

The Board, in an effort to encourage certificated staff to continue their education and enhance expertise, will provide partial reimbursement for course work taken while an employee of the Board. The reimbursement will be made under the following procedures and conditions:

A. By December 1st, the Board will set a budget amount, which will be the maximum amount paid to the total staff the following October for tuition reimbursements.

B. Each individual will be entitled to a maximum of $320 per semester hour and a maximum of $2880 per year. For Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center certified staff employed under a temporary or supplemental license, or conditional permit, the annual maximum for tuition reimbursement is $3840 (this $3840 annual maximum only pertains to coursework necessary for temporary or supplemental license renewal).

C. The total number of semester hours approved for all employees will be divided into the budgeted amount from "A" to determine the amount to be reimbursed per hour with the maximum amount to be $320.

D. All class work reimbursed, must be approved in advance of the start of the course by the Superintendent. To be approved, class work must be at an accredited teacher training institution, be at the graduate level (or in the case of certification requirements, a 300 or 400-level course), and be related to the position held with the Board or related disciplines.

E. Payment will be made in October for course work taken through the preceding August 31st to the current employees for credit hours earned. All paperwork must be submitted to the Superintendent by September 15th. Past staff members who are not employed by Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center in October are not eligible for reimbursement of course work unless their separation from employment was caused by non-renewal or reduction in force. Non-renewed employees will not be reimbursed for classes started after the date of the non-renewal notice UNLESS the employee is rehired by Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center in the following contract year.

F. A completed "Request for Reimbursement of Coursework" form, a grade report, and documentation of course payment by the employee will be required for reimbursement.

G. Reimbursement will only be made for course work paid by the employee as certified on the "Request for Reimbursement Form." If an employee does not submit paperwork for reimbursement by the September 15th deadline, reimbursement will fall into the next tuition year cycle and will count against the individual's annual reimbursement for that next tuition year.

*Upon superintendent recommendation, the Board reserves the right to enter into specific tuition agreements to address shortages and/or build capacity through staffing in the provision of services as determined necessary.

3.8 TAX SHELTERED ANNUITIES / DEFERRED COMP

Employees may request payroll deductions for investment plans such as 403(b) or 457 plans. Providers for 403(b) plans may be added if at least five (5) NwOESC employees wish to invest with the same provider. Interested employees should contact the NwOESC Business Office for a listing of currently approved providers.

NwOESC requires that all employees wishing to participate in a tax sheltered investment plan need to complete the NwOESC's Salary Reduction Agreement and Certification of Compliance forms in addition to completing any applications with the provider. Approved deductions will start with the first of a month.

3.9 403(b) UNIVERSAL AVAILABILITY NOTICE

You have the opportunity to save for retirement by participating in NwOESC's 403(b) plan. You can participate in the 403(b) plan by making pre-tax contributions by completing and submitting a salary reduction agreement to the Business Office and enrolling with one of the investment providers which NwOESC has approved. The salary reduction agreement gives NwOESC the right to take the elected dollar amounts or percentage from your paycheck and contribute those amounts to your 403(b) provider. For a complete list of investment providers available to you through the plan and their contact information, please contact the Business Office.

All NwOESC employees are eligible to participate. You may contribute at least $24,500 per year with this amount changing annually. If you have at least fifteen (15) years of service with NwOESC or you are at least fifty (50) years old, you may also be able to make additional catch-up contributions. Contact your investment provider for additional information on the amount you can contribute.

If you are already contributing to the 403(b) plan, you may change your contribution amount or percentage by completing a new salary reduction agreement and returning it to the Business Office.

ABSENCE FROM JOB DUTIES **Section 4**

ATTENDANCE REPORTING
All employees are obligated to report regularly for the performance of their duties. During a period of authorized absence, partial or full compensation may be paid if the employee maintains a positive sick or personal leave balance. Absences not approved by the Superintendent or designee, however, are considered as unauthorized and no payment of salary shall be made. Unauthorized absence from duty may be considered by the Board as cause for suspension or dismissal.

All leaves of absence should be reported in the online absence management system (Red Rover) as soon as the need to request sick leave is apparent**. If the absence cannot be entered into the online absence management system via on-line access or phone access, the employee must contact the Business Office as soon as possible to have someone enter the absence on their behalf. It is the employee's responsibility to verify the accuracy of the absence requests since this is the way leaves are requested.** If an error is found, the discrepancy must be reported to the Business Office immediately. A staff member who fails to give prompt notice of his/her absence, misuses leave, fails to verify his/her absence in accordance with Board policy, falsifies the reason for an absence, is absent without authorization, is repeatedly tardy, or accumulates an excessive number of absences without good cause shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide employees with a work calendar which specifies the starting and ending dates of their employment each contract year.

4.1 SICK LEAVE
The Board recognizes its statutory duty to provide paid sick leave to regular employees of this Center for absence due to personal illness, pregnancy, exposure to contagious disease which could be communicated to others, and for absence due to illness, injury, or death in the employee's immediate family.

All regular full-time employees of the Center eligible for sick leave shall receive fifteen (15) such sick leave days annually at the rate of one and one-quarter (1 1/4) a month. Unused sick leave shall be cumulative up to 230 days.

Regular part-time employees shall be entitled to sick leave in proportion to the time actually worked in accordance with R.C. 124.38. Employees working different hours per day within a normal work week and employees not working all work days within a normal week, shall accumulate sick leave based on a percentage of the full-time work schedule of comparable employees in the same employment category.

The Board shall accept by transfer the accumulated sick leave up to 230 days which any new employee has acquired in another position of public service in Ohio, provided that the last termination of such service shall have been within the last ten (10) years.

A newly hired employee and/or a regular employee who has exhausted his/her accumulated sick leave may be credited with up to five (5) days of sick leave in advance which shall be part of the fifteen (15) days that can be accumulated for the year. The number of days advanced shall not exceed the number of days that could be earned during the balance of the current contract year. The five (5) day advancement is a one-time annual occurrence.

Substitutes or persons who are employed by the Board on an as-needed, seasonal, or intermittent basis, shall not be eligible for paid sick leave.

Employees must be in attendance on scheduled work days or be in authorized leave status.

Use: For those eligible, sick days may be taken in one-quarter (1/4) day increments. An employee who fails to give prompt notice of his/her sick leave usage, or who misuses sick leave, or is absent without authorization, repeatedly tardy, or who is chronically absent without good cause shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination from employment.
The Superintendent or designee may require a physician's statement corroborating the use of sick leave after an employee has used three (3) or more consecutive days of sick leave. Falsification of a sick leave statement by an employee is grounds for the suspension or termination of the employee's employment contract.

Upon approval by the Superintendent or designee, an employee may use sick leave for absence due to personal illness, pregnancy, injury, exposure to contagious disease which could be communicated to others, and for absence due to illness, or injury, of the employee's family members including: spouse, child, stepchild, foster child, grandchild, parent, stepparent, or parent-in-law; or other relative residing in the same household.

The personnel records of NwOESC shall show the absences of each employee and shall be recorded with the reason for such absences noted. A record shall be made of unused sick leave days accumulated by each employee. All leaves of absence should be reported in online absence management system as soon as the need to request sick leave is apparent or by 6:45 AM. If the absence cannot be entered into the online absence management system via on-line access or phone access due to an emergency situation, the employee needs to contact the Business Office immediately to have someone enter the absence on their behalf. Emergency situations occurring after 8:15 AM must be called into the Business Office as the online absence management system will not allow phone or on-line entry after that time. Note that leaves beyond three (3) days cannot be entered into the online absence management system by individuals so a contact with the Business Office is required. It is the employee's responsibility to verify the accuracy of the absence requests since this is the way leaves are requested. If an error is found, the employee needs to report the discrepancy immediately to the Business Office. Sick leave requests for relatives must include the relationship in the online absence management system request to verify the leave eligibility.

Bereavement Leave:
An employee may use up to five (5) days of sick leave for absence due to a death in the employee's immediate family. For purposes of this policy, "immediate family" shall mean the employee's spouse, child, stepchild, foster child, grandchild, parent, stepparent, or parent-in-law; or other relative that resided in the same household. Use of sick leave in excess of five (5) days for a member of the immediate family shall require the employee to submit a written request to the Superintendent.

An employee may use two (2) days of sick leave for absence due to the death of extended family members. For purposes of this policy, extended family members shall mean the employee's sibling, grandparent~~,~~ aunt, uncle; any such in-law, or any such step-relative. Use of sick leave in excess of two (2) days for the death of an extended family member shall require the employee to submit a written request to the Superintendent.

Sick leave requests for bereavement must include the relationship in the online absence management system request to verify the leave eligibility.

To request consideration of sick leave use in the event of the death of a family member not specified above, the employee is required to submit a written request to the Superintendent. The request should indicate the relationship of the deceased and the number of days requested.

4.2 PERSONAL LEAVE
The Board shall provide for an employee's absence for personal necessity. Up to three (3) full days of unrestricted personal leave with pay may be used, if approved by the Superintendent or designee, each contract year by eligible employees. Personal leave is not cumulative. Personal leave days must be used in full or half day increments. Personal leave days will be prorated for employees who are employed for less than a full year contract (i.e. staff employed in July, August, September, October, or November will receive three (3) days; December, January, February, or March employment will receive two (2) days; and those employed in April, May, or June will receive one (1) day. Personal leave days may be used for personal obligations that are necessary and compelling which involve family events, legal transactions, or personal emergency, subject to the following conditions:

A. Requests shall be recorded in advance using the online absence management system at least five (5) work days in advance, except in the event of an emergency (i.e.: death of someone not covered by sick leave, court appearance, legal/financial appointments). All personal leave requests are subject to prior approval by the employee's immediate supervisor using the online absence management system.
B. The number of persons granted personal leave for anyone (1) day may be limited as determined by the employee's immediate supervisor. In classrooms with multiple NwOESC employees, only one employee per work day may be absent on personal leave (except for emergency leaves). Please coordinate the scheduling, to the extent possible, by communications with your co-workers in the same classroom.
C. Personal days are paid to eligible employees on an average of hours worked for the two (2) week pay period, up to a maximum of eight (8) hours per day.
D. Paid personal leave may be taken in one-half (1/2) day increments.

E. Employees assigned to a minimum of twenty-five (25) hours per week in a least a nine (9) month position will be eligible for the personal leave reimbursement. All eligible staff members will be reimbursed at the current board approved daily rate for substitutes, based on the balance of unused personal days on June 30 of the contract year.

4.3 HOLIDAYS

The Board authorizes that offices be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve Day. Instructional and related service personnel will follow the schedule and calendar of their assigned building/district.

Holidays are paid to eligible employees, via contract terms, on an average of hours worked for the two (2) week pay period, up to a maximum of eight (8) hours per day

4.4 HAZARDOUS WEATHER / EMERGENCY

On hazardous weather days, instructional staff assigned to a specific site will operate according to their assigned school schedule for the day (i.e. delays, cancelations). It is the expectation that applicable make up time (extended days, additional days) will be followed as well, dependent upon the assigned school site schedule. Related service staff, staff who travel to multiple locations, and school psychology staff will operate according to their overall assignment, however will be required to make up days when school is canceled if extending beyond 5 (five) days per year. These staff should consult with the Director of Special Education to approve their make-up plan.

Employees with NwOESC office hours (Superintendent, Directors, Supervisors, Consultants, etc.) will be expected to work on hazardous weather days, even if the local districts are closed due to the weather. Late arrivals or early dismissals due to weather conditions may be permitted (in connection with the amount of travel time required). Employees shall contact their direct Supervisor if they anticipate a late arrival. On rare occasions, the Superintendent may delay or close the office due to inclement weather or other conditions. Notice will be provided via email to building staff, and via office phone system recording and WTOL Channel 11 to the general public. During Hazardous Weather/Emergency, some essential personnel may be required to report to work.

Sick, personal, or vacation days scheduled on a day when a cancellation day occurs (assigned facility is closed) will not be charged against an employee's sick, personal, or vacation leave balance. Partial day delays will not reduce days charged against sick, personal or vacation accumulated balances.

4.5 DOCK OR DEDUCT DAYS (Non-Paid Leave)

Understanding the positive relationship between regular attendance of employees to quality service delivery, dock days are not considered to be a solution in most instances of absence from work. The use of dock/deduct days is highly discouraged and will only be considered in extreme cases.

Non-paid leaves of absence will only be granted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Superintendent. A request for non-paid leave should be made in writing and submitted to the Superintendent for review. Non-paid leaves will only be considered in cases where personal days are not available or sick leave is not appropriate for the situation. Employees who do not follow the request procedure will be subject to disciplinary action. Employees who are denied dock/deduct days are required to report to work (unless other leave is applicable) or they are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

4.6 UNCOMPENSATED LEAVE

The Board reserves the right to specify the conditions under which uncompensated leave may be taken.

A. Eligibility: Subject to Board approval, uncompensated leave may be granted to teaching employees.
B. Application: Request for uncompensated leave shall be made to the Superintendent or designee at least four (4) weeks in advance of the desired date leave is to begin, except in emergency situations.
C. Period of Leave: An uncompensated leave may be granted for a period of up to one-half (1/2) of a contract year.
D. Commitment of Employee: Employees granted an uncompensated leave shall inform the Board within sixty (60) days of the scheduled return date as to their intentions. If the notification is not received, action may be taken to terminate employment. Upon return from leave for health reasons, employees will furnish a physician's certificate stating they are able to resume normal duties.

E. Commitment of Employer: At the expiration of the uncompensated leave, the employee shall be offered a like position to that previously held, if available. While on uncompensated leave in excess of thirty (30) calendar days, employees shall be entitled to insurance benefits if the employee pays the entire premium. The employee will bear sole responsibility for the purchase of STRS credit during uncompensated leave.

4.7 MATERNITY LEAVE

An employee who anticipates the birth or adoption of a child shall notify their immediate supervisor and the Business Office as soon as the employee has knowledge of the pregnancy or adoption and an approximate arrival date. A written notice should also be given for Board approval which contains estimated due date, the approximate length of requested leave and what paid days are to be charged with the absence (sick, personal, vacation) and if dock time is desired. The total amount of sick leave to be used is limited to a maximum of eight (8) calendar weeks, unless the employee's condition requires an extension of sick leave. Any such request will be processed in the same manner as other sick leave requests. Note that leaves beyond three (3) days cannot be entered into the online absence management system by individuals so a contact with the Business Office is required when the leave begins. Use of paid sick leave for birth or adoption is limited to the eight (8) calendar weeks immediately following the arrival date. (Refer to the following FMLA section for other maternity guidelines for eligible employees.)

4.8 PATERNITY LEAVE

An employee who anticipates the birth or adoption of a child may request up to five (5) days of sick leave to be used immediately following the birth or arrival of their child. The employee should notify their immediate supervisor of their intent to use paternity leave. A written notice should be provided to the Business Office indicating the approximate arrival date and the number of days requested.

4.9 FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

The Board will provide leave to eligible employees consistent with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Eligible employees are entitled to up to twelve (12) work weeks of unpaid family and medical leave in any 12-month period; such leave can only be taken on the basis of a rolling year, i.e., the 12-month period begins with the first day of leave taken under FMLA (e.g., if the first day of leave taken is June 1, the 12-month period will end on May 30 of the following year). The Board will continue to pay its share of the employee's health and dental benefits during the leave. In addition, the Board will restore the employee to the same or a similar position after the termination of the leave in accordance with Board policy.

Leave Entitlement

An employee who has worked for NwOESC for at least twelve (12) months and for at least 1,250 hours over the twelve (12) months prior to the leave request is eligible for twelve (12) work weeks of FMLA leave. NwOESC may require, an employee to use accrued paid vacation, personal, or sick leave concurrent with the use of FMLA leave. An employee cannot compel NwOESC to permit the employee to use accrued medical/sick leave in any situation which the leave could not normally be used.

Types of Leave

An eligible employee may take FMLA leave for:

1. The birth and first-year care of a child (leave must conclude within 12 months of birth),
2. The adoption or foster placement of a child (leave must conclude within 12 months of placement),
3. If the employee is needed to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition, or
4. The employee's own serious health condition that keeps the employee from performing the essential functions of his/her job.
5. Any qualifying exigency (as defined in Federal regulations including but not limited to attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.) arising out of the fact that the staff member’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.
6. To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who is a qualified service member. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list. Leave under this category may be up to twenty-six (26) weeks in a twelve (12) month period.

The term "serious health condition" is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

1. More than three (3) consecutive, full calendar days of incapacity plus two (2) visits to a health care provider. The two visits must occur within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the period of incapacity and the first visit to the health care provider must take place within seven (7) days of the first day of incapacity.
2. More than three (3) consecutive, full calendar days of incapacity plus a regimen of continuing treatment. The first visit to the health care provider must take place within seven (7) days of the first day of incapacity.
3. "Periodic visits" for chronic serious health conditions which includes at least two (2) visits to a health care provider per year.

In cases in which the Board employs both spouses, the total amount of FMLA leave is twelve (12) weeks for the couple, except when the leave is due to a serious health condition of either spouse or a child.

Intermittent and Reduced Leave

Intermittent leave is leave taken in separate blocks of time due to a single illness or injury.

Reduced leave is a leave schedule that reduces the employee's usual number of hours per work week or hours per work day.

Intermittent or reduced leave is available only for the employee's own serious health condition or to care for a spouse, dependent child, or parent with a serious health condition. The use of intermittent or reduced leave shall be limited to a total reduction of twelve (12) work weeks calculated by the amount of leave actually taken. Such leave may be used, at the discretion of the Superintendent, for the birth or adoption/placement of a child.

The employee who wishes to use intermittent or reduced leave must have the prior approval of NwOESC. The employee should submit a request in writing to the Superintendent. Employees must make a reasonable effort to schedule such leave so as not to interrupt the operations of the District.

If such leave is foreseeable, NwOESC may temporarily transfer the employee to a position which better accommodates recurring or intermittent periods of leave. The alternative position shall have equivalent pay and benefits. The employee must furnish NwOESC with the expected dates of the planned medical treatment and the duration of the treatment. The Superintendent must authorize such leave in writing.

Instructional staff who request intermittent or reduced leave which exceeds 20% of the total number of work days over the period of anticipated leave must either:

A. Take leave for a period of a particular duration, not greater than the duration of the planned treatment; or
B. Temporarily transfer to an available position for which the instructional staff member is qualified, and that has equivalent pay and benefits, which better accommodates recurring periods of leave.

4.10 UNREQUESTED LEAVE

The Board reserves the right to place an employee on an unrequested leave of absence for physical or mental disability pursuant to law (3319.13 O.R.C.).

4.11 MILITARY SERVICE

Any newly employed teacher placed on the salary schedule shall be credited with one (1) year of NwOESC service for each year of military service to a maximum of five (5).

Requests for military leave shall be made to the Superintendent at least four (4) weeks in advance of impending military service.

For purposes of seniority and placement on the salary schedule, years of absence in the armed service of the United States or the auxiliaries thereof shall be counted as though teaching services had been performed during that time.

Each employee must notify the Board of his/her intention to resume employment within ninety (90) days of release or discharge, no less than thirty (30) days before the beginning of the semester and shall present to the Board evidence of an honorable discharge or a discharge under honorable conditions.

Request for military leave of absence may be made by those employees who are members of the Ohio Defense Corps, Ohio National Guard, Ohio Naval Militia, U.S. Army Reserve, U.S. Naval Reserve, U.S. Air Force Reserve, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, or other organizations affiliated with the Reserves or on an order by the Governor of Ohio. All employees on such leave for no more than thirty-one (31) days per year shall receive full compensation during the period of leave and shall accrue seniority status during the period of their leave.

Employees shall make every effort to schedule their period of training during summer months when school is not in session. If the period of training occurs during a school session, employee shall provide the Superintendent with the name of their supervisors in the reserves of the militia so that arrangements may be discussed to alter such service date.

4.12 JURY DUTY

Should an employee be called for jury duty, he/she shall record the absence on the online absence management system prior to the date of the absence.

Employees who are called to serve will not be penalized in any way for doing so. They will receive full pay if they endorse the check received from the court or pay the amount shown on their record slip, less parking fees upon receipt of payment from the court. While on jury duty, employees are required to report daily their schedule for the following day. The time spent on jury duty will not be charged against personal leave and will count as time on the job.

DISTRICT POLICIES & OTHER RESOURCES SECTION 5

All NwOESC employees are expected to become familiar with and comply with the policies adopted by the Board of Education. In addition to Board policies, employees are expected to follow applicable administrative guidelines, procedures, and forms associated with their job responsibilities.

Board policies, administrative guidelines, and related forms are available online through BoardDocs at:

- https://www.boarddocs.com/oh/nwoesc/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies

Additional employee forms, resources, and information are available on the NwOESC website at:

- www.nwoesc.org

DIRECTORY

Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center
205 Nolan Parkway
Archbold, OH 43502

WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.nwoesc.org

MAIN NUMBER: 567.444.4800

SUPERINTENDENT OFFICE
Phone: 567.444.4807
Fax: 567.444.4802

BUSINESS OFFICE
Phone: 567.444.4806
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SPECIAL EDUCATION OFFICE
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Fax: 567.444.4804

GENERAL/GIFTED EDUCATION OFFICE
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Independence Education Center
06950 Independence Road
Defiance, OH 43512
Phone: 567.444.5600
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Northwest Ohio Opportunity School
06950 Independence Road
Defiance, OH 43512
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Ohio Migrant Education Center (OMEC)
428½ Croghan Street
Fremont, OH 43420
Phone: 800.332.7505
Fax: 419.332.8350

MEMBERS OF NwOESC GOVERNING BOARD
Nona Rupp (Fulton County) District 1
Stephanie Parsons (Fulton County) District 2
Ross Stambaugh (Fulton County) District 3
Brian Baker (Henry County) District 4
Jim George (Henry County) District 5
Mary Alice Nagel (Defiance County) District 6
Lori Weber (Defiance County) District 7
Kelly Hug (Williams County) District 8
Deborah Gerken (Williams County) District 9

WHO TO CONTACT
567-444-XXXX (listed below)

			Ext.
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF			
Superintendent	Kerri Weir	kerri.weir@nwoesc.org	4795
Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer	Abby Lorenzen	abby.lorenzen@nwoesc.org	4797
Director of Special Education	Jill Gilliland	jill.gilliland@nwoesc.org	4796
Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Development	Andy Hunter	andy.hunter@nwoesc.org	4790
Director of Technology & Building Operations	Chad Rex	chad.rex@nwoesc.org	4816
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS			
Superintendent-Administrative Assistant	Linda Schlosser	linda.schlosser@nwoesc.org	4794
Special Education-Administrative Assistant	Melissa Sears	melissa.sears@nwoesc.org	4793
General/Gifted-Administrative Assistant	Michelle Hollstein	michelle.hollstein@nwoesc.org	4809
ABSENCE MANAGEMENT/REPORTING	Amy Mitchell	absences@nwoesc.org	5741
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BUSINESS OFFICE STAFF			
Assistant Financial Officer/HR Director	Brandi Nafziger	brandi.nafziger@nwoesc.org	4798
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Personnel Coordinator	Sarah Kirkingburg	sarah.kirkingburg@nwoesc.org	4791
FRONT DESK SUPPORT			
	Patricia Shotwell Pat Turpening	patricia.shotwell@nwoesc.org pat.turpening@nwoesc.org	4800
COMPLIANCE OFFICERS - (Anti-Harassment, Section 504 Compliance/ADA)			
Female Coordinator	Jill Gilliland	jill.gilliland@nwoesc.org	4796
Male Coordinator	Andy Hunter	andy.hunter@nwoesc.org	4790
TITLE IX COORDINATORS			
Female Coordinator	Jill Gilliland	jill.gilliland@nwoesc.org	4796
Male Coordinator	Andy Hunter	andy.hunter@nwoesc.org	4790
SPECIAL EDUCATION OFFICE STAFF			
Department Specialist	Lisa Bailey	lisa.bailey@nwoesc.org	4819
Department Specialist	Jackie Fouty	jackie.fouty@nwoesc.org	4812
TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT			
NWOCA Technician	Corey Todd	corey.todd@nwoesc.org	4822
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT	Linda Schlosser	linda.schlosser@nwoesc.org	4794
LOCAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LPDC)			
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*Shanna Sidle, Certified Member		shanna.sidle@nwoesc.org	5583
*Stacy Wagner, Certified Member		stacy.wagner@nwoesc.org	N/A
*Michelle Winters, Certified Member		michelle.winters@nwoesc.org	N/A

**Certified Members elected by NwOESC Staff*