

# 2024-25 Classified Staff Handbook



**Board Approved 7/23/24**

**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. Non-teaching personnel, sometimes called non-certified, are referred to as classified staff in this handbook.
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 Board may create or eliminate a position or adjust the number of classified employees in an existing position.

The 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 education, experience or qualifications for employment may constitute grounds for dismissal and/or refusal to hire. Any false statements made on any job application or document submitted in connection with employment by the Board will be ground for dismissal and/or refusal to hire.

The employment of classified 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.

**1.2 CONTRACTS****4124 - EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT**

The Governing Board requires, for the mutual protection of the Educational Service Center and the classified staff member, that every newly employed person in a classified position including regular hourly rate and per diem classified staff sign an initial employment contract for a period of not more than one (1) year.

The employment contract shall include the term for which employment is contracted, the salary, and such other matters as may be necessary to a full and complete understanding of the contract. In order to ensure employment, the applicant must sign the contract and abide by the policies of the Board which pertain to the applicant ~~him/her~~.

If classified staff are rehired, their three (3) subsequent contracts shall be for a period of two (2) years each. At the end of the third of these two (2) year contracts, if the classified staff member is renewed, it will be under a continuing contract.

Notice of the Board's intention not to re-employ a classified staff member shall be given on or before the first day of June. Notice shall be given by regular mail with a certificate of mailing, electronic mail with proof of delivery, or other method with proof of delivery.

Annual salary notice for the succeeding contract year shall be provided to classified staff no later than the first of July.

Salaries provided to classified staff by contract may not be reduced unless such reduction is part of a uniform plan affecting the nonteaching employees of the entire ESC.

The Superintendent is authorized to initiate employment followed by Board ratification at the next regular meeting.

Classified employee contracts are issued with an hourly or daily rate. All assignments for number of days and hours per day are at the discretion of the Superintendent, except those that are assigned to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Treasurer which are assigned at his/her discretion.

**A. Regular Employees****1. Limited Contracts**

- a. Employees will receive a one-year regular limited contract. Contract expiration dates will be noted on the individual's contract. Contracts may be for less than one (1) year.
- b. If the Board chooses to rehire the employee at the end of the one-year contract, a two-year contract is issued.
- c. If the Board chooses to rehire the employee at the end of the first two-year contract, a second two-year contract is issued.
- d. If the Board chooses to rehire the employee at the end of the second two-year contract, a third two-year contract is issued.

**2. Continuing Contracts**

- a. If the Board chooses to rehire the employee after the third two-year contract according to the sequence listed above, a continuing contract is issued.

- b. A continuing contract remains in effect each year until the employee elects to resign, retire, or is terminated or suspended as provided by law.

**B. Administrators**

Each administrative employment contract governed by ORC 3319.02 shall include:

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

The duration of any administrative employment contract entered into by the Board shall be consistent with such terms as are permitted by ORC 3319.02.

**C. As-Needed, Seasonal or Intermittent Employees**

1. Employees hired for as-needed, seasonal or intermittent positions receive one-year contracts on which employment is listed "as needed."
2. For pay purposes, as-needed, seasonal or intermittent employees will receive credit for previous experience at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.
3. As-needed, seasonal or intermittent employees are defined as working sporadically, fewer than an average of twenty-five (25) hours per week and less than nine (9) months per contract year or whose position is funded on a year-to-year basis.

**D. Renewal/Non-Renewal of Contract**

The Decision to renew or not renew an employment contract at its expiration rests solely with the Board in compliance with Ohio law.

### **1.3 PREVIOUSLY RETIRED EMPLOYEES**

#### **Employment of 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 record check from the Federal Bureau of Investigation upon renewal of a certificate, license, or permit. For staff not requiring a certificate, license, or permit, the records check must be completed as required by law, no less than 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 BCII.

If the criminal background check report is pending, applicants may be 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, except as permitted by law. 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 record(s) check for part-time and full-time employees (except for substitute employees). NwOESC will also pay the cost of the record(s) 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 paraprofessionals (classroom and attendants) 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**

Responsibility for the assignment and transfer of classified employees shall be vested in the Superintendent.

## **1.6 RESIGNATION / TERMINATION / REDUCTION IN FORCE**

### **4140 - TERMINATION AND RESIGNATION**

#### **Termination:**

The employment of a classified staff member may, upon a majority vote of the Governing Board, be suspended and/or terminated for violation of Board policies and in accordance with the criteria and procedures set forth in the Ohio revised code, as appropriate. Such contracts may be terminated for incompetence, inefficiency, dishonesty,

drunkenness, immoral conduct, insubordination, discourteous treatment of the public, neglect of duty, or any other acts of misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance. In addition to the right of the Board to terminate the contract of an employee, the Board may suspend or demote an employee for the reasons set forth in this section. The action of the Board terminating the contract of an employee or suspending or demoting the employee shall be served upon the employee by certified mail.

Notice of the Board's intention to terminate a classified staff member shall be given by regular mail with a certificate of mailing, electronic mail with proof of delivery, or other method with proof of delivery.

Any classified employee 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.

#### **Resignation:**

A classified staff member under contract may resign by filing a written resignation with the Treasurer or the Superintendent at least two (2) weeks prior to the effective date of the resignation.

A resignation, once accepted by the Board or the Superintendent on behalf of the Board, may not then be rescinded.

Any classified school employee may terminate their contract of employment two (2) weeks subsequent to the filing of a written notice of termination. A classified staff member under contract may resign by filing a written resignation with the Treasurer or the Superintendent at least two (2) weeks prior to the effective date of the resignation.

**Failure to provide at least 2 weeks' notice may be considered position abandonment.** A classified 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 will file a report to the Ohio Department of Education, on forms provided by the Department for that purpose, matters of professional misconduct on the part of certain classified employees who are also licensed by the Ohio Department of Education (e.g., aides with a permit, paraprofessionals with a license, and those individuals who do not hold a valid educator's license but who are employed by the Board under a Student Activity Permit), in those specific circumstances set forth in State law and Policy 8141, including a conviction of the staff member of certain enumerated crimes and/or in conjunction with the non-renewal or termination of a licensed staff member, or resignation by a licensed staff member under threat of same and/or during the course of an investigation, for conduct which is determined to be unbecoming to the teaching profession. Reports of any investigation regarding whether or not a licensed classified staff member has committed an act or offense for which the Superintendent is required to make a report to the Ohio Department of Education shall be kept in the personnel file of the classified staff member. Should the Ohio Department of Education determine that the results of that investigation do not warrant initiating an action suspending, revoking, or otherwise limiting that classified employee's license or permit, the report(s) of any investigation will be moved to a separate public file.

#### **Reduction in Force (Non-Administrative Staff)**

The Board reserves the right to reduce positions and to suspend the contracts of staff members in accordance with Ohio law and Board policy. In lieu of suspending an entire contract, the Board may suspend the contract of a staff member in part and provide a level of compensation commensurate with the percentage of work performed.

When, as a result of the abolishment of a position, it is necessary to change an employee's assignment, the employee shall be entitled only to the salary of the reassigned position.

#### **Reduction In Force (Administrative)**

The Board reserves the right to reduce positions and to suspend the contracts of staff members in accordance with Ohio law and Board policy.

## **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 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 the 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...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, 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 the 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 with or 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 Ohio Revised Code.

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 supervisor, in writing, of his 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 its 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, magazine, 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 Governing 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 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 classified staff shall be clearly specified. The Superintendent, CFO/Treasurer or designee shall specify the working hours for classified employees. Work beyond the hours assigned, should be discussed with the immediate supervisor, if possible, prior to working and is the responsibility of the employee to report for payment to the Business Office on a timesheet.

**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 report to 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, classroom-based 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. Staff who travel to multiple locations (i.e., PTA, COTA) 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 (i.e. office personnel, Custodial Staff, Attendance Officers, Administrative Assistants) 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 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, including the specific request and reason. Staff requesting work from home shall ensure that appropriate workspace/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 (PO4216)**

The Board believes that classified staff members, like professional staff members, set an example in dress and grooming for students to follow. Staff members who understand this precept and adhere to it enlarge the importance

of his/her task and present an image of dignity and professionalism. 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 classified 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 classified staff members' right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the constraints of the preceding dress and grooming guidelines.

### **2.3 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 interferes with the maintenance of discipline by school official.
- F. Unless expressly approved by the Superintendent, staff members may not accept fees for tutoring when such tutoring is conducted during the normal workday.
- 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 Office.

### **2.4 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 (1) 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](mailto: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.

## **2.5 EVALUATION**

The goals of the Board's evaluation plan for classified personnel are:

- A. To improve and reinforce the skills, attitudes, and abilities which enable an employee to be effective in achieving assigned job goals,
- B. To provide a procedure for:
  1. Assisting employees where improvement is desired,
  2. Releasing the ineffective employee when assistance fails to produce effective performance, and
  3. Releasing employees whose actions are incompatible in his/her position to the Board.

Regulations for the conduct of employee evaluations may include:

- A. Individual conferences with staff to identify performance strengths and weaknesses.
- B. Collection of evaluative data from a variety of sources in addition to on-the-job observations.
- C. Identification of each staff member's areas of weaknesses with suggestions for improvement in each.

All evaluations shall be conducted in accordance with Ohio law and Board policy.

### Classified Administrators

Evaluations shall be conducted in accordance with Ohio Law and Board policy.

The Superintendent develops procedures for the conduct of administrative evaluations which shall include the following:

- A. Individual conferences with administrators,
- B. Collection of evaluative data from a variety of sources in addition to on-the-job observations,
- C. Identification of each administrator's areas of weaknesses with suggestions for improvement in each,
- D. The opportunity for each administrator to appeal in writing.

## **2.6 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.

## **2.7 PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY**

The Governing Board is responsible for maintaining the public records of this Educational Service 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, 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, or staff directories or 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 his/her 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 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 download 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 his/her duties.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as preventing a Board member, in the performance of his/her 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, 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.

## **2.8 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.

## **2.9 COPYRIGHT WORKS**

The Governing 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 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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## **2.10 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.



**3.1 SALARY SCHEDULES**

The Board will review salary schedules annually and shall inform all employees of their wages for the following year by July 1.

The Superintendent is authorized to credit, for placement on the salary schedule, past service of an applicant for employment in this District on the following basis:

- A. One year credit for each year of experience in a public or private school, minimum of 120 days,
- B. For service in the military of this country, one year credit on schedule for each one year served, and
- C. For service judged by the Superintendent to be applicable.

Initial salary schedule placement for all staff will be based on a review of the application materials. Receipt of verification of employment forms from previous employers will initiate movement to the appropriate level on the salary schedule (placement beyond step #6 is at superintendent discretion). New employees have sixty (60) days from the start date of their employment contract to provide previous experience information for adjustment in salary schedule placement.

In order to advance one step on a salary schedule, an employee must have served at least 120 days of the prior contract year in a similar job assignment. 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.

Compensatory Time

No time in addition to an assigned work schedule shall be worked or compensated for without prior approval of the Superintendent or immediate supervisor. Work performed must be reported on a timesheet and submitted to the Business Office. The employee may be disciplined for the additional work, if it would not have been approved by the immediate supervisor due to necessity.

**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 twenty-four (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.*

Ohio law 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 drug and alcohol testing may be disqualified for compensation and benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act.

**3.3 SEVERANCE PAY**

All eligible 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 Ohio 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. For all NWOESC employees who have or will reach age fifty-five (55) or older in the calendar year of retirement, the payment will be made to a defined contribution plan qualifying under Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code. 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. Such payment shall be made only once to an employee.
  3. 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**

The Board will provide for the payment of actual and necessary employee expenses, including traveling expenses, incurred in the course of performing services for NWOESC, whether within or outside the NWOESC service area. The Board shall pay the expenses of employees when they attend 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, gratuities or 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 ~~August~~ **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 ~~August~~ **January** 1 effective date.
- E. Grant programs with specified reimbursement rates will follow those rates to maintain compliance.

Local travel expense 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 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 will 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.

### **3.8 403(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 \$22,500 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.

**ATTENDANCE**

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. An 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 his 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 ~~18~~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 ~~18~~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, upon request, be credited with 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. Use of advanced sick leave days are not automatic but must be requested by the employee to the Superintendent and the Personnel Specialist.

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 made 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 any one (1) day may be limited as determined by the employee's immediate supervisor. In classrooms with multiple NwOESC employees, only one (1) employee per workday 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 leave is 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 VACATION**

Each regular classified employee serving eleven (11) or more months per year shall be entitled to an annual vacation, with pay, based on length of service for NwoESC. The Board reserves the right to specify the conditions under which vacation time may be taken.

Employees with less than five (5) years of service are entitled to annual vacation of approximately ten (10) days (.84 days accumulated monthly). After five (5) years of service, fifteen (15) days per year (1.25 days per month) will be accumulated; after ten (10) years of service, approximately twenty (20) days (1.67 days per month) will be accumulated. For purposes of accumulation rate change, 120 days of work will be required to count the period for a year of credit. Rate changes occur with the accumulation for July. Accrued vacation shall not exceed twenty (20) days.

Accrued vacation shall be paid to any employee separating from service or to the estate of a deceased employee.

Employees requesting vacation leave must do so in online absence management system at least two (2) weeks in advance, except in circumstances deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee. No more than ten (10) days of vacation can be used consecutively at any one time.

Vacation days may be taken in one-quarter (1/4) day increments. Vacation leave is 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.

#### **4.4 HOLIDAYS**

The Board authorizes that the office 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. Classroom and related service personnel will follow the schedule and calendar of their assigned building/district.

Employees are eligible for holiday pay if they work or are excused from work (due to approved leave or similar reasons for not working, but not eligible for leave) on their scheduled workdays before and after a holiday. Holidays are paid on an average of hours worked during the two-week pay period, up to a maximum of eight (8) hours per day.

All classified employees are eligible for up to eight (8) paid holidays, per approved work calendar, including: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day of each year.

Classified employees assigned a work schedule of 210 or more work days shall be granted up to ten (10) paid holidays, per approved work calendar, including: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day of each year.

Regular classified employees serving eleven (11) or more months per year shall be entitled to thirteen (13) paid holidays that shall include: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve Day of each year.

#### **4.5 HAZARDOUS WEATHER / EMERGENCY**

On hazardous weather days, classroom-based staff assigned to a specific site will operate according to their assigned school schedule for the day (i.e., delays, cancellations). 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. Staff who travel to multiple locations (i.e., PTA, COTA) 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 (i.e. CFO, Office Specialists, Accountants, Administrative Assistants, Maintenance Staff, Attendance Officers) 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 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 (and 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.

#### **4.6 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 (or CFO/Treasurer for Business Office staff). A request for non-paid leave should be made in writing and submitted to the Superintendent (or CFO/Treasurer for Business Office staff) 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.

#### **4.7 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 classified 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 SERS credit during uncompensated leave.

#### **4.8 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.)

#### **4.9 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.

#### **4.10 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. An employee may elect, or 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 twelve 12 months of birth),
2. The adoption or foster placement of a child (leave must conclude within twelve 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 (2) 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 workday.

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 for the birth or adoption/placement of a child at the discretion of the Superintendent.



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.

#### **4.11 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. (ORC 3319.13)

#### **4.12 MILITARY SERVICE**

Any newly employed classified staff 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 classified 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.

#### **4.13 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.

#### **4.14 PANDEMICS AND OTHER MEDICAL EMERGENCIES (po8420.01)**

A pandemic is an outbreak of an infectious disease. The Governing Board directs the Superintendent to set up a Pandemic Response Team ("PRT") to develop a Pandemic Plan in coordination with local government and law enforcement officials.

The Pandemic Plan should include:

- A. a communication method for school schedule changes, busing changes, and school closure;
- B. an educational pandemic prevention program for staff and students;
- C. provision for the business office to maintain continuity of operations during a pandemic;
- D. provision for distance-based learning for students (i.e., Internet instruction, community channel broadcast) to maintain continuity of education;
- E. policies and procedures for staff and student absences and extended leaves of absence due to a pandemic;
- F. policies and procedures for isolation and possible transportation of students and staff who become ill at school due to a pandemic;
- G. a plan of communication regarding pandemic status to students, parents, and staff;
- H. a plan for operating the Educational Service Center with less staff due to a pandemic;
- I. a designee responsible for establishing timelines within the Pandemic Plan and ensuring that such timelines are met and implementation of the plan occurs; and
- J. other emergency procedures necessary for the Center to deal with a pandemic.

The Pandemic Plan should be reviewed annually by the PRT and updated as appropriate.

All NwoESC employees are expected to familiarize themselves with and abide by all policies adopted by the Board. All Board policies are maintained by the Business Office and can be accessed by/at:

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

# DIRECTORY

## **Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center**

205 Nolan Parkway  
Archbold, OH 43502

**WEBSITE ADDRESS:** [www.nwoesc.org](http://www.nwoesc.org)

**MAIN NUMBER:** 567.444.4800

### **SUPERINTENDENT OFFICE**

Phone: 567.444.4807  
Fax: 567.444.4802

### **BUSINESS OFFICE**

Phone: 567.444.4806  
Fax: 567.444.4803

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OFFICE**

Phone: 567.444.4818  
Fax: 567.444.4804

### **GENERAL/GIFTED EDUCATION OFFICE**

Phone: 567.444.4809  
Fax: 567.444.4802

**VOICE MAIL ACCESS:** 567.444.4810

## **Independence Education Center**

06950 Independence Road  
Defiance, OH 43512  
Phone: 567.444.4825  
Fax: 567.444.4826

## **Northwest Ohio Opportunity School**

06950 Independence Road  
Defiance, OH 43512  
Phone: 567.444.4820  
Fax: 567.444.4821

## **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  
Christine Smallman (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

### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Superintendent	Kerri Weir	<a href="mailto:kerri.weir@nwoesc.org">kerri.weir@nwoesc.org</a>	4646
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Director of Technology & Operations	Chad Rex	<a href="mailto:chad.rex@nwoesc.org">chad.rex@nwoesc.org</a>	4816

### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

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### ABSENCE MANAGEMENT/REPORTING

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### BUILDING MAINTENANCE

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### BUSINESS OFFICE STAFF

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Personnel Coordinator	Sarah Kirkingburg	<a href="mailto:sarah.kirkingburg@nwoesc.org">sarah.kirkingburg@nwoesc.org</a>	4693

### COMPLIANCE OFFICERS – (Anti-Harassment, Section 504 Compliance/ADA)

Female Coordinator	Jill Gilliland	<a href="mailto:jill.gilliland@nwoesc.org">jill.gilliland@nwoesc.org</a>	4796
Male Coordinator	Andy Hunter	<a href="mailto:andy.hunter@nwoesc.org">andy.hunter@nwoesc.org</a>	4649

### TITLE IX COORDINATORS

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Department Specialist	Lisa Bailey	<a href="mailto:lisa.bailey@nwoesc.org">lisa.bailey@nwoesc.org</a>	4664

### TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

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