

**NORTH LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT  
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**



**2400 Willow Street**

**North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114**

**551-771-8000**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **Section I: Introduction to the North Little Rock School District**

Welcome to the North Little Rock School District.....	5
Our Mission and Vision.....	5
Our District and City.....	5
About This Handbook.....	6

### **Section II: Our Commitment to Fostering a Positive and Inclusive Work Environment**

Our Culture of Appreciation and Respect.....	7
Equal Employment Opportunity.....	7
Individuals with Disabilities.....	8
Harassment Prevention Policy and Complaint Procedure.....	8
Suggestions and Open Communication.....	9
Resolving Workplace Issues.....	9

### **Section III: Our Recruitment and Hiring Process**

Recruitment Efforts.....	10
Application, Screening, and Selection.....	10
Hiring, Onboarding, and Orientation.....	11
Employment of Relatives.....	11

### **Section IV: Working in the North Little Rock School District**

Employment Categories.....	12
Introduction to Employment/Orientation Period.....	12
Job Descriptions.....	12
Job Postings, Assignments, Transfers and Promotions.....	12
Work Schedules and Breaks.....	13
Overtime and Time Reporting.....	14
Receiving Your Pay.....	15
Outside Employment.....	15
Employee Records.....	16
Work-Related Travel and Expenses.....	16

## **Section V. Our Performance Expectations**

Guidelines for Behavior in Our Workplace .....	17
Work Attire and Appearance.....	18
Attendance at Work and Attendance Tracking .....	18
Inclement Weather and Emergency Closings .....	19
Personal and Family Relationships in our Workplace .....	20
Performance Management System .....	20
Ethics, Social Media and Conflicts of Interest .....	21
Confidentiality and Individual Privacy.....	22
Use of Telephones.....	22
Use of Computer Systems and Electronic Mail.....	23
Use of Social Media.....	23
Due Process and Discipline Guidelines.....	23

## **Section VI. Benefits and Leaves of Absence**

Health and Prescription Drug Insurance .....	35
Additional Optional Benefits.....	35
Professional Development, Licensure, and Training .....	36
Paid Holidays.....	37
Paid Vacation.....	37
Paid Sick Leave.....	37
Family and Medical Leave .....	38
Jury Duty Leave.....	39
Military/Uniformed Services Leave.....	39
Leave Requests .....	40

## **Section VII. Workplace Safety, Health and Security**

The Importance of Safety at Work .....	41
Identification Badges.....	41
Accidents and Workers' Compensation .....	42
Emergency Procedures and Contacts .....	42
Mandated Reporting.....	43
Notice Concerning Electronic Monitoring.....	43
Medical Examinations .....	43
Smoke-Free Workplace .....	44
Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace.....	44

**Section VIII. Ending Your Employment with the North Little Rock School District**

Resignation /Retirement ..... 46  
Termination/Layoff ..... 46  
Final Compensation and Continuing Your Benefits..... 47  
Return of Property ..... 47  
Our Exit Interview Process ..... 47  
Rehire Eligibility..... 47

## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### *Welcome to the North Little Rock School District*

As the Executive Director of Human Resources, it is my pleasure to welcome all employees to a new year in our District. We are proud of the educational opportunities we offer our students, as well as our accomplishments in fostering a positive work environment for all our valuable employees.

Educational institutions today face many challenges in meeting the diverse needs of all students. Knowing that we have a responsibility to help shape the "whole" child, we also strive to guide them toward service in worthy causes greater than themselves. This approach requires the cooperation of family and community. We recognize, however, that we cannot fulfill our mission without the hard work and dedication of our most valuable resource—our employees—and we appreciate the many contributions each individual makes toward the positive learning environment in our schools.

*Jacob M. Smith*

#### *Our Mission and Vision*

The mission of the North Little Rock School District and the community is to provide for achievement, accountability, acceptance, and the necessary assets in the pursuit of each student's educational success.

*Our vision is world class schools for world class students.*

#### *Our District and City*

The North Little Rock School District (the "District") provides quality education to approximately 8,300+ students. North Little Rock's children receive a solid education, rich in fundamental skills and cultural programs. Our facilities include a pre-school, nine elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, the Center of Excellence, and The Academy. Students are offered a variety of academics for regular, gifted, and special needs students, as well as a wide array of extracurricular offerings in music, visual arts, sports, and many other areas. North Little Rock is a city of about 65,000 residents located north of the Arkansas River from Little Rock.

It was once known as "Argenta," a name that currently applies specifically to downtown North Little Rock.

### *About This Handbook*

This Handbook serves as a general reference during your employment with the District. It is not intended to be a definitive source of information on all the terms and conditions of your employment.

The information contained in this Handbook is subject to revision based on changes in the law or Board of Education policies and procedures or regulations. **The contents of this Handbook are meant to serve as guidance and do not constitute the terms of a contract of employment or a guarantee of continued employment.** There are no promises in this Handbook regarding your work assignment, work schedule, specific working conditions, or length of employment. While we do not intend to change the policies and practices contained in this Handbook without good reason, the District's administration reserves the right to review, revise, delete, and interpret the policies and procedures described in this Handbook at its discretion, subject to any legal restrictions. Of course, we believe in open communication and fairness and will keep you apprised of changes about which you need to be aware in order to perform your job.

Many District policies and regulations have been referenced and paraphrased for the sake of brevity. Employees are responsible for making sure they are fully aware of the obligations and prohibitions contained in those policies. A copy of the complete policy manual is available online: <http://www.nlrsl.org/o/central-office/browse/2881>. Hard copies of the policies are available from the Human Resources Office and in each school.

If any provision in this Handbook conflicts with current policies adopted by the school board, the current policies shall govern.

If you have any questions about the contents of this Handbook, please contact the Executive Director of Human Resources.

## SECTION II

### OUR COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A POSITIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

#### *Our Culture of Appreciation and Respect*

Our work environment and culture are an essential part of our success. The District greatly values the diversity of its workforce and the unique background, talent, and perspective each employee brings to our place of work. We believe that a diverse workforce enhances the quality of our work environment and educational system. We also believe it is important that each employee be treated in a courteous and respectful manner, and that employees appreciate and learn from individual and group differences. Treating each individual as a person worthy of respect supports a higher-performing, innovative, and harmonious workplace. In addition to the common categories of individuals who are entitled to equal treatment by law, we value treating individuals with respect without regard to other differences, including education, economic status, family background, perspectives, or other individual characteristics.

#### *Equal Employment Opportunity*

The District is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination in all our employment policies and practices, including recruitment, hiring, training, compensation, benefits, transfers, promotions, and all other employment conditions. As stated in our *Equal Employment Policies (3.19 and 8.13)*, we will make every effort to ensure that our employment policies and practices provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or expression, pregnancy, parental status, marital status, genetic information, past or present service in the uniformed services of the United States, or any other legally protected basis. Employment decisions will be based on individuals' qualifications and our business/operational needs.

Inquiries on discrimination may be directed to the Executive Director of Human Resources.

## ***Individuals with Disabilities***

We value and support individuals with disabilities. A qualified person with a mental or physical disability must be provided the same employment opportunity as any other qualified individual. A qualified person with a disability is someone who has the knowledge, skills, and ability to perform the essential functions of a job, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include:

- removing physical barriers to the employee's work area;
- modifying an individual's job duties, work schedule or work environment;
- modify how the job is normally performed;
- providing alternative means of work communications; and
- transferring the employee to a vacant position for which the person is qualified.

Any individual (employee or applicant) who is in need of accommodation should contact the Executive Director of Human Resources at (501) 771-8009 about the specific needs. After confidential discussions with the individual and consultation with the employee's supervisor, the District will decide what, if any, reasonable accommodation will be made.

Please see the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines for further information.

## ***Harassment Prevention Policy and Complaint Procedure***

It is the policy of the District to maintain learning and work environments that are free from any form of harassment. The District's policies prohibit any form of harassment, including but not limited to sexual harassment, and harassment based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, sex, sexual orientation, transgender expression or identity, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, religion, age, disability, past or present service in the uniformed services of the United States, genetic makeup, or any other legally protected basis. The District also prohibits discrimination or harassment against any individual based upon that individual's association with an individual in a protected class. In addition, the District prohibits any form of harassment or bullying against any employee or applicant for employment, or by an employee against anyone, including anyone with whom we do business, or visitors, regardless of whether the victim is a member of a protected class.

## ***Open Communication***

We are always seeking ways to improve our work environment, processes, productivity, or educational services. If you have an idea or recommendation for improvement in the way we operate, you should share it with your supervisor, an administrator, or the Human Resources Office. Suggestions can include ideas related to operations, safety, health, ways to enhance employee skills or productivity, employee activities, educational services—anything that will improve our education system, or make this a better place to work.

As an incentive and expression of appreciation for any employee who comes up with a new idea, process, tool, or has a suggestion that saves the District money or resources, increases productivity or quality, improves safety, or enhances District services, the employee will be recognized for their contribution in the manner approved by the School Board. Whether your idea or observation represents an opportunity based on innovation or concern, we want to hear from you.

## ***Resolving Workplace Issues***

We believe that employees should be treated in an impartial and consistent manner. We also believe that problems that are not brought to our attention will remain unresolved and may eventually cause a breakdown in working relationships and dissatisfaction in working conditions. Our goal is to solve any workplace problems as quickly and equitably as possible.

The first step is for you to let your supervisor know about the issue. If the issue involves your supervisor, you should bring it to the attention of the administrative director, who is next in the line of authority or directly to the attention of the Executive Director of Human Resources. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue in a prompt and fair manner in accordance with the District's Grievance Policies 3.25 and 8.19. A complaint form for this purpose is available in the policies.

Certain policies, such as our policy against discrimination and harassment, have their own complaint procedure. Nonetheless, we encourage employees to raise any issue that is cause for concern.

## SECTION III

### OUR RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESS

#### *Recruitment*

We strive to establish a school working environment that will attract and retain the best-qualified people to provide the best possible learning opportunities for our students. Toward that end, we engage in extensive and targeted recruitment efforts to build and identify the largest possible pool of applicants for District positions. Those efforts include advertising open positions on the District website, on the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, and LinkedIn, hosting and attending job and career fairs, and establishing direct relationships with local colleges and universities.

#### *Application, Screening, and Selection*

We strive to fill each open position with the most qualified candidate available for the position. This means the candidate selected is determined to most closely match the total position requirements. Our selection process is based on guidelines and practices that are designed to screen applicants and identify those individuals who will best contribute to our overall success, consistent with our commitment to equal employment opportunity, as expressed above.

#### Application and Related Material

All applicants for employment are required to apply for positions by using the District's electronic online application system. The system is accessible on the Human Resources Department section of the District website.

See Policies 3.19, 8.13, and NLR.4.

#### Applicant Screening and Interviewing

Administrators and other management staff who oversee any vacant job position will screen the applicants and select the individuals to be interviewed. Vacancies will be announced to provide internal candidates with the opportunity to apply. Interviews will be scheduled typically with the supervisor or administrator who oversees the position and may include a team of individuals who have a role related to the position. Please refer to Policies 3.1.5 and NLR.8 and NLR.30 for more information.

## [Selected Candidates](#)

Hiring decisions are based on the determination of each applicant's demonstrated qualifications, experience, skills, and other job-related factors. See Policies 3.1.3 and 8.13. Candidates selected for transfer, promotion, or hire will be informed in writing and are conditional upon board approval. External offers of employment will be conditional based upon the results of background checks, reference checks, required pre-employment physical examination, and are conditional upon board approval. In addition to a rigorous screening process, the District will also conduct criminal background checks on all candidates for hire, in accordance with applicable laws. Reference checks from previous employers or others also will be gathered. The District also may have candidates undergo a pre-employment medical examination and drug screen for certain job positions. Finally, all new hires will be required to submit proof of eligibility to work in the United States, consistent with federal law.

## ***Hiring, Onboarding, and Orientation***

Our hiring and onboarding process is meant to be welcoming to new employees and start them off on the road to being successful in working in the District.

All employees in classified positions must successfully complete an Introductory Period. Your initial period of employment is a time when newly hired employees receive information to make them familiar with the District, including our policies and procedures. During this time, you will work closely with your supervisor to learn how best to do your job. You will receive feedback from your supervisor to recognize good performance and to help you improve aspects of your performance as needed.

Newly licensed teaching staff participate in the District's mentoring for the first few years of teaching. Arkansas law also governs the employment of all licensed staff.

This also is a time for us to learn about your work habits and abilities. After you complete this initial employment/Introductory Period, you and your supervisor will conduct an evaluation of your performance as it relates to District standards.

In addition, all employees will receive an orientation during the first year of employment that will include necessary training, mentoring, and other things to familiarize the new employee with the District's operations, performance expectations, and to provide support and other information to help be successful.

## ***Supervision of Employees by a Relative***

In order to prevent potential conflicts of interest, the District has established rules for the supervision of an employee by a relative. See Board Policies 3.3 and 8.13.

## **SECTION IV**

### **WORKING IN THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT**

#### ***Employment Categories***

Proper classification of employees is essential in order to administer pay and benefit plans and to comply with employment and tax laws. Under federal and state law, every employee who works for the District must be classified as either (a) exempt or (b) non-exempt. Exempt employees are salaried and work in administrative, managerial, and supervisory positions. Those employees are not eligible for overtime pay. All other employees are non-exempt, paid for all hours they work to the nearest quarter-hour, and are eligible for overtime pay.

Employee positions also are classified as either "12-month", "11-month", or "10-month" positions based upon the length of contract employees in the position are scheduled to work during the school year or throughout the fiscal year.

#### ***Job Descriptions***

The District maintains job classifications based upon performance standards, working conditions, supervisory authority, reporting arrangements, and other job-related requirements. The classifications fall into two broad categories: Licensed (administrator and teacher) positions, and Classified positions. We also maintain job descriptions for each job position. A job description defines essential job functions, minimum qualifications needed to perform the essential functions, and other aspects of the job. Job classifications and job descriptions will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

Copies of all job descriptions are available through the Human Resources Department.

#### ***Job Postings, Assignment, Transfers and Promotions***

We recognize that employees of the District may wish to transfer to other positions as they become available. Vacancies will be posted internally in accordance with applicable policy provisions. In consideration of the interests and aspirations of current employees, the administration will interview existing staff when filling vacancies in accordance with Board Policy 3.1.5 and NLR.8. See also NLR.30 regarding Personnel Survey of Job Preference. Transfer and promotional decisions

will be based upon an assessment of each employee's qualifications (including experience, training, knowledge, skills, abilities, and prior performance).

In addition, the District may transfer or reassign any employee at any time to another job position for which you are qualified based upon our operational needs, due to the need for a disability accommodation, or for other business-related reasons or as permitted by law (e.g., FMLA). A meeting with any employee who is to be transferred will be held to inform the employee of the reason(s) for the transfer.

## ***Work Schedules and Breaks***

### Business and Work Hours

The standard business hours for the central office are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Each school level (elementary, middle, and high school) has its own school hours. For non-exempt employees, the workweek for full-time employees consists of between thirty (30) and forty (40) hours per week, generally between six (6) and eight (8) hours per day.

For teaching staff, the workday consists of seven and three quarter ( $7\frac{3}{4}$ ) hours.

Teachers may need to work beyond that of the normal working day to attend school-related events or activities such as the annual open house, conference days, staff meetings, department meetings, and committee meetings.

The work year for other employees may depend on the job position. The work year for "12-month" employees is the fiscal year, July 1 through June 30. The central office and schools may operate on different schedules during the summer recess.

### Breaks

Each non-exempt employee working more than twenty (20) hours per week shall be provided two (2) paid fifteen-minute duty-free breaks per workday. Meal periods, which are less than thirty (30) minutes in length or in which the employee is not relieved of duty, are compensable. Employees with a bona fide meal period shall be completely relieved of their duty to allow them to eat their meal, which they may do away from their worksite, in the school cafeteria, or in a break area. Employees who work thirty-five (35) hours a week and receive a duty-free meal period shall not be entitled to receive the two (2) paid breaks for working more than twenty (20) hours. You should not engage in any work for the District during meal breaks except in rare and infrequent emergencies. Meal breaks and other breaks will be scheduled with the approval of your supervisor.

See Policy 8.11 and 3.29.2 for more information about work schedules and breaks.

Exempt professional employees will receive meal breaks each day according to when it best fits into their work schedule based upon operational needs and staff assignments.

## ***Overtime and Time Reporting***

### Overtime/Compensatory Time

As noted above, exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are eligible for overtime compensation. A reasonable amount of overtime may be required with reasonable advance notice, except in emergencies such as inclement weather. **Overtime work (outside regularly scheduled hours) must be approved in writing and in advance by the employee's supervisor, a manager, or an administrator.** No one will be paid overtime unless the approval is present.

The overtime compensation rate for approved overtime work is one and one-half (1 and ½) times the eligible employee's regular hourly rate for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week. For all work on any Sunday or Holiday, the overtime rate will be two times the employee's regular hourly rate, plus any applicable holiday pay.

Provided the employee and the District have a written agreement or understanding before the work is performed, compensatory time off may be granted in lieu of overtime pay for hours worked over forty (40) in a workweek and shall be awarded on a one-and-one-half (1 1/2) time basis for each hour of overtime worked.

Employees must submit a completed OVERTIME/COMPENSATORY TIME AUTHORIZATION FORM for this purpose.

Please see Policy 8.11 for more information on this topic.

### Reporting of Time Worked and Time Off

Designated non-exempt employees must complete a timesheet/enter their work time into Finance for each Reporting Period. The time entered for each week should include time worked in each week from 12:01 a.m. Monday through 12:00 midnight on the following Sunday. Designated non-exempt employee must record his or her own work time only, including beginning time, ending time, and meal or other break times. **Non-exempt employees are not permitted to start work before their scheduled shifts or work after their scheduled shifts without prior authorization from their supervisor. Non-exempt employees also are not permitted by law to "volunteer" your work time.** When completing timesheets,

employees must accurately reflect the reason for any absence anytime you are absent from work.

Time and attendance should be turned into your supervisor on the due dates designated by the Finance and Human Resources Department (either for a two-week or three-week period). **Failure to submit your work time may/will result in pay being delayed. If an absence(s) is not reported, this may result in pay having to be collected from a later payroll.** All exempt and nonexempt employees also must enter any absences into the eFinancePLUS system.

Please see Policy 8.11, 8.7, and 3.11 for more information.

### ***Receiving Your Pay***

Employees are paid on a semi-monthly basis on the dates listed on the Payroll Schedule for 24 paychecks each fiscal year. Paychecks are for all work through the end of the preceding Reporting Period. You will receive your check by direct deposit into a checking or savings bank account, or if a bank account is not available, a prepaid debit card will be used. If you have any questions about your pay, please contact the District Finance Office. Payroll information will not be released to any individual other than the employee unless the written approval is received authorizing release to another person.

### ***Outside Employment***

An employee may not accept employment outside of his/her district employment, which will interfere or otherwise be incompatible with the District employment, including normal duties outside the regular workday. An employee who has another job outside the District must not perform any work for that job during regular work hours or use any district property or equipment related to the other job. In addition, an employee who is out of work due to personal illness, covered family illness or injury, on FMLA leave, or on Workers' Compensation leave must not work another job (unless the employee has been released to work a light-duty assignment and such an assignment is not available). In addition, if you are injured while working for another employer, you will not be eligible for Workers' Compensation through the District. Please make sure to inform your supervisor if you have outside employment.

See Policies 3.18 and 8.12 for more detailed information about this topic and about having more than one position within the District. See also Policies 3.44, 3.8, 8.12, and 8.32 regarding working another job while out of work due to personal illness or injury for a Workers' Compensation injury.

## *Employee Records*

Employee personnel records are maintained in accordance with federal and state law. You may view the contents of your personnel file upon request with reasonable notice. Medical, grievance and other employment claim records are maintained in separate, secure files in accordance with federal and state law. Written request to view your personnel, medical, or employment claim records is required. A form for this purpose is available in the Human Resources Office. An employee will receive notice of any outside request to your personnel file and will be given an opportunity to consent or object to the release of documents or information in accordance with applicable laws.

**It is each employee's responsibility to notify the Human Resources Office whenever there are any changes in home address, telephone numbers, marital status, number of dependents or children, death of a family member covered under the District's medical insurance, beneficiary for life insurance, emergency contact(s), and any other information about you that we need to know.**

See Policies 3.5.1. and NLR.5.

## *Work-Related Travel and Expenses*

As stated in the section of this Handbook related to Employee Benefits, we encourage our employees to continually seek ways to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities by engaging in continuing education and professional development. Internal professional development is provided for licensed staff (both teachers and administrators).

Employees shall be reimbursed for personal and/or travel expenses incurred while performing duties or attending workshops or other employment-related functions, provided that prior written approval has been obtained through the appropriate supervisor.

Please see Policies 3.20, 8.14, and 7.12 for more information.

## SECTION V OUR PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

### *Guidelines for Behavior in Our Workplace*

The District takes great pride in the quality of its educational system. As an important foundation of our success, we all must strive to maintain a positive and productive work environment. Our purpose in defining expectations of behavior and adopting certain work rules is to minimize conflict and the need for corrective action among employees. We hope to never find it necessary to take corrective action for any reason. However, when situations arise that are cause for concern, they will be investigated and dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Unless the situation involves the risk of injury or safety, violence, or an emergency, an employee will be given an opportunity to explain his or her side of the story before any action is taken.

Depending on the nature of the conduct, a serious infraction may lead to suspension or termination of employment, even for a first-time offense. Factors that may be considered in determining the appropriate corrective action include the seriousness of conduct, an employee's employment record, an employee's honesty, willingness and ability to correct conduct, and corrective action taken with respect to similar conduct by other employees.

#### Desired and Expected Behaviors Include:

- Treating fellow employees, students, parents and visitors with courtesy and respect;
- Performing job duties and assignments to meet or exceed performance standards;
- Following instructions and directions given by supervisor or administrators;
- Knowing and complying with safety rules;
- Complying with Board Policies;
- Respecting others at work and not speaking disparagingly about other employees.

#### Examples of Unacceptable Behavior that could Result in Corrective Action:

- Falsification of work records, including timesheets;
- Speaking disrespectfully about other employees, students or parents;
- Violation of another employee's privacy rights;
- Engaging in any harassing, intimidating, threatening or disruptive conduct while at work;

- Dishonesty;
- Excessive absenteeism;
- Insubordination;
- Refusal to follow supervisor's instructions regarding job-related matters
- Violation of any Board Policy or the provisions of this Handbook.
- Showing a pattern of tardiness
- Not following sign-in and out procedures
- Failure to follow mandated reporting guidelines

In addition, licensed employees and non-licensed teachers are subject to the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators.

### ***Work Attire and Appearance***

To set an example for our students, all employees must present a neat and professional image and to exercise sound judgment with respect to work attire and personal appearance in the workplace. In order to ensure that we all foster a professional learning environment, the following guidelines apply:

- Dress should be appropriate for the employee's job position.
- Employees should not wear clothing that is overly revealing, overly clinging, dirty, or that display a hostile message. Ripped, torn, or otherwise damaged clothing, loungewear, tank tops, and cut-off shorts are examples of inappropriate attire.
- Footwear should be clean and conform to safety requirements.
- Hair should be neat and clean.

If you come to work in unacceptable attire, you may be asked to go home, change your clothes, and then return to work in acceptable attire.

See Policies 3.22 and 8.16.

### ***Attendance at Work and Attendance Tracking***

#### Being Here When We Need You

Employees who come to work on time and every day show us that they are a contributing member to the District's team and its success. Regular attendance at work is an important part of satisfactory job performance. If you often miss work, arrive late, or leave early, it puts added burdens on other employees, which can lower workplace morale and productivity.

### Reporting Absences

We understand that occasionally you may need to be absent from work for a variety of reasons. On those occasions, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible once you know you are going to be absent or late, as directed.

For all absences other than workers' compensation or personal illness/medical appointments, you must submit a written request on the appropriate form. For personal illness, medical appointments, or approved family illnesses, employees must secure permission from their supervisor and enter their absence in the district's substitute software/portal. In addition, employees who leave work during a time when they are supposed to be at work must sign out in accordance with building procedures.

Please see Policy NLR.4 and NLR29 for more information.

### Returning to Work

Prior to returning to work from an absence of three (3) or more consecutive calendar days due to your personal illness or injury, you may be required to submit medical documentation indicating that you are able to return to work with or without medical work restrictions. Failure to provide requested medical documentation may result in a delay or denial of reinstatement.

### Attendance Monitoring

The District monitors employee attendance so that we can address issues that may cause employees to be absent in an equitable and consistent manner. Excessive absenteeism will be addressed pursuant to guidelines established by the Human Resources Office.

### ***Inclement Weather and Emergency Closings***

The Superintendent has the responsibility of making alternate plans, procedures, and schedules, as he may deem appropriate whenever inclement weather or other emergencies warrant. Administrators, custodian and maintenance employees, central office employees, and other employees generally are expected to report to work as assigned and make every reasonable effort to arrive on time whenever school is closed due to inclement weather unless directed otherwise by the Superintendent. If severe weather conditions prevent you from coming to work or arriving on time, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible. If you are

unable to report to work due to the severity of the weather or other emergency, your absence may be excused, and you will be charged personal or vacation leave. If weather is severe enough to cause travel safety concerns, the Superintendent may permit certain employees to arrive late or leave early without loss of pay. The Superintendent also may release employees from work or require them to stay at work in cases of emergency, for safety or other legitimate reasons. If there is a delayed opening, instructional staff and aides are expected to report to work one-half hour before the start of school.

Please refer to Policies.3, 8.38, and NLR28.

Delayed openings and school closings are announced on local TV stations. In addition, each employee and student family will be notified directly via the District's automated voice system.

### ***Personal and Family Relationships in Our Workplace***

The District encourages you to refer qualified applicants for employment to the District, including friends and family members. However, as mentioned above, we cannot allow any direct supervisory reporting relationships among family members because supervisors are responsible for evaluating the work of employees who report to them. This rule covers hires, transfers, and promotions.

See Policies 3.3 and 8.3.

One of our objectives in the District is to foster cooperative and respectful working relationships among our employees. Relationships of a romantic or personal nature in the workplace can interfere with the work environment. Therefore, employees who are engaged in a personal or romantic relationship must be careful not to display the relationship in a way that could interfere with their work, the work of others, or create an uncomfortable work or educational environment for others.

Employees also must be aware of and adhere to the School District's Harassment Prevention Policies 3.26 and 8.20.

### ***Performance Management System***

We believe that every employee in the North Little Rock School District deserves regular and ongoing feedback regarding his or her performance. Your supervisor will provide constructive feedback and performance evaluations to enhance communication, make suggestions for improvement, and establish goals. Performance evaluations will be conducted for all classified employees at least annually. Supervisors will make sure employees are aware of the evaluation

process. Employees who have ongoing or significant performance problems will have their work performance closely supervised and monitored, be provided with identifiable standards, objectives, and support. See Policy 8.2.

Different performance evaluation procedures are conducted for our Teachers and other Licensed Personnel. Please refer to Policy 3.2 for more specific information regarding evaluations for licensed staff.

### ***Ethics, Social Media, and Conflict of Interest***

Respect for the District's reputation, interests, and success requires all of us to maintain a high standard of ethical conduct, especially given the public nature of our work. Public employees hold a position of trust with responsibilities that require them to observe the highest ethical standards. Each employee is expected to conduct his or her personal affairs in a manner that avoids any conflict of interest or impropriety, or the appearance of a conflict of interest or impropriety with the employee's work, including working relationships with other employees, students, parents, and members of the public, private vendors, consultants, contractors or others.

Examples of conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Having outside employment that interferes or conflicts with your job duties or work schedule, including any required overtime work, or that creates a conflict of interest with the District's business.
- Having a significant financial interest or stake in any business or contract that could influence or affect your ability to perform your job
- Soliciting for money, purchases, or donations in working areas during working hours.

Employees must immediately disclose to their supervisor any potential or actual conflict of interest.

In order to uphold the highest ethical practice standards, as well as to comply with federal and state law, the District encourages all employees to come forward with any information about conduct on the part of any District employee that may be unprofessional, unethical or illegal, or that may constitute corruption, fraud, unethical practices, mismanagement or abuse of authority. This could be through any format, whether digitally or in person. Employees should immediately report any such information to a supervisor or administrator.

In accordance with state and federal law, no employee will be disciplined or otherwise penalized because the employee, or a person acting on behalf of the employee, reports, verbally or in writing, a violation or a suspected violation of any

state or federal law or regulation or any municipal ordinance or regulation, unethical practices, mismanagement or abuse of authority by any employee or supervisor. This does not apply if the employee knows that such report is false.

Professional Licensed Personnel also must adhere to the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators.

See also Policies 3.45 and 8.37.

### ***Confidentiality and Individual Privacy***

Respect for others dictates that each employee must not discuss confidential information about other employees that is gained while working for the District. Certain employees have access to business systems, student records, personnel records, and other information that is confidential in nature. Such information includes information about anyone's personal or medical conditions. Protection of this information by safeguarding it when in use, filing it properly, and discussing it only with those who have a legitimate need to know is an extremely high priority for everyone. Discussing or disclosing such confidential information about another person may also be a violation of the law. In addition, all employees must comply with the requirements of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regarding access to and disclosure of student educational records.

Telephone numbers and addresses of employees or students must not be provided to anyone without the approval of the Human Resources Department. Any requests for information or documents under the Freedom of Information Act should be forwarded to the Communications Office for handling.

### ***Use of Telephones***

The District's telephone equipment system is intended for work-related or business calls. As a matter of courtesy in the workplace, personal cell phone ringers and audible notifications should be turned off during work hours. Personal phone calls, other than calls of short duration for a specific purpose, should be limited to designated break times, except in cases of emergency or other serious situations that need immediate attention. The same discretion applies to the use of cellular phones. Special rules apply to the use of mobile devices by Bus Drivers.

See Policy 8.24.

## *Use of Computer Systems and Electronic Mail*

The District's computer network, electronic information, and communication systems are owned and maintained by the District for educational or work-related business purposes. Use of those systems is subject to the District's Computer Use Policy. All users of the system are required to abide by the terms of that policy. There is no expectation of privacy in the use of these systems, both email and computer use records maintained by the district are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The District reserves the right to monitor the use of the systems or inspect materials stored on its systems.

See Policies 3.28 and 8.22 for more detailed information about the use of computers, network systems, email, etc.

## *Use of Social Media*

We recognize that the use of Social Media has a prevalent and increasing role in the lives of employees and students alike. Social Media accounts may be established for both personal and professional purposes to post messages, videos, photographs, blogs, podcasts, emails, or other information, and include networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, or Instagram. District staff are encouraged to use educational technology, the Internet, and professional/education social networks – **not personal accounts** - to help raise student achievement and to improve communication with parents and students. However, consistent with First Amendment rights, it is the duty of each employee to appropriately manage all interactions with students, regardless of whether contact or interaction with a student occurs face-to-face or by means of technology, to ensure that the appropriate staff/student relationship is maintained. This includes instances when students initiate contact or behave inappropriately themselves.

See Policies 3.45 and 8.37 for a more detailed explanation of your rights and obligations.

## *Due Process and Discipline Guidelines*

### **Purpose**

Employee work violations in this resource contain general guidelines for examining and responding to employee performance or behavior issues. The guide is a tool to help supervisors evaluate and respond to employee performance problems and workplace issues fairly and effectively. It does not stand alone, nor does it constitute legal advice regarding action-specific infractions. These guidelines are not intended

to create contractual rights or obligations regarding the level of disciplinary action, which may be imposed on an employee.

Personnel hired under employment contracts are governed by the conditions of their contracts and the North Little Rock School District's personnel policies. Supervisors are responsible for training and supporting each employee in understanding job requirements, assisting employees in improving performance, and addressing issues negatively affecting the workplace.

## **Expectations**

Employees of the North Little Rock School District (NLRSD) have the following reasonable expectations of management:

- A clear understanding of the individual job description, standards, expectations, and work rules
- Annual performance appraisal based upon job-related competency criteria
- A safe and healthy work environment
- Willingness to respond to employees' concerns and complaints
- To be treated with dignity and respect
- Fair and non-discriminatory application of policies and procedures

This document provides general guidelines for the proper level of discipline depending on particular infractions and is to be used to help promote consistency in the level of discipline for similarly situated employees. Specific case information must be considered, which may change the recommended level of disciplinary action from what is noted.

## **Considerations Prior to Action**

The following section outlines considerations that should be taken into account prior to initiating disciplinary action.

- Did the supervisor give the employee forewarning of the possibility or probability of disciplinary action for the employee's performance or behavior?
- Was the supervisor's policy/procedure reasonably related to the orderly, efficient, and safe operation of the establishment?
- Did the supervisor investigate whether the employee violated the policy/procedure?
- Was the fact-finding process fair and objective?
- Did the facts reveal substantial evidence that proves a violation of the policy/procedure?
- Has the supervisor applied the policy/procedure and the appropriate disciplinary action(s) evenhandedly to all employees?
- Is the degree of discipline reasonably related to the violation?

## Disciplinary Investigation Process

When disciplinary action is warranted, an investigation of the circumstances of the case will be employed, as described below.

### A. Investigation

1. An investigation will be done prior to disciplinary action. The employee's immediate supervisor usually conducts investigations; however, an administrator with superseding authority may assume investigatory responsibilities or assign other central office personnel to pursue the investigation.
2. It may be necessary for administrators investigating to make credibility determinations regarding alleged victims, wrongdoers, and witnesses.
3. It is legal for an administrator to base a discipline decision upon a belief that a particular individual is being truthful or not. Accordingly, if the individuals have different versions, and if the administrator finds one individual to be more credible than the other, the administrator may take action and impose discipline.

### B. Administrative Leave with Pay During an Investigation

1. An administrator conducting an investigation may consider whether removing an employee from the work environment by implementing administrative leave is advisable to investigate the allegation of misconduct. The administrator may recommend administrative leave to the Superintendent or his/her designee. Final approval of Administrative Leave with Pay is always required from the Superintendent.
2. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee has the authority to implement administrative leave with pay for cause because administrative leave is not a disciplinary action, and administrative leave does not affect the financial interests of an employee.

### C. Due Process

1. In most cases, a **due process meeting(s)** with the employee should be conducted at the end of an investigation. This allows the investigating administrator to review and use all of the information, evidence, documents, etc., obtained during the investigation, enabling the administrator to conduct a better interview and to more accurately assess the employee's responses. It also ensures that the administrator

will be able to provide the employee with the opportunity to respond to all the allegations that arose during the investigation.

2. If the due process interview is held before the end of the investigation, the administrator will re-interview the employee prior to taking disciplinary action if any new allegations arise after the previous interview. During this meeting(s), the employee will be allowed to respond to the new allegations.

#### D. Resolution

1. Following the due process meeting(s), the administrator will review the case to determine the next steps. These steps may include:

- (a) Investigation is closed without a finding and no disciplinary action
- (b) A finding that warrants a disciplinary action(s)
- (c) Further investigation

2. The employee will receive timely notice of the next steps. If a disciplinary decision is issued, the employee will be notified of a **disciplinary meeting** and will be notified of their right to witness or representation per AR 6-17-210. The employee will receive written notice of the disciplinary decision along with any appeal rights. The written notice will be placed in the employee's personnel file and copied to his/her supervising administrator(s).

#### Model Steps

The below is meant to model the appropriate steps which need to be taken to provide the employee and complainant the appropriate actions to resolve the issue equitably. Again, these steps and documents do not stand alone, nor do either constitute legal advice regarding action-specific infractions.

**Step 1:** A specific incident/allegation is reported.

**Step 2:** If the report is made to a staff member, then the said person informs the building administrator/supervisor.

**Step 3:** Building Administrator/Supervisor informs their direct supervisor of the incident.

**Step 4:** The direct supervisor will inform the Executive Director of Human Resources and the Deputy Superintendent and give guidance to the building administrator/supervisor.

**Step 5:** Directives will be given as to whom will conduct the investigation.

**Step 6:**

- a) If the incident is determined to be a building-level/department issue, the building administrator/supervisor will investigate the validity of the issue and collect statements/evidence from all parties involved.
- b) If the incident is determined to be a district-level issue, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will investigate the validity of the issue and collect statements/evidence from all parties involved.

**Step 7:**

- a) If the incident is determined to be a building-level/department issue, the building administrator/supervisor will make a decision regarding progressive employee discipline based on the outcome of the evidence and appropriate guidelines set forth by NLRSD's policies and procedures.
- b) If the incident is determined to be a district-level issue, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will make a decision regarding progressive employee discipline based on the outcome of the evidence and appropriate guidelines set forth by NLRSD's policies and procedures.

**Step 8:**

- a) If the incident is determined to be a building-level/department issue, the building administrator/supervisor will communicate the appropriate disciplinary action to the appropriate direct supervisor.
- b) If the incident is determined to be a district-level issue, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will communicate the appropriate disciplinary action to the employee and his/her appropriate supervisor, as appropriate.

**Step 9:** If the incident is determined to be a building-level/district-level issue, all investigation documentation will be secured in an appropriate onsite location. Non-disciplinary documentation (i.e., Verbal Warnings and Letters of Concern) will be secured in a building/department file by the appropriate supervisor. Disciplinary documentation (i.e., Written Warnings, Written Reprimands, Administrative Leave without Pay Letters, and Termination Letters) will be secured in the employee's official personnel file located in the Department of Human Resources.

**Step 10:**

- a) If the incident is determined to be a building/department level issue and there is no finding to the incident/allegation, then the employee will receive a formal written letter indicating that the investigation has concluded, which will be secured in an appropriate onsite location.

- b) If the incident is determined to be a district-level issue, a district-level communication will come from the Executive Director of Human Resources to the employee regarding the outcome, which will be secured in an appropriate onsite location.

Building Administrators/Supervisors should contact the Executive Director of Human Resources related to any documentation regarding an individual's circumstances relating to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or Workers' Compensation.

"Administrative Leave with Pay Pending an Investigation" is only to be used in extreme situations and only after consultation with the Executive Director of Human Resources and prior approval by the Superintendent.

### **Progressive Disciplinary Process**

**Purpose-** NLRSD's progressive discipline processes are designed to provide a structured corrective action process to improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable employee behavior and performance issues. Outlined below are the steps of NLRSD's progressive discipline policies and procedures. NLRSD reserves the right to combine or advance steps depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense. Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite counseling or training, the employee's work record, and the impact the performance or behavior issues have on the organization.

Nothing in this progressive disciplinary process provides any contractual rights regarding employee discipline or counseling, nor should anything in this progressive disciplinary process be read or construed as modifying or altering the employment relationship between NLRSD and its employees.

### **Procedure for Progressive Discipline**

**Verbal Warning (non-disciplinary)-** A verbal warning creates an opportunity for the immediate supervisor to bring attention to a performance or behavior issue. The supervisor should discuss with the employee the nature of the problem or a violation of federal/state law or a violation of local policies and procedures. The supervisor is expected to clearly describe expectations and steps the employee must take to improve his or her performance or behavior to resolve the problem. Within five business days, the supervisor will prepare written documentation of the verbal warning.

**Steps:**

- Speak with the employee about the concern
- Follow up with an email documenting the issue, corrective action, and employee expectations

**Letter of Concern** (non-disciplinary)- A letter of concern involves more formal documentation of the employee's performance or behavior.

With a letter of concern, the immediate supervisor and a witness will meet with the employee to review any additional incidents or information about their performance or behavior, as well as any prior assigned corrective actions. The building administrator/supervisor will outline the consequences for the employee regarding his or her continued failure to meet performance or behavior expectations.

An outline of how the employee can correct his or her performance or behavior shall be included in the letter of concern. The letter of concern shall also include a statement indicating that the employee may be subject to additional discipline, up to and including termination, if the performance or behavior is not corrected.

**Steps:**

- Draft a Letter of Concern
- Letter of Concern remains in employee's file at the building level
- Not subject to a grievance procedure

**Written Warning** (disciplinary)- A written warning involves formal documentation of an employee's performance or behavior.

With a written warning, the immediate supervisor and a witness will meet with the employee to review any additional incidents or information about their performance or behavior, as well as any previously assigned corrective actions. The building administrator/supervisor will outline the consequences for the employee regarding his or her continued failure to meet performance or behavior expectations.

An outline of how the employee can correct his or her performance or behavior shall be included in the written warning. The written warning shall also include a statement indicating that the employee may be subject to additional discipline, up to and including termination, if the performance or behavior is not corrected.

**Steps:**

- Provide the Notification of Right to Witness Form (Appendix A)

- **Ask the** employee to return the form in 48 hours
- After 48 hours schedule the disciplinary meeting the following day
- Use the Model Disciplinary Action Template (Appendix B) to draft a Written Warning Letter
- Provide the employee the opportunity to write a written rebuttal
- The Written Warning Letter remains in employee's file at Central Office
- Not subject to a grievance procedure

**Written Reprimand** (disciplinary)- A written reprimand involves formal documentation of a performance or behavior.

With a written reprimand, the immediate supervisor and a witness will meet with the employee to review any additional incidents or information about their performance or behavior, as well as any previously assigned corrective actions. The building administrator/supervisor will outline the consequences for the employee regarding his or her continued failure to meet performance or behavior expectations.

An outline of how the employee can correct his or her performance or behavior shall be included in the written reprimand. The written reprimand shall also include a statement indicating that the employee may be subject to additional discipline, up to and including termination, if the performance or behavior is not corrected.

**Steps:**

- Provide the Notification of Right to Witness Form (Appendix A)
- **Ask the** employee to return the form in 48 hours
- After 48 hours schedule the meeting the following day
- Use the Model Disciplinary Action Template (Appendix B) to draft a Written Reprimand Letter
- Provide the employee the opportunity to write a written rebuttal
- The Written Reprimand Letter remains in employee's file at Central Office
- Not subject to a grievance procedure

**Administrative Leave with Pay** - Some performance or behavior incidents are so egregious that the most effective action may be the temporary removal of the employee from the workplace. When immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of the employee or others the employee may be placed on administrative leave with pay (non-disciplinary) pending the results of an investigation subject to approval from the Superintendent and are assigned by the Executive Director of Human Resources.

**Suspensions without Pay** - Suspensions that are recommended as part of the normal sequence of the progressive discipline protocol and procedures are recommended by the building administrator/supervisor subject to approval from the Superintendent and are assigned by the Executive Director of Human Resources.

Depending on the seriousness of the infraction, the employee may be suspended without pay (disciplinary) in full-day increments consistent with federal, state, and local wage and hour employment laws by the Executive Director of Human Resources, with prior approval from the Superintendent. Employees may not substitute or use an accrued paid vacation or sick day in lieu of the unpaid suspension. In compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), unpaid suspension of salaried/exempt employees is reserved for serious workplace performance or behavior issues and can only be issued by the Executive Director of Human Resources, with prior approval from the Superintendent.

**Termination**- The last and most serious step in the progressive discipline process is a recommendation to terminate employment. Generally, NLRSD will exercise the progressive nature of these guidelines by first providing written disciplinary letters including written warning(s), written reprimand(s), or suspending the employee from the workplace without pay before proceeding to a recommendation to terminate. However, NLRSD reserves the right to combine and advance steps depending on the circumstances of each situation and the nature of the offense. Furthermore, employees may be terminated without prior disciplinary action. The building administrator's/supervisor's recommendation to terminate employment must be approved by the Executive Director of Human Resources with final approval from the Superintendent.

### **Employee Assistance Programs and Fitness for Duty Evaluations**

In the event that a building administrator/supervisor is concerned that an employee's emotional or mental state presents a danger to the employee or others, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or "fitness for duty" evaluations may be implemented.

A. An employee may be directed to the EAP or to a "fitness for duty" evaluation after authorization by the Superintendent/Designee.

B. An employee's participation in EAP, or any other counseling program, is a confidential matter. The content of an employee's EAP or counseling sessions is not a legitimate area of interest or information to an administrator.

C. Employees will be required to follow the recommendations of their EAP referral or fitness for duty evaluation and will provide NLRSD with all necessary releases to

certify that they have complied with the recommendations. Failure to comply with these recommendations may result in disciplinary action/termination.

**Appendix A**

**North Little Rock School District  
Notification of Right to Witness or Representative Form  
(AR 6-17-210)**

During the upcoming disciplinary/grievance meeting with the building principal or supervisor, you have the right to have a witness or a representative of your choice present with you.

Time:

Date:

Place:

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to bring a witness/representative to the meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_ I waive my right to have a witness or a representative at the meeting.

Name of person attending with you: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness/Representative's Position:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator's Signature              Date

Employee's Comments:

## Appendix B

### Model Disciplinary Action Letter Template

July 19, 2021

Ms. Jane Doe  
123 Charging Wildcat Circle  
North Little Rock, AR 72116

Dear Ms. Doe:

This letter constitutes a **(add Disciplinary Action being delivered here)** for your failure to uphold the policies communicated in the North Little Rock School District (NLRSD) Employee Handbook and Code of Ethics set by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Your actions failed to meet the expectations and standards of the NLRSD. **(What is the issue?, i.e. You did not show up to work )**

On (date), you (facts) ...

After completing the investigation, I deemed that your actions violated the following:

(analysis and rule)...

- #1 which violated Policy ( )
- #2 which violated Clause ( )
- #3 which violated Standard ( )

(conclusion) ...

A **(add Disciplinary Action being delivered here)** is one of the steps of progressive disciplinary actions and will be placed in your official NLRSD personnel file at the central office. It is my hope and intent that this **(add Disciplinary Action being delivered here)** will serve the purpose of formally reminding you of future expectations. Any future occurrences of this nature will result in progressive disciplinary action, up to and including the recommendation for your termination of employment.

Please note that you may submit a written response to me within five (5) days of your receipt of this disciplinary letter to accompany this document before it is placed in your personnel file, should you choose to do so.

You are directed to complete the following remedial actions listed below. Your failure to complete the remedial actions may lead to additional disciplinary actions.

- Remedial action () ...

**Acknowledgment of Receipt**

My signature acknowledges my receipt of this letter only and does not necessarily constitute my agreement with its contents.

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- (1) The following section is to be completed if the employee refuses to sign or otherwise, acknowledge receipt hereof:

On \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, I provided or offered a copy of this memorandum to the affected employee in the presence of the undersigned witness (es).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and title of witness

Cc: **Applicable Supervisors, (Title)**  
Personnel File

## **SECTION VI BENEFITS AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

The District's success is dependent on our employees' health and ability to perform their jobs in a reliable and productive manner. We have a variety of benefits to assist you and your family to cover expenses and promote your wellbeing. The benefits described in this section are generally available only to employees who are scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours per week or be a full-time bus driver. Because benefits may change as we monitor and review their value and effectiveness, this Handbook is meant to summarize the benefits and serve as a guideline only.

### ***Health and Prescription Drug Insurance***

The District knows how important it is for employees and their families to have affordable health care. We offer medical and prescription drug insurance coverage to all eligible employees. Vision and dental insurance are also offered separately with employer and employee contributions.

The District will pay a set amount per month to cover a portion of the premium for such coverage as specified in Policies 3.35 and NLR39, which will be amended from time to time. Employees who elect coverage will be required to contribute the remaining amount as a monthly premium toward the cost of their medical care. Your contribution to the cost of the medical coverage will be paid by payroll deduction on a pre-tax basis.

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides for the temporary continuation of health insurance coverage at the group rate for individuals who experience certain life events such as legal separation, divorce, death of a spouse, or when a covered dependent ceases to be an eligible dependent. You will be provided with appropriate notices of your rights and eligibility as applicable. In addition, health insurance benefits will be maintained as required under the Family and Medical Leave Act for any employee whose leave qualifies as FMLA leave.

### ***Additional Optional Benefits (available at 20 hrs/week)***

The District provides group term life insurance for all employees (employer paid), and (at the time of the publication of this Handbook) the following optional benefits for all District employees at the employees' cost:

- Accident Insurance (with a Wellness Benefit)
- Critical Care Insurance (with a Wellness Benefit)

- Cancer Insurance (with a Wellness Benefit)
- Hospital Confinement Plan
- Voluntary Short-Term Disability
- Voluntary Long-Term Disability
- Lump-Sum Disability
- Supplemental Life Insurance
- Voluntary Group Life Insurance
- Universal Life Insurance
- Universal Life Events

The District's offering of these benefits may change from year to year. Always consult with the District's benefits coordinator or benefits vendor for current information.

### ***Professional Development, Licensure, and Training***

We strongly support our employees in their ongoing efforts to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities through professional development activities. All employees—including License/Certified staff and Classified employees—will participate in professional development activities as set forth in Policies 3.6, 5.4, and NLR31. Some training and development will be organized and conducted by the District's Administration. Employees also may participate in professional development activities, such as conferences, workshops, self-study, and individual learning, distance learning, internships, and approved college/university course work, as well as other activities. Prior approval is required to attend external PD activities.

Detailed information on professional development is found in the District's Professional Development Manual.

See also Policy 8.7 for provisions regarding Paid Professional Leave for external professional development activities.

All North Little Rock School District Employees have employment requirements. All North Little Rock School District Employees are expected to have reviewed their current licensure and confirm it is valid for the position they hold for the current fiscal year. Failure to confirm proper licensure may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. All North Little Rock School District Employees are expected to remain current on all professional development requirements set by their direct supervisors and the North Little Rock School District. Teachers in the North Little Rock School District are required to complete 24 hours of professional development during the Summer. Each professional development day equates to six hours. For every hour a teacher is short of the required 24 professional development hours, the teacher understands that their overall contracted salary for the current fiscal school year will be adjusted based on the lack of hours. New

teachers to the district will be given until December 1 of the current contracted year to make sure all Summer hours are completed.

See Policies 3.6, 3.1.3, NLR 31, and 8.13.

### ***Holidays***

The school system and district offices are closed in observance of the following holidays.

New Year's Day	Thanksgiving
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Day After Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Independence Day	Christmas Day
Labor Day	

If a holiday falls on a weekend, you will receive either the Friday or Monday as the Holiday day off with pay if scheduled to work.

### ***Paid Vacation / Personal Leave***

All employees' benefit from scheduled time off away from work - for relaxation, recreation, and rejuvenation. To provide this important benefit, the District provides annual vacation leave for all regular 12-month employees.

Licensed teaching staff and paraprofessionals are not eligible for vacation, as they enjoy time off during times when school is not in session. However, all full-time employees receive two (2) personal leave days per school year.

Please see Policies 3.11, 3.46, 8.7, and 8.38 for further information and restrictions on vacation and personal leave.

### ***Paid Sick Leave***

Sick leave is for the purpose of personal illness or injury, illness or injury of immediate family members, adoption, death in the family, to attend the funeral of a non-family member, or for medical/dental appointments that cannot be scheduled

outside of regular working hours or when school is not in session. Sick leave also will be used in accordance with the District's FMLA policy.

Employees are eligible for paid sick leave if they are considered full time or qualifying part-time employees. The amount of sick leave available is based on length of service in the District as of July 1 of each year. For Licensed Certified staff, the amount of sick leave will be made available in accordance with Arkansas State Law. In addition, employee will receive credit for employment in another District in the State of Arkansas.

See Policies 3.8, 3.9, 8.5, and 8.6. See also NLR.18 regarding the redemption of sick leave at the end of each fiscal year, upon retirement, or upon the staff member's death.

### ***Sick Leave Bank***

All District employees are eligible to enroll for participation in the Sick Leave Bank. When a qualifying serious personal or family illness, disability, or accident (excluding Workman's Compensation claims) causes an extended leave of absence from employment, an enrolled employee who has exhausted all sick leave may apply for benefits from the Sick Leave Bank.

See Policies 3.9 and 8.6.

### ***Family/Medical Leave***

In accordance with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, an employee is entitled to a certain amount of unpaid FMLA leave in a 12-month period. Available paid leave (i.e., sick, personal, vacation) must be substituted for unpaid FMLA leave that is permitted for the type of leave taken. The following types of leave qualify as FMLA leave:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal care, or childbirth, and to care for the employee's child after birth (leave must be taken within 12 months after birth);
- For adoption and foster care, and to care for the employee's child after placement of a child with the employee by adoption or foster care (leave must be taken within 12 months after placement);
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition;
- For the employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more essential functions of his or her current position.

- Because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on (or has been notified of an impending call to) covered active duty in the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves). Qualifying exigencies may include:
  - (a) Short-notice deployment activities (if a member receives seven or fewer calendar day(s) notice prior to the date of deployment);
  - (b) Military events and related activities;
  - (c) Childcare and school activities;
  - (d) Financial and legal arrangements;
  - (e) Counseling activities;
  - (f) Rest and recuperation activities;
  - (g) Post-deployment activities; and/or
  - (h) Additional activities.
- To care for the employee's spouse, parent, son or daughter, or next of kin who is a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank or rating. A covered servicemember includes (1) a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) (a) who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; (b) is in outpatient status; or (c) is on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness, and (2) a veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness who was a member of the Armed Forces at any time during the five years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

The District's full FMLA policy is contained in Policies 3.32 and 8.23.

### ***Jury Duty Leave***

Any employee who is summoned for jury duty must notify his or her supervisor and provide a copy of the jury summons notice. The District will pay your daily rate of pay. You must return to work whenever not actively serving on jury duty. See Policies 3.14 and 8.10

### ***Military/Uniformed Services Leave***

The District proudly will comply with the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1993 ("USERRA") in its employment practices. Additional military leave provisions are set forth NLR22.

An employee who gives advance notice and who takes a leave of absence from the District for any period of active or training service in the Uniformed Services of the United States, is entitled to continued employment and, after completing longer periods of service will be re-employed in accordance with federal and state law. You must notify your supervisor as soon as you become aware of your military leave schedule.

### ***Leave Requests / Extended Leave of Absence***

An employee who will be absent from work on a scheduled workday for any reason must notify his or her supervisor in accordance with building procedures as soon as practicable once the employee knows he or she is going to be absent. Employees also must follow their building site's process for reporting attendance so absences are entered into the District's absence management system, as required.

When situations arise that require an employee's absence beyond the leave provided by the District, an employee may request a leave of absence without pay. The request must include an explanation of the need for the leave and the supervisor's approval or disapproval of the request. The District's approval or disapproval of the extended leave is governed by Policies 3.11.1 and NLR.19

## SECTION VII

### OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY AND NON-VIOLENCE

#### *The Importance of Safety at Work*

While the District cannot guarantee to protect any employee from willful or reckless acts by third parties or other employees, preventing workplace accidents and ensuring a safe, clean, and healthy work environment for employees, students, and visitors is of utmost importance for everyone who works at the District. All employees are expected to comply with all applicable safety, health and security rules, regulations, policies, and laws that apply to our District.

The North Little Rock Board of Education has a strong, "Zero Tolerance" workplace safety and anti-violence policy. No employee may bring firearms, explosives, incendiary devices, martial arts equipment, or any other weapons into the workplace or any work-related setting, regardless of whether or not the individual is licensed to carry such a weapon. If you feel that you have experienced or witnessed any threats or violence in the workplace, you must immediately notify your supervisor or an appropriate administrator. Board policy prohibits retaliation against anyone who has reported workplace violence.

Please see Policies 3.48 and 8.40 (Weapons).

#### *Employment Background Checks*

All new employees of the District are subject to the state-mandated background checks for state and federal criminal history (including fingerprinting) and the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry. See Arkansas Code Ann. §§ 6-17-410 and 6-17-414. The background checks are not required if the same background check has been completed within twelve (12) months of beginning employment with the District. Background checks are performed every five years in addition to the initial background check. Employees will receive instructions from the Human Resources Office for completing the background checks.

#### *Identification Badges*

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of providing a safe environment for all District students and staff. To promote a safe environment, the District requires all employees, volunteers, and visitors to wear a District issued, approved identification badge.

## ***Accidents and Workers' Compensation***

Injuries, no matter how slight that occur at work, must be reported to your immediate supervisor so that any necessary treatment or Workers' Compensation claims can be initiated. If you cannot remain at work due to an injury, you will be paid for the balance of your scheduled shift. Any employee who sustains any injury at work must immediately notify his or her immediate supervisor, or if the supervisor is unavailable, notify the Business Office. Instructions will be provided regarding the procedures to be followed and needed paperwork.

Medical documentation will be required prior to your return to work on a form provided by the District. If an employee recovering from a work-related injury is permitted to return to work with work restrictions, the District may offer the employee a "light duty" position, if a position is available.

See Policies 3.44 and 8.32 for more detailed information about your rights and responsibilities regarding Workers' Compensation.

## ***Emergency Procedures and Contacts***

Whenever you believe that an emergency situation exists or is about to exist, you must immediately call 911 for fire, police, or emergency medical service. In addition, you must notify your supervisor, or an administrator. The supervisor or administrator will contact an employee's family member or other emergency contact, as warranted.

In accordance with federal and state law, the District has established lockdown procedures to ensure the safety of all employees and students to the greatest extent possible. Training and drills are conducted to support these efforts.

## ***Mandated Reporting***

In accordance with Arkansas state law, if there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment, all employees are required to **directly and personally** report these suspicions to the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline by calling 1-800-482-5964. This is a personal obligation that may not be delegated. Under Arkansas law, a supervisor shall not require an employee to report the suspected abuse or maltreatment to the supervisor before an employee places a call to the Hotline. Failure to report suspected child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect by calling the Hotline can lead to criminal prosecution and individual civil liability of the person who has this duty. Notification of local or state law enforcement does not satisfy the duty to report; only notification by means of the Child Abuse Hotline satisfies this duty.

See Policies 3.40 and 8.34 for more information.

## ***Electronic Monitoring***

As a safety and security measure, District employees should recognize that their work activities and communications may be subject to electronic monitoring and video surveillance. Electronic equipment that may be monitored includes, but is not limited to, telephones, computer files, and e-mails. Employees should not have any expectation of privacy while using the District's electronic equipment. Video cameras are placed in strategic locations to enable school officials to monitor and record the activities of students, employees, and visitors. Employees will not be subject to any such monitoring or recording in areas designed for the health or personal comfort of the employees or for safeguarding of their possessions, such as restrooms, locker rooms, or lounges.

See Policies 3.41 and 8.29.

## ***Medical Examinations***

In accordance with Board Policy, the District may require any employee to undergo a fitness for duty examination to evaluate the employee's ability to perform the duties of their assigned position whenever an employee's performance suggests the need for such an examination. The District also may require an employee to undergo a medical examination pursuant to the FMLA, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or as otherwise permitted by law.

Pre-employment physical examinations and drug tests are required for certain job positions.

Please see Policies 3.7, 3.8, 3.32, 8.4, 8.5, 8.23.

## ***Smoke-Free Workplace***

In accordance with Arkansas State law and to ensure a healthy work environment, smoking or use of tobacco or products containing nicotine in any form (including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and snuff) in or on any real property owned or leased by a District school, including school buses or other vehicles owned or leased by the District, is prohibited. With the exception of recognized tobacco cessation products, this policy's prohibition includes any tobacco or nicotine delivery system or product. Specifically, the prohibition includes any product that is manufactured, distributed, marketed, or sold as e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-pipes, or under any other name or descriptor. Smoking in any District building is strictly prohibited.

See Policies 3.21 and 8.15.

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

As part of the North Little Rock School District's commitment to maintain a safe, healthy, and efficient work environment, we must make sure to minimize hazards at our worksites resulting from the use of drugs and alcohol. Any employee who abuses drugs or alcohol, or who comes to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol presents a safety risk to his or her fellow employees and limits our ability to provide a positive learning environment for students. Therefore, the Board has adopted a firm policy on drug and alcohol abuse.

This prohibition includes prescription drugs obtained by a means other than the employee's own current prescription and extends to an employee's personal vehicle located on District property or in any vehicle engaged in work-related business. No employee may be under the influence of any illegal drug or alcohol while in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating District vehicles or equipment.

### **[Assistance for Those Who Voluntarily Seek Help](#)**

The District has a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the District's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance abuse programs. Consistent with applicable law, the District maintains a policy of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation with respect to recovering addicts and alcoholics, and those having a medical history reflecting treatment for substance abuse conditions.

### Convictions or Arrests

Any employee who is convicted of violating any laws regarding the use of illegal drugs or is charged with a violation of any criminal law involving the use of illegal drugs must promptly (within five (5) days), provide written notice of the conviction to the employee's supervisor or the Superintendent.

### Legal Drugs

Legal drugs (over-the-counter and prescription drugs) are to be used only in the manner, combination, and quantity as prescribed or directed by the employee's physician. If the employee knows or has reason to believe that his/her motor coordination skills, physical or mental ability, and/or regular work activities could be impaired while taking legal drugs, the employee shall immediately notify his or her supervisor that he or she is taking a drug which may cause such impairment to their work performance, along with the nature of the impairment. If a supervisor determines that the employee is impaired at work, the employee may be sent home.

See Policies 3.31 and 8.28.

### Drug and Alcohol Testing

Bus Drivers are subject to testing for drug and alcohol use in accordance with applicable laws and Board policy. Testing may also be implemented in other specific instances, such as following workplace injuries.

For more specific information, please see Policies 3.7, 3.31, 3.44, 8.4, 8.28, and 8.36.

**SECTION VIII**  
**ENDING YOUR EMPLOYMENT WITH**  
**THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT**

***Resignation/Retirement***

Non-exempt employees who decide to resign or retire from employment are required to provide their supervisors with a timely notice. This timeframe is determined by the Human Resource Department. If an employee wishes to resign during the summer months when school is not in session, such notice is expected to be submitted directly to the Human Resources Department. This notice allows the District to plan an orderly transition of duties with less interruption to operations.

Resignations are subject to District approval, which are generally accepted if submitted timely, and a suitable replacement is available.

See Policies 3.5.4 and NLR.11.

***Termination/Layoff***

If it becomes necessary for the District to terminate the employment of an employee involuntarily, depending on the reason for termination, notice will be given in writing as to the date of an involuntary termination of employment. Prior disciplinary actions and conferences with supervisors may inform employees that termination of employment could result from failure to correct unacceptable behavior or performance.

If termination of employment is based on business reasons such as reorganization or reduction in workforce (layoff), notice will be given as permitted by circumstances and/or as required by law and pursuant to the District's reduction in force policies.

See Policies 3.4 and 8.30 for detailed information on reductions-in-force.

## ***Final Compensation and Continuing Your Benefits***

Employees who are involuntarily terminated will receive their final paycheck in accordance with state law. Employees who end employment voluntarily will receive their final paycheck on the next regular payday.

The District will provide each employee who separates from employment with information about the extension of health insurance benefits under COBRA, information concerning the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and about conversion of any optional life insurance or disability policies.

## ***Return of Property***

On or before their last workday, exiting employees must return all District property in their possession, including:

- keys, key cards, and badges;
- files, computers, and any other District business-related information or records, whether in printed or electronic format.

## ***Our Exit Interview Process***

We will ask exiting employees to participate in exit interviews. These interviews are voluntary and are conducted to obtain employees' honest opinions and evaluations of their work experiences at the District. No employee will be penalized in any way for declining to participate in an exit interview.

## ***Rehire Eligibility***

Former employees may be considered for rehire into a position in which the former employee successfully worked. In addition, employees are eligible for rehire only if they resigned in good standing or were laid off from a job. In no event will an employee be rehired who was terminated for misconduct, poor performance, violating any District policy, or as a result of the imposition of disciplinary measures.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Initial:

- \_\_\_ I acknowledge my receipt of the North Little Rock School District's Employee Handbook. I understand that this Handbook is intended to serve as a helpful guide to the District's policies and practices and not as a contract of employment for any length of time.
- \_\_\_ I understand that the policies, rules, and benefits described in the Handbook are subject to change at any time, subject to any legal restrictions.
- \_\_\_ I understand that the policies adopted by the District's School Board govern over any summary provided in this Handbook, and I should consult those Policies for the full, detailed policy provisions.
- \_\_\_ I understand that should the content of this Employee Handbook be changed in any way, the District may require an additional signature from me to indicate that I am aware of and understand any new policies, procedures, practices, or conditions of employment.
- \_\_\_ I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understood the above statements and have received a copy of the Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date