

FORWARD

The purpose of the Staff Handbook is to answer as many questions as possible, which may arise during the school year. Of course, not all questions with which you will be confronted can be answered. What is not explained will have to be handled in the best manner possible until a formal interpretation can be obtained.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

President – Les Hall

Secretary – Doug Stanton

Treasurer – Tonya Larson

Board Member – Leah Hagan

Vice President– Tim Shaw

Board Member – Chad Peterson

PERSONNEL POLICIES

The Rock County Public Schools Board of Education recognizes that teachers must provide a classroom situation which maximizes the learning opportunity for the students. A classroom that is physically attractive and orderly will help children to realize the benefits of such qualities in their own lives. The teacher also must create a learning climate which fosters positive attitudes within the children themselves, their country, their community, and their goals in life.

Teacher Responsibilities:

1. To offer stimulating up-to-date instruction in accordance with the adopted curriculum.
2. To keep informed of developments in teaching techniques and advances in subject areas of teaching.
3. To set an example for student behavior which creates an optimum learning environment.
4. To participate on a total basis in general school improvement.
5. To support and implement school district policies and regulations and to participate in their modification for school improvement.
6. To protect the learning rights of all by establishing and maintaining an appropriate learning environment, including control of disruption.
7. To assist in caring for school property by proper use.
8. To keep necessary school records.
9. To offer guidance and support to students.

Teacher Rights:

1. To have reasonable access to the necessary tools of instruction.
2. To be free to use effective teaching methods appropriate to the subject to be taught and the age of the students.
3. To enjoy the rights and privileges of any free citizen in matters of a political nature.
4. To privacy of out-of-school life.
5. To support in matters of student discipline when actions have been appropriate.
6. To consistent application of personnel policies.
7. To fair evaluation of professional competence.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Rock County Public School is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants for vacancies are considered on the basis of merit, regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, disability, or national origin. Grievances regarding equal opportunity employment should be addressed to the Superintendent.

When vacancies occur, these vacancies will be advertised in appropriate publications (e.g., newspapers, radio stations, college placement bureau bulletins.) An administrative vacancy will be handled through the president of the Board of Education with the board responsible for interviewing candidates.

Teaching vacancies and all other vacancies will be handled through the superintendent. When applications for employment are received, the superintendent will notify the applicant of the receipt of the application and will request the candidate's credentials, which must include an official college transcript and letters of recommendation from individuals who have supervised the candidate. The superintendent is responsible for interviewing candidates, making certain that they are properly certificated and endorsed, and recommending to the board that a contract be offered to the candidate he feels is best qualified for the position.

The Board of Education is responsible for hiring all employees, and this responsibility cannot be delegated to the superintendent.

When a teaching vacancy occurs, teachers already in the system may apply for the position, and they will be given first priority. If it is judged by the principal to be in the best interest of the school, the transfer will be made.

LINE AND STAFF RELATIONS

As with any organization, each staff member has certain responsibilities. The Board of Education is responsible to the patrons of Rock County. The superintendent, as the executive administrator of the school, is directly responsible to the Board of Education. All staff members are responsible to the superintendent or principal, and all suggestions, questions, and complaints are to be directed to either. Only after this avenue has been exhausted should a staff member request to meet with the Board of Education, and this meeting is to be arranged through the principal.

TEACHER'S HOURS

The regular school day at Bassett Grade School begins with classes at 8:15 a.m., with morning dismissal at 11:25 for lunch. Afternoon classes begin at 12:10, and dismissal is at 3:31 Monday through Friday.

The regular school day at Pony Lake and Rose begins with classes at 8:15 a.m. with dismissal at 3:15 p.m.

The regular school day at Rock County High School begins with classes at 8:00 .am with dismissal at 3:31 p.m.

All teachers are to be at school at least fifteen minutes before classes begin in the morning. Teachers are to remain at school for at least fifteen minutes after school is dismissed in the afternoon. Permission to deviate from these procedures must be obtained from the principal. Before vacations, teachers will be permitted to leave school when all students have left.

If a teacher has told a student to report before or after school, the student must be supervised. The student's parents must be notified of such circumstances, especially when the student's transportation may be affected.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Teachers/Staff who know in advance they are unable to be present to discharge their assigned duties should notify Jean Fuhrman (elementary) or Brandi (high school) at the earliest possible time, and pickup a "Staff Absence Slip" from Jean/Brandi. If you are ill please call Jean/Brandi as early as possible after 6:00 A.M., so she can make arrangements for a substitute. All subs must be requested thru Jean/Brandi in the office, even if going to be gone one period. Teachers are to maintain adequate lesson plans which are readily accessible and understandable by a substitute teacher.

Substitute teachers are paid according to school policy. Substitute teachers will be paid a per diem rate set annually by the Board. Substitutes employed for 10 or more consecutive days in the same position shall be paid according to the prevailing base salary, and will be retroactive to the first day of the substitute period. Substitute certificated employees are expected to perform the same duties as the certificated employees.

PATRIOTISM

Each school day may begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. Students are encouraged to learn the words of the Star Spangled Banner and other patriotic songs in music classes. It is the responsibility of the teachers to make students aware of the importance of loyalty and patriotism to our country.

DISCIPLINE

Adequate control of the classroom situation is the foundation of effective teaching. Discipline is not incidental; it is good control through planning. Teachers are more likely to be accepted by both the pupils and the parents if they insist upon an orderly procedure of classroom control.

Being “too easy” with the students does not win respect for a teacher. A teacher may be “easy” on the students and allow infractions of the rules to be popular with the students, but students will have more respect if they are made to abide by the rules. The strongest disciplinarians are frequently the best-liked teachers, because they give the students an orderly learning environment. Teachers who have discipline problems should consult with the principal for advice and assistance. The principal will assume some teacher problems, but it is necessary for personal success and a feeling of satisfactions that teachers attempt to handle difficult situations as well as possible.

Students have a keen sense of fair play, so the best rule for discipline would be to treat the students fairly and consistently. We establish rules for everyone, and students resent someone who is considered to be a favorite. In whatever rules we establish, we must be sure that we can follow through with consequences that have been established to deal with misbehavior. The teacher is the best example for the students. The respect we give to others will be returned many times.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment is prohibited in Rock County Public Schools.

Corporal punishment is not to be confused with physical force used by a teacher or employee to protect another person from personal attack or threat of attack, to protect himself/herself, to remove a student from a class or from one part of the building to another, or to protect a student from doing harm to himself/herself or others. Nor should corporal punishment be confused with grasping or touching a student with no intent to inflict bodily harm.

It shall be the policy of Rock County Public Schools to periodically, as the administrator and Board of Education deems appropriate, review this policy with the appropriate employees of the School and to provide information to such employees as the administrator and Board of Education may deem appropriate for the appropriate and lawful application of the policy by the employees of Rock County Public Schools.

It shall be the further policy of Rock County Public Schools to require any person employed by the school who has been involved in an incident involving self-defense, the defense of others, the defense of one's property, the property of another, or the property of the school, to make an oral report of such circumstances to the administrator or his/her designee as soon as is practicable and within twenty-four hours. The administrator or his/her designee shall prepare a memorandum of such report and shall undertake such efforts as he/she deems appropriate to investigate and further report in writing the results of the investigation concerning any such incident.

ASSIGNMENT OF TEACHERS

As much as possible, the workload for teachers will be assigned equitably. Each teacher's daily schedule shall include at least one class period during the regular day, or an equivalent amount of time, for pupil conferences and class preparation.

Teachers will be assigned to positions by the principal and will be responsible directly to him/her. Prior to a change of assignments, a consultation will be held with the teacher whenever possible.

Extracurricular duties will be assigned to teachers based upon several considerations, including: background, experience, interests, and regular teaching assignment.

Each teacher is assigned to a room and is charged with making sure all windows and the doors are closed and locked when leaving the building. The teacher is to remind the students of their responsibility to keep everything in the room in good condition, and when anything needs to be repaired, the teacher is to notify the principal. At the end of each school year, the teacher will complete an inventory of the classroom.

NOON DUTY PROCEDURE (Specific to Bassett Grade School)

All staff members will be assigned on a rotation basis, with two teachers on duty per day. The dismissal bell for lunch will ring at 11:25. Students who go home for lunch are to leave at that time upon dismissal. Students eating at school will go to the gym upon dismissal. They will be dismissed to the playground by the staff members on duty. Students who leave for lunch are not to be back on the playground until 11:50 a.m.

RECESS

Recess is the responsibility of the individual classroom teacher. When the students go outside, the teacher and/or an aide must supervise them. As a safety measure, teachers/aides should make sure that students know how to properly use playground equipment. Misuse of playground equipment by students can cause injuries. For the sake of uniformity and safety, students are to push the merry-go-round from the outside so as not to become tangled between the metal pipes.

SUPERVISION OF BUILDING AND GROUNDS

During regular school hours, the entire staff—superintendent, principal, teachers, and support personnel—is responsible for the discipline and supervision of the school building, supplies, equipment, and school grounds. Everyone is to make sure that good discipline is enforced for all students, not just for the students in a teacher's homeroom. All school functions and activities will be supervised. All district employees are responsible to enforce district policies and procedures.

HALL DUTY

Teachers are to supervise the halls outside their classrooms when classes are passing. Running, loud talking, noise making, and other distracting behavior is not to be tolerated. All staff members are to enforce the rules concerning students being in the hallways prior to school.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Elementary teachers are to take roll by 8:30 in the morning and by 12:30 after lunch, and enter absentees/tardies on PowerSchool. High School teachers must take attendance at the beginning of each period. Students who are tardy because of bad roads will not have this counted against their attendance records, as they cannot control such circumstances.

If a student is absent, the teacher is to indicate the reason for the absence if it is known. If the teacher does not know the reason, this should be indicated so the student's parents will be called.

When students will miss school because of an appointment, school activity or a trip with parents, MAKE-UP WORK IS TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE ABSENCE. When parents do not notify the school of a planned absence, completion of make-up work before the absence is impossible, and the absence will be treated as unexcused.

SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS

Teachers are to be familiar with the Board of Education policy on student suspension and expulsion. Teachers are to go through this policy with the students to make sure that students realize that there is a policy, what actions warrant suspension or expulsion, and what the procedure is.

RETENTION OF STUDENTS

When, in the opinion of the teacher, a student should be retained, the teacher should confer with the principal, explaining the reasons for retention. A conference with the child's parents should be arranged as soon as possible to explain that retention is a possibility and the reasons for making the recommendation. The parents should understand that the final decision is a joint decision, with the best interests of the student as the main factor.

SALARY INFORMATION

Salaries are paid on the 15th of each month according to provisions of the teaching contract. When the 15th falls on a weekend or during a vacation during the school year, teachers will be paid on the school day immediately preceding the weekend of vacation. The following items are deducted from salaries: social security, Medicare, federal income tax, state income tax, retirement contributions, health insurance, privately owned annuities, and NEA/NSEA dues upon request.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

All employees shall, upon request, have access to his or her personnel file maintained by the District and shall have the right to attach a written response to any item in such file. The employee may, in writing, authorize any other person to have access to such file, which authorization shall be honored by the District. Such access and right to attach a written response shall not be granted with respect to letters of recommendation solicited by the employer which appear in the personnel file. No other person, except school officials while engaged in their professional duties, shall be granted access to such file, nor shall the contents thereof be divulged in any manner to any unauthorized person.

Complete transcripts of all college credits earned by each teacher must be on file in the school office. It is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain current transcripts in his or her file. If a teacher has earned enough college credits as defined in the negotiated agreement for horizontal movement on the salary schedule, it is the teacher's responsibility to furnish the District with an official transcript of such credits, according to the conditions specified in the negotiated agreement.

A current copy of each teacher's Nebraska teaching certificate must be on file in the school office.

INSURANCE

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Nebraska is the official health insurance carrier for the current school year.

CONTRACT PERIOD

All full-time teachers are under contract for 182 days of service, with at least 175 days of teaching. In accordance with the Negotiated Agreement, teaching contracts will be offered on or before the regular March board meeting of each year for the coming school year. Contracts must be returned by the regular April board meeting.

If a teacher resigns before a contract is completed, the Board of Education must act on the resignation before it becomes effective.

EXPENSES INCURRED IN SCHOOL BUSINESS

If a school vehicle is not available. Mileage will be paid to employees to use their own car for authorized school trips. Reimbursement will be at the current IRS allowance. Room and meal expenses for employees on school trips will also be paid.

DRESS CODE

Well-groomed teachers are more likely to command respect from students than those who neglect good grooming. All teachers are expected to dress in an appropriate manner for people of professional status. Sponsors of activities are expected to wear customary school attire, unless the activity is of such nature that occasional dress is deemed expedient and proper.

REPORTS

1. All teachers – withholding exemption certificate, retirement numbers or application, and health insurance forms – all on file in the office.
2. All teachers – certificates on file in the school office.
3. Homeroom teachers – attendance reports at the beginning of the day and immediately after lunch.
4. All teachers – inventory of room at the end of the year.

CURRICULUM-ASSESSMENTS

1. State Assessments.

Rock County Public Schools has adopted an assessment plan and has aligned the curriculum with the state approved content standards. The assessment plan includes a schedule and procedures for assessing success in achieving state standards.

Teachers are to clearly articulate the learning targets and align instruction to the learning targets within each of the content standards. Teachers are to give students instruction on the content prior to students being assessed on each content standard in order to provide learning opportunities for all students.

The assessments are to be conducted in accordance with the assessment plan schedule. Teachers are to conduct the assessments in a manner that assures it accurately assesses whether or not students are meeting the targets outlined by the content standards.

Assessment results are to be reported by the teachers in the manner and within the time directed by the administration or designee. The assessment data is to be used to meet state standards, to provide students and parents with information about student progress, to enhance school improvement planning, and to improve instruction. The assessment data is to be evaluated by teachers to monitor student learning and to improve instruction or terminate ineffective teaching practices to ensure students are being given the opportunity to meet the standards.

2. Achieving Valid Assessments.

Educators are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the assessments to ensure that assessments provide a valid measure of student progress and accomplishments. Educators are not to engage in any practice that may result in assessment results that do not reflect student learning, knowledge, skills or abilities in the area assessed.

For purposes of this policy, student assessments include both “standardized assessments” (including state assessments, norm referenced tests, and evaluations conducted for special education eligibility) and “coursework assessments” (e.g., classroom tests, quizzes, and other evaluative tools used to assign grades).

The following specific assessment expectations and rules apply:

- a. Integrity of the Assessment Instrument. The integrity of the assessment instrument is to be maintained.
 - i. Standardized Assessments. Standardized assessment instruments are not to be made available to students at any time before the student takes the assessment. The assessment instrument is to be maintained in a secure manner.
 - ii. Coursework Assessments. Coursework assessment instruments are to be periodically modified to keep the assessments current and prevent students from effectively using “test banks.” For coursework assessments that are given on a repeat basis to students at different times (e.g., a test that is given to students throughout the school day), the educator is to remind students to not share the content of the assessment with students who will be taking the assessment later.

b. Teaching for Success on Assessments.

It is appropriate for educators to prepare students to do well on assessments. This is to be accomplished in a manner that assures the assessment accurately reflects the student’s knowledge, and not simply test preparation.

- i. Teach the Content. Educators are to prepare students to do well on assessments by teaching the subject content. Educators are not to “teach to the test” by teaching based solely on the content of the assessment. The content is to be taught to the students over an appropriate amount of time prior to the assessment. “Cramming” assessment content just before the assessment is to be taken is not appropriate. Review of content previously taught is appropriate.
- ii. Practice Tests. Educators are to prepare students by teaching test taking skills independent of the subject matter being assessed. Educators are not to conduct reviews (drills) using earlier (no longer published) versions of the same test, using alternate (parallel) forms of the same published test, or using actual items from the current form of a standardized test that will be administered to students. Educators are not to conduct reviews (drills) using items of identical format (for example, multiple choice) to the exclusion of other formats.

c. Conditions for Successful Assessments.

- i. Communications. Educators are to communicate to students and parents when assessments will be administered, the purpose of the assessment and how the assessment results will be used. Educators are to motivate students to do their best on assessments. Educators are to read and be familiar with assessment administration directions in advance and communicate the rules to students accurately and clearly.
- ii. Climate. Educators are to have sufficient assessment materials available (e.g., No. 2 pencils, if needed). The classroom is to be arranged to allow comfortable seating. Distractions are to be eliminated. Educators in nearby classrooms are to be informed that the assessment is to be administered so noises from neighboring classrooms are kept at a minimum. Activities or arrangements are to be made for students who finish early so such students do not cause a distraction to other students still taking the assessment.
- iii. Security. Educators are to monitor students while administering assessments to ensure students are complying with standards of academic integrity. Students who violate standards of academic integrity are to be reported to the administration.

- d. Full Participation. Educators are to make efforts to have all eligible students take the assessments. The educator should develop a list of students who will be exempted from assessment and the reason for the exemption and submit the list for review and approval by the Principal.
- e. Assistance During Assessments.
 - i. Standardized Assessments. Educators are not to provide assistance to students while a standardized assessment is being administered except as provided for in a student's 504 Plan or IEP. This includes giving "hints," giving extra time, reading the tests to students or defining or pronouncing words for students, allowing students access to instructional material related to the content of the assessment (e.g., displaying a map during a social studies assessment) or allowing students access to mechanical aids (e.g., calculators).
 - ii. Coursework Assessments. For coursework assessments, students may be allowed access to instructional materials or mechanical aids only when all students being given the assessment are given the aids and use of the aids does not hinder the students from learning the content of the lesson.
- f. Student Answers. Assessments are to reflect the students' work as submitted by the students. During the assessments, educators are to monitor students to make sure directions are being followed (e.g., students are using a No. 2 pencil on all "bubble" sheet assessments and completely erase mistaken answers and extra marks on "bubble" sheet assessments). Educators are not to change answers on a student's assessment sheet or otherwise participate in the submission of false or misleading assessment results.

Violations of the rules and expectations set forth in this policy will be considered to be a breach of the District's standard of ethics and may result in disciplinary consequences. Educators are to report suspected violations of the expectation to the administration. The administration is to investigate and appropriately respond to violations of the expectations.

STUDENT RECORDS AND REPORTS

Teachers are responsible for recording necessary academic information in the cumulative records of each student in their homeroom. In the departmentalized grades, the teacher of a subject is to complete the cumulative record for that subject. Cumulative records are kept in the classrooms during the school year, but they are turned in to the office at the end of the school year.

Cumulative records for students at the High School are kept in the office.

Special education records, speech therapy records, accident reports, and discipline reports are maintained separately from the academic file.

Staff members are required to report to parents any significant change in a students' work (raising or lowering of a letter grade).

ACCIDENT REPORTS

Many accidents occur each year. All accidents of a serious nature, as determined by the individual teacher, must be reported to the principal, and an accident report completed. A copy of the report will be returned to the teacher(s) completing the report.

HEALTH SERVICES

All school personnel may administer first aid for many of the minor injuries. General first aid supplies will be kept in the office. If the injury appears to be serious, the student's parents will be notified to determine the disposition of the student.

Prescription medication will not be administered by school personnel without the written permission of the parent(s)/guardian. Medication must be in the original prescription container that clearly describes the dosage and intervals, and will be maintained in the office of the principal or secretary. The medication will be administered by the designated school staff member, who will record when medications are taken and will notify the parents of any adverse reaction.

Non-aspirin pain reliever will be administered to students after a call to the parent for the parent's approval.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

School personnel are constantly in the public eye. Our actions both in and out of school cause the public to form opinions of our abilities.

Good public relations are the responsibility of everyone associated with the school. Whenever it is possible, positive events or interesting happenings should be brought to the attention of the public. In addition, all teachers are encouraged to put news articles which will keep the public informed about the school in the Rock County Leader, with approval of the principal or superintendent.

Of course, most information about school is disseminated to the public through the students. School personnel should be aware of this in making sure that students understand why we must do certain things for the benefit of all students.

ORDERING PROCEDURE

ALL purchases must be approved by the superintendent. When supplies or textbooks must be ordered, a purchase order is required. Most of the textbooks and teaching supplies will have arrived by the opening of school. These items will be checked in and will be in the room at the beginning of the year.

Requisitions for teaching supplies and textbooks for the coming school year will be due in the office as requested by the superintendent.

LEAVE

Leave of Absence—All leaves of absence (excluding personal, sick, professional, maternity and bereavement) must be requested in writing and presented to the Board of Education.

Personal Leave—Each full-time employee at RCPS may have three days of Personal Leave per year. Such leave shall be arranged with the principal and/or superintendent. Faculty members are asked to provide the administration with 2 weeks prior notice and leave may be granted dependent upon substitute availability.

Sick Leave—Employees shall be entitled to absence without loss of pay for personal illness or for illness or death in the immediate family for a period of ten days in any one year, cumulative to 45 days. No part of the sick leave shall be granted to employees or used by them for any other purpose. The board reserves the right, in exceptional cases, to extend these provisions by a majority vote of the board.

Professional Leave—Will be granted at the discretion of the principal according to the provisions found in the Policy Manual.

Bereavement Leave—Will be granted by the principal or the Board of Education on an individual basis,

determined by the circumstances. Personal leave may be used to attend funerals for which bereavement leave is not granted.

Maternity Leave—The teacher must notify the principal as to pregnancy and request a leave of absence to begin at a mutually agreed upon time. The teacher will be allowed to use any unused personal leave, sick leave for the year, and accumulated sick leave to avoid loss of pay, if she desires to do so. Continuity of the instructional program will be a prominent factor in the length of the leave of absence.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. If the employee has a grievance he should first discuss the matter with his principal in an effort to resolve the problem.
2. If the employee is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance, he/she may file a written grievance with the local Teacher's Association Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee. (P.R.& R.)
3. If the committee feels that the grievance warrant further consideration, a request for a hearing with the superintendent may involve, in addition to the employee, a representative from the P.R.& R. committee and the principal, in an effort to solve the problem. If a decision is made, the superintendent will render his/her decision and his/her reasons for making it, in writing, to the aggrieved person with a copy to the P.R.& R. committee.
4. If the superintendent is unable to resolve the problem or the employee is not satisfied with the disposition of the problem, he/she may request, in writing, a hearing with the Board of Education. The board will agree to meet with the employee within 35 school days.
5. The board will set a time and place for the hearing. A representative of the P.R.& R. committee and the superintendent and/or principal may be invited to participate in the meeting if necessary. The board will render its decision, in writing, within 5 school days of the meeting.
6. If the employee chooses not to accept the decision of the Board of Education, the two parties will be at impasse and the Fact Finding Process shall be initiated.
7. Fact Finding Committee will consist of one member selected by the Board of Education, one member selected by the association, and a third by the two members. This Fact Finding Committee will hear and review matters relating to the dispute and shall render a written report of its decision. Such recommendations shall receive the good faith consideration of the parties as a method of settling the dispute.

LESSON PLANS

All teachers must have complete lesson plans and turn them in on a weekly basis to the principal.

FACULTY MEETINGS

Faculty meetings will be held Tuesday morning following the regular monthly board meeting. All teachers are to attend faculty meetings, unless excused by the principal.

ASSEMBLY PROGRAMS

Students will be permitted to attend assembly programs at the high school when the principal and teachers determine that some or all students may benefit from the program. All classes will attend assembly programs unless the principal and/or the classroom teacher feel the program content is inappropriate for a class.

In all cases with assembly programs, all teachers will supervise the students. One or two teachers or staff members will remain at the elementary school to supervise those students who do not attend assembly programs at the high school.

PARTIES

Classroom parties are to be kept to a minimum. Parties will be held throughout the school at Christmas time. Parties on any other day must be approved by the principal.

Student birthday parties will not be held; however, students wishing to bring treats for the class may do so, as long as treats are brought for every member of the class.

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips must be approved by the superintendent or principal. The teacher requesting the trip will be responsible for arranging transportation, places to tour, sponsors, and notifying the parents about the trip. Rules of the trip must be established prior to the trip in accordance with school rules and made known to the students.

CARE OF FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

It is to the credit of the Rock County Public Schools staff that the buildings, grounds, and equipment are in good condition. All members of the staff must continue to impress upon the students the importance of respect for all school property, and that destruction of property prevents others from its use and costs the taxpayers of the district hard-earned money.

Except in cases of unavoidable accidents, pupils are liable for all damages they do to school property, and the teachers are to report such damages to the principal or superintendent immediately. Whenever it is necessary to repair furniture or equipment, the principal or superintendent is to be notified.

Textbooks are a valuable commodity, and teachers must impress upon the students the need for proper care of books. New hardcover books should be covered to extend the life of the books. At the end of the school year, teachers are to examine books, and if there are damages, fines will be assessed.

ESU SERVICES

Rock County Public Schools takes advantage of many services from Educational Service Unit #17.

1. The media library provides many kinds of audio-visual aids for classroom use. Ordering of media materials is accomplished through the school librarian.
2. ESU #17 coordinates a cooperative purchasing program for school districts, and the Rock County Public Schools saves money on equipment and supplies through this program.
3. Other services available include speech therapy, health screenings, special education supervision and programs, psychological testing, and pre-school special education.

MONEY

Parents often wonder why students must bring money to school. In the lower grades, whenever it is necessary for the students to bring money to school, a note is to be sent home explaining the reason for the money and the amount needed.

When teachers order books from book clubs for the students, this money is to be counted and balanced with the order. All inaccurate orders will be returned to the teacher.

All checks, unless otherwise specified, are to be made out to the Rock County Public Schools.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Staff members are encouraged to attend extracurricular activities, which are conducted according to school policy. Coaches are responsible for supervision of participants at practice, games, and to and from away games. The band instructor is responsible for supervision of band students at school functions.

If a student must be dismissed from an activity prior to its scheduled conclusion, the sponsor should contact the student's parents prior to dismissing him/her.

MAIL

Mail will be distributed daily, unless something unforeseen develops. Teachers should check their mailboxes daily, and should also check the announcement board in the teacher workroom daily.

FACULTY BULLETINS

Faculty bulletins will be distributed when needed. Teachers are responsible for knowing what is in the bulletins, as the use of bulletins eliminates the need for frequent faculty meetings.

SMOKING

To promote the health and safety of all students, staff and patrons, the use of all tobacco products in all school buildings, in all school vehicles, rented or owned, and at all school-sponsored functions, whether within the school facilities or elsewhere, is prohibited. This ban extends to all employees and students attending school-sponsored athletic events, productions, classes, field trips, meetings, etc., whether within school facilities or elsewhere, as well as to all privately-sponsored functions held within the school facilities.

Sanctions which may be taken against an employee for non-compliance with this policy may be one or more of the following: A. An oral reprimand; B. A written reprimand to be placed in the personnel file; C. suspension with pay; D. Suspension without pay; E. Cancellation of employment; F. Non-renewal of employment.

PERSONAL BUSINESS

Teachers are not to conduct personal business during school hours. If it is necessary to make appointments after school, permission may be obtained from the principal to leave school before 3:45.

VISITORS

Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms. All visitors must report to the school office before proceeding to their destination. Students from other schools will not be allowed to visit the school unless they are former students or they will be enrolling in Rock County Public Schools.

Any teacher who has questions about a visitor or a visitor's purpose should contact the principal to make sure the visitor has notified the principal of the purpose.

SALESMEN

All salesmen must report to the office and provide necessary identification. A salesman who wishes to contact a teacher must do so outside of regular school hours for teachers or during a teacher's free period, if permission is given by the principal. Salesmen who do not abide by Board Policy will be asked to leave the school.

TELEPHONE CALLS

The school telephone is a business phone. Teachers will not be called out of regular classes unless it is urgent. Long distance calls by teachers should be kept to a minimum.

TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

If a teacher is aware of a classroom problem that another teacher is encountering, he/she should speak to the teacher having the difficulty and offer advice. If the problem persists, it should be presented to the principal. Remember that being a professional educator means that you must always consider the well-being of the children first.

PARENT NOTIFICATION OF SPECIAL EVENTS

When a student is to participate in a school-sponsored activity outside of the regular school day, the school sponsor of the activity should notify the parents of the student at least one week prior to the activity.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Conduct of a sexual nature, when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with student academic performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive, or unsafe or unwholesome environment, is prohibited. Use of any electronic means or medium for any interpersonal communication of a sexual or harassing nature is prohibited. Please refer to the Board Policy Manual for more information.

PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

The Rock County High School Board of Education will follow state law in negotiation procedures with employees.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

School employees are encouraged to:

1. Join educational associations whose programs are designed to improve the teacher's professional capabilities.
2. Work toward advanced college degrees to improve their teaching capabilities.

Professional leave must be approved by the administration.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH CREDIT

The Board of Education recognizes the need for continued professional growth on the part of the certificated employees. Nebraska Statute 79-12, 113 states [Every six years permanent certificated employees shall give evidence of professional growth. Six semester hours of college credit shall be accepted as evidence of professional growth or, in the alternative, such other activities as are approved by the school board, who may include, but are not limited to, educational travel, professional publications, or work on educational committees. The Board of Education will approve the following professional activities as evidence of professional growth by permanent certificated employees:

1. Six semester hours of college credit.
2. Other professional activities. To determine the number of professional growth credits, the following guideline shall be followed: For every fifteen (15) hours of class preparation time spent on the activity, one (1) professional growth credit shall be granted with the approval and verification of the superintendent.

Activities which will be accepted as professional growth include:

- a. Workshops
- b. Conventions
- c. Curriculum committees
- d. State Department committees (e.g., PPC, Chapter 1)
- e. Professional publications
- f. Educational travel
- g. Conferences on classroom instruction-related topics
- h. In-service programs
- i. Nebraska State Education Association convention, and other activities sponsored by the NSEA or other professional organizations which are related to classroom instruction and approved by the superintendent.
- j. Visitations to other schools
- k. Serving as cooperating teacher (supervising a student teacher)
- l. Teaching adult education, college credit, or summer classes
- m. Other activities approved by the Superintendent

At the request of the staff member, a review will be made of professional growth credits of each teacher for verification of permanent status. All professional growth credits obtained under the provisions of this policy which are approved by the superintendent shall be accepted by the Board of Education as evidence of professional growth for retention of permanent status.

The Board of Education delegates to the superintendent the authority to approve professional growth activities for professional growth credit, so long as compliance with this policy is maintained. The superintendent shall devise procedures and forms to implement the provisions of this policy.

TEACHER EVALUATION

All teachers shall be evaluated by the Principal/Superintendent at least once during the school year. Probationary teachers shall be evaluated at least once each semester, with a minimum of two total evaluations during the school year. All evaluations shall be in writing and shall follow room visitations. These visitations shall last for an entire instructional period. Format of evaluation forms is at the discretion of the principal and will be made available to the teacher prior to the time of the visitation.

TEACHER EVALUATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- (A) The purposes of teacher evaluation at Rock County High School shall be:
 1. To improve the performance of teachers and thus raise the quality of educational service to the students.
 2. To provide a basis for recommendations by the superintendent regarding the continued employment of teachers within the system.
- (B) The policy, procedures, and forms concerning staff evaluation shall be developed by the superintendent with input from the teaching staff. The teacher input will be provided by a committee of the certified

teaching staff. The board of education and State Department of Education shall have approved the policy, procedure and forms prior to implementation and shall approve all changes before they become effective.

(C) Definition of Terms for the Appraisal Process:

1. Average: Job performance is comparable with the norm in the profession, as viewed by the evaluator.
2. Needs improvement: Job performance is slightly below the norm in the profession, as viewed by the evaluator.
3. Unsatisfactory: Job performance is substantially below the norm in the profession, as viewed by the evaluator.
4. Above Average: Job performance is above the norm in the profession, as viewed by the evaluator.
5. Outstanding: Job performance is considerably above the norm in the profession, as viewed by the evaluator.

(D) Evaluation Schedule:

Each probationary teacher will be evaluated at least *two* times per year and at least once each semester, following an observation. The *two* observations will be for at least the entire instructional period. At least one of the observations will be an announced observation.

Each tenured teacher will be evaluated at least one time per year following an observation.

Each coach will be formally evaluated at least one time during the season of each sport they coach.

(E) Teacher Performance Improvement: If a teacher is evaluated as "Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" on the Teacher Evaluation Form, the teacher will be given written directions concerning method(s) to improve his/her performance and a time line for implementing the methods.

(F) Evaluator Training: The evaluator must possess a valid Nebraska Administrative Certificate. The evaluator is encouraged to attend the in-service provided by Educational Service Unit #17 concerning teacher evaluations. Also, the evaluator is encouraged to attend other professional classes, meetings, etc., concerning teacher evaluation.

(G) Teacher Contracts: Any teacher who receives a rating of "Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" in one or more areas on Teacher Evaluation Form is expected to remedy the observed deficiencies. If the teacher does not satisfactorily remedy the observed deficiencies, the evaluator may recommend contract termination or contract non-renewal. This policy and its corresponding rules, regulations, and forms will not restrict the Board of Education from executing their statutory rights concerning teacher contract termination or contract non-renewal.