

**Valentine Community  
Schools  
Staff Handbook  
2023-2024**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook provides information to persons who are employed by the school district and are referred to in this handbook as employees, staff, or staff members. It is designed to provide practical information about the daily operation of the schools in the district and contains building and district directories, safety and emergency information, as well as district policies and procedures. Each staff member should carefully review this handbook. The administration and the board of education continually review policies and procedures, so staff members should discuss comments, concerns, or suggestions about this handbook with their building principal or another member of the administrative staff.

This handbook does not create a “contract” of employment. Staff positions and assignments that do not require a teaching certificate or are not otherwise governed by the teacher tenure laws may be ended or changed on an at-will basis notwithstanding anything in this handbook or any other publication or statement, except a contract approved by the board of education.

Many situations may arise that are not covered by this handbook. In those instances, staff members should use their own good judgment or consult with the administration. If any information contained in this handbook conflicts with board policy or state statute, the policy or statute will govern.

The provisions in this handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Superintendent and the Board of Education. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in the handbook. These updates should be kept within the handbook so that all procedures can be kept up to date. If you have any questions regarding this handbook, please ask your supervisor or the Superintendent for assistance.

Your suggestions about ways to improve the school are welcome and will always be considered.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Name: Mr. Mike Halley  
Title: Superintendent  
Address: 431 N Green Street, Valentine NE 69201  
Telephone: (402)376-1780  
E-mail: [mhalley@vcsbadger.net](mailto:mhalley@vcsbadger.net)

For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, visit <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area or call 1-800-421-3481.

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

## **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS**

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

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

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

An employee must notify his/her supervisor of any conviction of a criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace within five days. The failure to report such a conviction will be grounds for dismissal. If the employee convicted of such an offense is engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the provisions of a federal grant, the district shall notify the grant agency within 10 days of receiving notice of a conviction from the affected employee or of receiving actual notice of such a conviction.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING ALL STAFF**

### **Accidents and Injuries**

Staff must inform the building office immediately of all accidents and/or injuries to students or staff, and complete the appropriate accident form that is available from the office secretary. The accident form must be returned to the office within twenty-four hours.

### **Activity Accounts and Fundraising**

Activity accounts are handled through the superintendent's office. No student or sponsor may make any purchase without a signed purchase order. **Purchases made without permission are the personal obligation and responsibility of the purchaser.**

The superintendent or his/her designee is responsible for authorizing any fundraising on the part of student activities. **No fundraising may occur without express administrative permission.**

### **Activity Tickets**

Activity tickets may be issued to staff through the building offices. Staff members may earn an activity ticket at no cost if they volunteer to assist with activity supervision. Staff members interested in pursuing that option should contact the Activities Director.

### **Agents, Salesmen and Other Business Representatives**

All business representatives calling on school matters must obtain permission from the superintendent or building principal before conferring with staff. Staff must determine whether the business representative has been granted permission before discussing business matters. Classroom teachers may not interrupt class work to confer with such representatives.

Staff may not use school time or school facilities for any personal activity for personal financial gain or confer with any business representative for personal business during school time.

### **Announcements and Circulars**

No announcements shall be made before any school group without authorization of the principal or superintendent.

Any circulars or advertising displayed within the school shall have the approval of the building principal or superintendent before posting.

### **Board Policies**

The board of education has adopted policies that govern the operation of the school district. A complete policy manual is available on the district's website or in the main administrative office. These manuals will be updated as the board adopts new policies or modifies existing policies. In particular, the 4000 series deals with policies that affect personnel. Additionally, the



Board has authorized the Superintendent and his or her designee to adopt rules and directives regarding the conduct of students, staff, and other persons. Many of these rules and directives are published in the Student Handbook, Staff Handbook, and Activity Handbook, respectively. Each of these handbooks are available on the district's website and in the main administrative office. **By signing the attached handbook receipt page, you agree that you have read and understood those policies, their application to you, and that you have had an opportunity to discuss any questions with the administration.**

### **Child Abuse**

School employees who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect or observe a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in child abuse or neglect will report the suspected abuse or neglect according to the following procedure.

1. Any school employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the suspicion to the building principal immediately. Employees shall also personally report or cause a report to be made to local law enforcement or to the Department of Health and Human Services.
2. When the principal makes a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, he/she shall inform the employee(s) who made the initial report.
3. Nothing in the paragraph above shall hinder a school employee from fulfilling his/her/their obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect if he, she or they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.
4. Any doubt or question in reporting such cases shall be resolved in the favor of reporting the suspected abuse or neglect. Consultation between the administrator and school employee is encouraged, keeping in mind that prompt reporting is essential.

### **Complaint Procedure**

Good communication helps to resolve many misunderstandings and disagreements. This complaint procedure applies to board members, patrons, students, and school staff, unless the staff member is subject to a different grievance procedure pursuant to policy or contract. Individuals who have a complaint should discuss their concerns with appropriate school personnel in an effort to resolve problems. When such efforts do not resolve matters satisfactorily, including matters involving discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status,

disability, or age, a complainant should follow the procedures set forth below.

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

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

1. The first step is for the complainant to speak directly to the person(s) with whom the complainant has a concern. For example, a parent who is unhappy with a classroom teacher should initially discuss the matter with the teacher. However, the complainant should skip the first step if complainant believes speaking directly to the person would subject complainant to discrimination or harassment.
2. The second step is for the complainant to speak to the building principal, Title IX/504 coordinator, superintendent of schools, or president of the board of education, as set forth below.
  - a) Complaints about the operation, decisions, or personnel within a building should be submitted to the principal of the building.
  - b) Complaints about the operations of the school district or a building principal should be submitted in writing to the superintendent of schools.
  - c) Complaints about the superintendent of schools should be submitted in writing to the president of the board of education.
  - d) Complaints involving discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, or age may also be submitted at any time during the complaint procedure to the School District's Title IX/504 coordinator. Complaints involving discrimination or harassment may also be submitted at any time to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education: by email at [OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov); by telephone at (816) 268-0550; or by fax at (816) 268-0599.
3. When a complainant submits a complaint to an administrator or to the Title IX/504 coordinator, the administrator or Title IX/504 coordinator shall promptly and thoroughly investigate the complaint, and shall:
  - a) Determine whether the complainant has discussed the matter with the staff member involved.

- 1) If the complainant has not, the administrator or Title IX/504 coordinator will urge the complainant to discuss the matter directly with that staff member, if appropriate.
    - 2) If the complainant refuses to discuss the matter with the staff member, the administrator or Title IX/504 coordinator shall, in his or her sole discretion, determine whether the complaint should be pursued further.
  - b) Strongly encourage the complainant to reduce his or her concerns to writing.
  - c) Interview the complainant to determine:
    - 1) All relevant details of the complaint;
    - 2) All witnesses and documents which the complainant believes support the complaint;
    - 3) The action or solution which the complainant seeks.
  - d) Respond to the complainant. If the complaint involved discrimination or harassment, the response shall be in writing and shall be submitted within 180 days after the administrator or Title IX/504 coordinator received the complaint.
4. If either the complainant or the accused party is not satisfied with the administrator's or the Title IX/504 coordinator's decision regarding a complaint may appeal the decision to the superintendent.
  - a) This appeal must be in writing.
  - b) This appeal must be received by the superintendent no later than ten (10) business days from the date the administrator or Title IX/504 coordinator communicated his/her decision to the complainant.
  - c) The superintendent will investigate as he or she deems appropriate. However, all matters involving discrimination or harassment shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated.
  - d) Upon completion of this investigation, the superintendent will inform the complainant in writing of his or her decision. If the complaint involved discrimination or harassment, the superintendent shall submit the decision within 180 days after the superintendent received complainant's written appeal.

5. If either the complainant or the accused party is not satisfied with the superintendent's decision regarding a complaint may appeal the decision to the board.
  - a) This appeal must be in writing.
  - b) This appeal must be received by the board president no later than ten (10) business days from the date the superintendent communicated his/her decision to the complainant.
  - c) This policy allows, but does not require the board to receive statements from interested parties and witnesses relevant to the complaint appeal. However, all matters involving discrimination or harassment shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated.
  - d) The board will notify the complainant in writing of its decision. If the complaint involved discrimination or harassment, the board shall submit its decision within 180 days after it received complainant's written appeal.
  - e) There is no appeal from a decision of the board.
6. When a formal complaint about the superintendent of schools has been filed with the president of the board, the president shall promptly and thoroughly investigate the complaint, and shall:
  - a) Determine whether the complainant has discussed the matter with the superintendent.
    - 1) If the complainant has not, the board president will urge the complainant to discuss the matter directly with the superintendent, if appropriate.
    - 2) If the complainant refuses to discuss the matter with the superintendent, the board president shall, in his or her sole discretion, determine whether the complaint should be pursued further.
  - b) Strongly encourage the complainant to reduce his or her concerns to writing.
  - c) Determine, in his or her sole discretion, whether to place the matter on the board agenda for consideration at a regular or special meeting.
  - d) Respond to the complainant. If the complaint involved discrimination or harassment, the response shall be in writing

and shall be submitted within 180 days after the president received the complaint.

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

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

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

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

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

**Bad Faith or Serial Filings.** The purpose of the complaint procedure is to resolve complaints at the lowest level possible within the chain of command. Complaints filed (a) without a good faith intention to attempt to resolve the issues raised; (b) for the purpose of adding administrative burden; (c) at a volume unreasonable to expect satisfactory resolution; or (d) for purposes inconsistent with the

efficient operations of the district may be dismissed by the superintendent without providing final resolution other than noting the dismissal. There is no appeal from dismissals made pursuant to this section

### **Computers and the Internet: Acceptable Use by Staff**

Internet access is an important tool for communicating, keeping up-to-date with current developments in education, and for conducting research to enhance management, teaching, and learning skills. Staff members must refer to and comply with board policy regarding Staff Internet and Computer Use. A copy of this policy is attached below. Staff should also refer to and comply with the board policy regarding Staff and District Social Media Use. Staff should also refer to the district's policy on Staff and District Social Media Use.

### **Conflict of Interest**

All staff members are subject to the board's policy governing conflict of interest. That policy provides, in part, that no employee shall solicit or accept anything of value, including a gift, loan, contribution, reward, or promise of future employment based on an agreement that the vote, official action, or judgment of the employee would thereby be influenced.

### **Contact Information**

Staff are required to keep the district informed of any change in their name, address, telephone or other contact information. Contact the building secretary to report a change.

### **Copyright and Fair Use**

The school district complies with federal copyright laws. Staff members must comply with copyright laws when using school equipment or working on behalf of the district. Federal law prohibits the unauthorized reproduction of works of authorship, regardless of the medium in which they were created.

The "fair use" doctrine allows limited reproduction of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. "Fair use" of a copyrighted work includes reproduction for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research. Staff who are unsure whether their proposed reproduction of copyrighted material constitutes "fair use" should consult with their building principal, review the school district's copyright compliance policy, and review *Reproduction of Copyrighted Works by Educators and Librarians* from the U.S. Copyright Office found at <https://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ21.pdf> and *Copyright for Students* found at <https://www.whoishostingthis.com/resources/student-copyright/>. You can find more information on copyright compliance requirements and permitted uses from the U.S. Copyright Office and the Library of Congress at the

following

site:

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/copyright.html>.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment is the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for disapproved behavior, and is prohibited by law. Some physical contact is inevitable, and most of it is appropriate. Corporal punishment does not include the use of physical force that is reasonable and necessary to (1) protect school employees; (2) protect students or property; or (3) remove a student from a situation that endangers the student, persons, or property. Staff members should promptly report any event that required the use of physical force to their building principal.

### **Crisis Response Team**

Any staff member appointed by the district administration will serve on the Crisis Response Team as outlined in the board policies. The Crisis Response Team serves a vital role in supporting the district's staff and students. It is the responsibility of the appointed staff member to discuss with the district administration any circumstances that may affect the staff member's ability to perform the tasks required by board policy.

### **Disability Leave (Short-Term)**

Short-term disability leave will be treated in the manner required by state and federal law and consistent with the negotiated agreement with the school district's local education association. Short-Term Disability leave will run concurrently with FMLA leave.

### **Discrimination and Harassment**

The school district prohibits discrimination and harassment based upon or related to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, marital status, disability, age or any other unlawful basis that (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment, (2) has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an employee's school performance, or (3) otherwise adversely affects an employee's employment opportunities. Employees who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their disability should contact the following Section 504 Coordinator : VES – Counselor Angela Jordan at [ajordan@vcsbadger](mailto:ajordan@vcsbadger), VMS – Counselor JJ Thorpe at [jjthorpe@vcsbadger](mailto:jjthorpe@vcsbadger), and VHS Principal Andy Cronin, [acronin@vcsbadger.net](mailto:acronin@vcsbadger.net). Employees who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their sex should contact the following Title IX Coordinator: Mrs. Cristen Witte at (402)376-3237 or [cwitte@vcsbadger.net](mailto:cwitte@vcsbadger.net) or in person at school. Employees who believe that they have been the subject of any other unlawful discrimination or harassment should contact Mrs. Cristen Witte at (402)376-3237 or [cwitte@vcsbadger.net](mailto:cwitte@vcsbadger.net) or in person at school. Employees may report discrimination or harassment to any staff member who will then

forward it on to the appropriate coordinator or administrator. The staff member will follow school district policies to respond to the report.

### **Driving (both school and personal vehicles)**

Staff members who drive school vehicles or volunteer to use their personal automobile to transport students must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance. Staff members will be provided a Driver's Certification form to verify this information. Staff members who drive school vehicles or transport students in their personal vehicles are responsible for following safe driving practices, including use of seat belts by all occupants, and are responsible for any injury or accident. Staff members are not to use cell phones while driving a school vehicle or while transporting students. Please see the school district's policy on school vehicle use for further information.

Drivers for the school district must be free from drug and alcohol use or abuse. The school district will test drivers as permitted under state and federal law and in accordance with board policy.

### **Dress Code**

Staff should dress in a manner that reflects the honorable profession of education. Certified staff, para-educators and office staff should generally dress in business casual attire. Custodial, maintenance and transportation staff should dress in attire appropriate to the work they are performing.

The attire worn by staff members conveys an important image to students and the general public. The appearance of professional staff members shall be appropriate to their assigned duties and indicative of their professional standing in the school and community.

Certified staff, para-educators, and office staff should generally dress in business casual attire that is clean and professional.

The following are examples of unprofessional attire which should not be worn by classroom staff during the traditional school day, when students or visitors are in attendance, or when the employee is supervising, directing, or coaching students when the public is in attendance:

- For men: shirts without collars, unless the shirt can be deemed professional by other standards.
- Athletic wear, including sweat, jogging and wind suits, except when teaching a physical education activity in the gymnasium, on a playing field, or at athletic or other activity practices.
- Shorts, except when teaching physical education class or at athletic or other activity practices.
- Blue jeans, except at athletic or other activity practices, or on days considered to be "dress down" days.
- Hats, except when worn outside for sun coverage.
- Rubber soled 'flip flop' thong sandals.



- Any attire which is excessively wrinkled or torn, so that it is no longer neat and professional.
- Any attire which is immodest or may distract other employees or students in the learning environment.

Custodial, maintenance, and transportation staff should dress in attire appropriate to the work they are performing.

The superintendent or principal shall maintain the discretion to make determinations on staff dress and appearance. Administrators may temporarily suspend all or a portion of the dress code when other factors support a lower dress expectation for school employees (e.g., special “casual days” or field days). Any violation of school policy and rules may result in disciplinary action.

### **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

School district administrators who suspect that drugs or alcohol may be present in a staff member’s system may require the staff member to provide a body fluid or breath sample as provided in Nebraska law. Staff members who refuse a lawful directive to provide a body fluid or breath sample may be subject to disciplinary or administrative action by the employer, including denial of continued employment.

### **Electronic Communication While Driving**

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

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

### **Expenses**

The board of education will reimburse staff for all approved expenses incurred in attending to school business. Reimbursement for mileage, supplies, overnight travel expense, and credit course reimbursement fees are processed on an expense report form that is available from each building secretary. Appropriate receipts must be attached.

To be reimbursed for an item or for personal car use, staff members must complete a reimbursement claim form, attach receipts and submit it to the Superintendent for approval.

All claims for reimbursement must be approved by the board, so some delay is probable. Mileage reimbursement will be denied if a school vehicle was available.

### **Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)**

Qualified employees will be provided leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as provided in board policy.

### **In-School Communication**

Every staff member will be assigned a mailbox in the building where he or she works. Staff members are expected to check their mailboxes for messages in the morning upon arrival at school, at lunch time, and at the end of the day before departing.

A great deal of information is distributed to staff via the school's e-mail system. Each staff member should check his or her e-mail account frequently throughout the school day. Staff members are allowed to use their school e-mail accounts for a moderate amount of personal e-mail correspondence. However, sending or receiving personal e-mail during class time is prohibited, regardless of whether that personal e-mail is received on the staff member's school e-mail account or a personal account.

### **Intellectual Property**

All written or artistic works, instructional materials, inventions, procedures, ideas, innovations, systems, programs, or other work product created or developed by any employee in the course and scope of performance of his or her employment duties on behalf of the district, whether published or not, shall be the exclusive property of the district. The district has the sole right to sell, license, assign, or transfer any and all right, title, or interest in and to such property.

### **Jury and Witness Duty Leave**

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

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

### **Keys**

Staff will not lend or have any duplicate keys made of any school key. Staff will make sure all doors are locked when they enter or leave the building

other than regular school hours and are responsible for setting the security system after hours.

Staff members are responsible at all times for all keys issued to them and must keep their keys in a secure location or on the employee's person. Each classroom teacher must check that the doors and windows in his or her room are closed and locked at the end of the school day. Staff must report lost or stolen keys to the building principal immediately.

### **Maintenance & Cleaning Request Forms**

Staff members should fill out maintenance requests forms just as soon as they need or see a maintenance problem. These forms must be turned into the building principal or superintendent.

### **Meals Program**

Staff may take advantage of meals offered through the district's food service program. Staff may purchase meals from the school cafeteria for the current adult rate per meal. The meal price includes one carton of milk. Extra cartons cost .50 cents. Staff members must deposit funds in their lunch accounts before purchasing meals. Staff members will not be allowed to run a deficit in their lunch accounts.

### **Military Leaves of Absence**

Leaves of absence without pay for military or Reserve duty are granted to all employees as required by law. An employee who is called to active military duty or to Reserve or National Guard training or who volunteers for the same should submit copies of the military orders to the Superintendent as soon as is practicable. An administrator, at his or her discretion, may require an employee who requests leave under the Nebraska Family Military Leave Act to provide certification from the proper military authority to verify the employee's eligibility for the leave requested.

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

### **Milk Expression**

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

### **News and Press Releases**

Positive media coverage of the school district and its activities is good for the school, its staff, and its students. Staff should endeavor to establish and maintain cordial relationships with local media outlets.

Activity sponsors and other staff who are involved in newsworthy activity

should submit typed press releases to the office for distribution to the media when noteworthy events have occurred. Coaches must communicate with local TV, radio, and print media promptly after matches or games to disseminate the results.

Communicating with the public, keeping the public informed, and public relations with the community are important tasks. News of important and/or interesting events and activities are usually welcomed by the newspapers.

### **Obligations Related to American Civics Instruction**

All staff members shall be familiar with, and comply with, the requirements of state law, board policy, and district curriculum to properly instruct students regarding American Civics, Social Studies, American History, and appropriate patriotic exercises on particular days of the year. Neglect of any such responsibilities by any employee may be considered just cause for dismissal.

### **Outside Employment**

No full-time staff member may accept any other employment or carry on any business or activity for profit that interferes with the complete and competent discharge of his or her responsibilities to the school district.

### **Political Activities**

District employees retain all rights of citizenship, including, but not limited to, engaging in political activities. An employee of the District may participate in the political process, including seeking an elective office, provided that the staff member does not campaign on school property during working hours, and provided all other legal requirements are met. The District assumes no obligation beyond making such opportunities available.

While the District supports its employees by allowing them to exercise their rights, any impact on the employee's ability to perform his or her functions as required by the district is grounds for discipline. For further guidance regarding political conduct on school grounds, contact the superintendent and consult the board policies.

### **Pregnant or Parenting Students**

The school district encourages students who are pregnant or parenting are encouraged to continue to participate in the district's educational and extracurricular programs. Students who anticipate deviations from their regular school experience or accrue absences due to pregnancy or parenting have been told to notify their building principal as early as possible to discuss their educational programming. The building principal will work with the student and appropriate district staff to develop a plan to assist the student in participating in district curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Such a plan may include:

1. If the student cannot regularly attend classes, the provision of online courses;
2. The arrangement of meeting times with teachers;
3. If the student has not identified appropriate childcare, the identification of child care providers that meet statutory requirements for quality and care; and
4. All other curricular adjustments, modifications, and means of supplementing classroom attendance deemed appropriate by the school administrators including, but not limited to, modification of attendance policies.

### **Professional Boundaries Between Staff and Students**

All district employees must follow board policy when interacting with students in any way. School district employees are responsible for conducting themselves professionally and for teaching and modeling high standards of behavior and civic values, both at and away from school. District employees must be aware of professional boundaries between students and staff, and they must never blur the boundaries. These standards of behavior apply to social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., along with communications and interactions of any kind between staff and students.

Examples of unprofessional misconduct include: inappropriate sexual communications or interactions with students, meeting with students in private outside of school, and intruding on a student's personal space. These are a few examples of inappropriate behavior, not an exhaustive list. For further guidance, refer to the district's policies regarding professionalism and staff-student interactions.

Any teacher or student who witnesses or knows information about a district employee violating board policy should report the violation to the district administration *immediately*. Minor violations and questionable violations should be reported within 24 hours.

A violation of board policies for professionalism will form the basis for employee discipline up to and including termination or cancellation of employment, filing a report with law enforcement officials, and filing a report with the Commissioner of Education.

### **Professional Growth**

All certificated staff must accumulate professional growth points based on the professional growth policy adopted by the board of education. All staff shall be provided opportunities for development of increased competence beyond that which they may attain through the performance of their assigned duties.

In addition to this requirement, the superintendent and administrative team will select in-service programming to provide additional professional growth

activities for certified and classified staff.

### **Purchasing**

All requisitions for books and school supplies must be filed with the building principal. The requisition must include the name of the article being requested, where it may be purchased, how many articles are required and their cost. Requisition forms are available from the office. Orders should not be placed until the district office has issued a printed purchase order. Once an order has been received, the staff member must notify the building secretary so payment can be processed. Failure to follow the procedure for requisitions may prevent the staff member from receiving the items requisitioned. All orders or supplies must be authorized by the administration. Staff may be personally liable for any orders placed without such authorization.

When routine supplies are needed for immediate use, staff should contact the building secretary. When it is necessary to make a special or emergency requisition for supplies or equipment, staff should contact the principal for the necessary forms. The superintendent will either approve or disapprove the request through the principal.

### **Records and Reports**

Staff members must refer to and comply with Board Policy 5016 regarding the management and maintenance of student records.

All staff members shall promptly furnish the administration with any information relating to their professional training, experience, activities or work required for reports to county, state or federal officials or for official school records. Personal information will be treated confidentially by school officials.

### **Recordings of Students and Classrooms**

Staff members may make audio and video recordings of classroom instruction and school activities upon authorization of the superintendent or supervising administrator. Staff should refer to Board Policy 5063 for information on recording by students.

### **School Calendar**

The official school calendar is maintained in each building office. All activities and events must be scheduled and approved by the building principal and/or activities director. To avoid conflict, a sponsor should not call a meeting of any activity until the schedule has been checked and the meeting approved by the office.

### **School Property**

School property is not to be lent to individuals except by permission of the superintendent or building principal.

Staff or groups who wish to use school facilities should make requests to the building principal as early as possible so that they may be placed on the school calendar.

Staff must inform the building principal of any school property that needs repair or that is lost, stolen, or damaged beyond repair. Matters regarding custodial service in the building should be handled through the principal's office.

### **School Vehicle Use**

The transportation of students in a pupil transportation vehicle is governed by the rules of the Nebraska Department of Education and the district's safe pupil transportation plan or safety and security plan. School district employees, board members, and other elected or appointed school district officials who are not transporting children are authorized to use a school district vehicle to travel to a designated location or to their home when the primary purpose of the travel serves a school district purpose. Staff should refer to Board Policy 4046 for information on the use of school vehicles.

### **Security**

Each staff member is responsible for the security of his/her own classroom or work area. Staff must lock the doors and windows of their classrooms and/or other work areas each night.

Staff members who use the building after it has been locked by the custodian or on weekends are responsible for turning off all lights and locking all windows and doors that they or students under their supervision may have used.

Under no circumstances are pupils to be allowed in the building before or after school hours without faculty supervision. Keys to any school areas are not to be loaned to students under any circumstances.

### **Smoking on School Premises or at School Activities**

Smoking, including the use of cigarettes, cigars, or other tobacco or tobacco derivative products; vapor products or electronic nicotine delivery systems; alternative nicotine products; or any other such look-alike or imitation product, is permitted on school property only in specifically designated areas.

### **Sniffer (Drug) Dogs**

The administration is authorized to use sniffer dogs to minimize the presence of illicit items on school grounds. Students and staff are specifically notified that:

1. Lockers may be sniffed by sniffer dogs at any time.

2. Vehicles parked on school property may be sniffed by sniffer dogs at any time.
3. Classrooms and other common areas may be sniffed by sniffer dogs at any time students and staff are not present.
4. If contraband of any kind is found, the student or staff member shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Social Media Usage by Staff**

Social media is an important tool for communicating, keeping up-to-date with current developments in education, and for conducting research to enhance management, teaching, and learning skills. The district also uses social media accounts to provide information to district stakeholders. All staff members must refer to and comply with the board's policies regarding Staff Internet and Computer Use and District Social Media Use. This policy applies to both personal and school-affiliated social media use. Staff members who are uncertain about the applicability of Board Policy to a particular situation must confer with their supervising administrator prior to posting on social media.

### **Solicitation and Distribution of Merchandise**

In the interest of maintaining a proper school environment and preventing interference school purposes, employees may not sell merchandise, solicit financial contributions, solicit, or distribute literature or printed material for any non-school related cause during working time or on school grounds except as approved by the administration.

### **Staff Room**

The staff room is maintained for the exclusive use and convenience of the staff. It is not for student use and staff members should not hold student conferences there. Each staff member will assume responsibility in keeping the staff room in an orderly and presentable condition.

### **Student Interviews**

Employees shall refer any police officer, child protective service worker, or other similar individual seeking to speak to or interview a student to an administrator.

### **Telephones**

School telephones are maintained for the primary purpose of conducting school business. Staff members should limit their use of school phones to brief conversations. Teachers will not be called to the telephone during class time except in the case of an emergency.

Staff members may not use personal cell phones to make or receive calls or to send or receive text messages during instructional time or while



supervising students.

## **Threat Assessment and Response**

The board of education is committed to providing a safe environment for members of the school community. Students, staff and patrons are urged to immediately report any statements or behavior that makes the observer fearful or uncomfortable about the safety of the school environment.

### **1. Definitions**

- a. A **threat** is an expression of a willful intent to physically or sexually harm someone or to damage property in a way that indicates that an individual poses a danger to the safety of school staff, students or other members of the school community.
  - i. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means.
  - ii. A **transient threat** is an expression of anger or frustration that can be quickly or easily resolved.
  - iii. A **substantive threat** is an expression of serious intent to harm others which includes, but is not limited to, any threat which involves a detailed plan and means.
- b. A **threat assessment** is a fact-based process emphasizing an appraisal of observed (or reasonably-observable) behaviors to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations, to assess them and to manage/address them. Threat assessment is the process of identifying and responding to serious threats in a systematic, data-informed way.
  - i. The threat assessment process is distinct from student disciplinary procedures. The mere fact that the district is conducting a threat assessment does not by itself necessitate suspension, expulsion or emergency exclusion without complying with state law and board policy related governing those actions.
  - ii. The threat assessment process is distinct from specialized instruction which a student with a disability may receive from the school district. The school district will not change a student's educational placement as that term is used in the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act *solely* as part of a threat assessment.

## **2. Obligation to Report Threatening Statements or Behaviors.**

All staff and students must report any threatening statements or behavior to a member of the administration. Staff and students must make such report regardless of the nature of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person(s) who were threatened or who were the focus of the threatening behavior. Staff and students must also make such reports regardless of where or when the threat was made or the threatening behavior occurred.

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

## **3. Threat Assessment Team**

The threat assessment team (team) shall consist of the superintendent of schools, building principal(s), and local law enforcement. Not every team member need participate in every threat assessment. If the threat has been made by or is directed towards, a student with a disability, the threat assessment team must include a staff member who is knowledgeable about special education services or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate. Neither the student nor their student's family members are part of the threat assessment team.

The team is responsible for investigating all reported threats to school safety, evaluating the significance of each threat, and devising an appropriate response. The threat assessment team shall work closely with the crisis team in planning for crisis situations. The threat assessment team shall be familiar with mental health resources available to students, staff and patrons and shall collaborate with local mental health service providers as appropriate.

## **4. Threat Assessment Investigation and Response**

When a threat is reported, the school administrator shall initiate an initial inquiry/triage and, in consultation with members of the threat assessment team, make a determination of the seriousness of the threat as expeditiously as possible. The school administrator must contact law enforcement if the administrator believes that an individual poses a clear and immediate threat of serious violence.

If there is no reasonably apparent imminent threat present or once such an imminent threat is contained, the threat assessment team will meet to evaluate and respond to the threatening behavior. The team may, but is not required to, review the following types of information:

- Review of the threatening behavior and/or communication;
- Interviews with the individuals involved including students, staff members, and family members as necessary and/or appropriate;

- Review of school and other records for any prior history or interventions with the students involved;
- Any other investigatory methods that the team determines to be reasonable and useful.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the team will determine what, if any, response to the threat is appropriate. The team is authorized to disclose the results of its investigation to law enforcement and to the target(s) of any threatened acts. The team may refer the individual of concern to the appropriate school administrator for consequences under the school's student discipline policy or, if appropriate, report the results of its investigation to the student's individualized education plan team.

Regardless of threat assessment activities, disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement will occur consistent with board policy and Nebraska law.

## **5. Communication with the Public about Reported Threats**

The team will keep members of the school community appropriately informed about substantive threats and about the team's response to those threats. This communication may include oral announcements, written communication sent home with students, or communication through print or broadcast media. However, the team will not reveal the identity of the individual of concern or of any target(s) of threatened violence unless permitted by law.

## **6. Coordination with the Crisis Team After Resolution of Threat**

The threat assessment team will confer with the district's crisis team after a threat has been investigated to provide the crisis team with information that the crisis team may use in assessing or revising the district's All-Hazard School Safety Plan.

### **Ticket Taking**

**Staff members who take tickets during at least two events per year will be provided with an activity ticket at no cost.** Staff members who coach a sport may take tickets at an event they do not coach. Staff members who are unavailable to take tickets at the event they are assigned to work must find their own replacements and notify the activities director and/or building principal of who will be taking their place.

### **Transportation Request Forms**

Staff members must complete transportation request forms as soon as they know they need school-provided transportation to allow the activities director adequate time to schedule drivers and vehicles.

### **Visitors**

Staff should welcome members of the public who wish to visit school, but should ensure that visitors follow the district's requirements.

All visitors must report to the building office before visiting any classroom or other areas of the building.

Visitors must comply with the following guidelines:

- if a visitor wishes to observe a specific skill or subject, he or she will be asked to observe during a specified time period
- children under the age of 10 years must be accompanied by a parent or guardian
- all visitors must have the prior approval of the principal or superintendent
- salespeople and other such agents will not be allowed to solicit staff members during school hours
- visitors must wear the visitor's badge supplied by the building office

### **Wage and Salary Payments**

Staff members are paid on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. The district provides direct deposit of paychecks to designated financial institutions. Otherwise, paychecks will be delivered personally at school or mailed to the address on file in the district office. Staff who wish to activate or modify their direct deposits or who wish to have paychecks mailed to a different address must contact the district office.

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

Staff members, by their signature on the acknowledgement page of this handbook, authorize the school district to withhold such sums from their paychecks as necessary to cover property damage, cash shortages or other amounts owed to the school district by the employee.

### **Weather-Related Closings**

If school is called off because of bad weather or for any other reason, it will be announced on the local radio station and automated messaging system.

Parents may decide to keep their children at home in inclement weather because of personal circumstances. Students absent because of severe weather when school is in session will be marked absent. Staff members

should treat the absence like any other absence for legitimate causes provided parents properly notify the school of their decision. Parents may pick up their children in inclement weather (except in case of a tornado) at any time during the school day. Students will not normally be dismissed from school during severe weather on the basis of a telephone request.

### **Workplace Searches**

To safeguard the property and interests of our students, employees, and patrons; to help prevent the possession, sale, and use of illegal drugs on school grounds, and in keeping with the spirit and intent of the district's drug-free workplace policy and other policies, the school district reserves the right to question employees and all other persons entering and leaving our premises, and to inspect any packages, parcels, purses, handbags, briefcases, lunch boxes, or any other possessions or articles carried to and from school when it has reasonable grounds to do so. The school also reserves the right to search any employee's office, desk, files, locker, or any other area or article on school grounds. All offices, desks, files, lockers, and so forth, are school district property and are issued or provided for the use of employees only during their employment with the district. Inspections may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the administration. Employees who refuse to cooperate with this provision will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING CERTIFIED STAFF**

### **Absences**

The accumulation of leave for teaching staff is governed by the Negotiated Agreement between the Board of Education and the Education Association. This handbook sets forth the process for using that leave

#### **1. Sick Leave**

Certified staff members who are too ill to perform their teaching duties must contact their building principal before 6:00 a.m.

#### **2. Personal Leave**

Certified staff who wish to take personal leave should submit a leave request to their building principal at least three days in advance of the proposed leave. Building principals may deny personal leave requests if the school district is unable to secure the services of a qualified substitute teacher on the day of the proposed leave. Staff members may not take personal leave adjacent to a school break. For example, if school is not in session on a Monday, certified staff may not take personal leave the preceding Friday or following Tuesday without express permission of the building principal.

#### **3. Professional Leave**

The board and administration recognize the value of continuing education and encourage certified staff to participate in seminars, workshops and other activities which will continue their professional growth. Certified staff members who wish to take professional leave must submit a leave request to their building principal, along with a description of the proposed event and any written materials about the event. Building principals may deny requests for professional leave if they are unable to secure the services of a qualified substitute or if the principal determines that the activity will not enhance the certified staff member's effectiveness as an employee of the district. Certified staff members who feel they have been unfairly denied professional leave may grieve the principal's decision, pursuant to the grievance procedure contained in the district's Negotiated Agreement.

#### **4. Substitute Folders**

Each teacher must prepare a substitute folder and keep the completed folder in the upper right-hand drawer of his/her desk. The folder must contain:

- a.) the current seating chart for each class;
- b.) the daily routine followed by each class;
- c.) all schedules (fire drill procedures, lunch schedule, etc.);
- d.) a copy of this handbook; and
- e.) plans for the day if the teacher's absence was anticipated. (These plans are in addition to the teacher's regular lesson plan book.)

Certified staff members may not make arrangements for their own substitute.

### **Assemblies**

Classroom teachers must attend assemblies, including pep rallies, and sit with students to help maintain order.

All certified staff members should attend school assemblies and should try to attend as many of the school functions as possible regardless of whether they have specific assigned duties or not.

### **Assignment Notebooks**

Assignment notebooks may function as students' make-up slips, as well as a pass out of class or to see another instructor. They can also be used as a communication tool home to parents. Students should not be in the hallways during class time without his/her assignment notebook signed by the instructor. Every time a student leaves class during class time, it should be signed. This way, other staff can ascertain where the student has permission to be.

Students may not go to another classroom without a signed pass obtained from that teacher. No student should be in the halls during class or study time without a signed pass for a specific destination. If a teacher retains a student after the period ends, staff should write a note in the student's assignment book stating why the student was late, rather than sending the student to the office for a tardy slip.

### **Assignment of Teachers**

The administration will assign certified staff to individual duties. Certified staff will also be assigned for various forms of hall, extracurricular, recess, traffic, lunch period and other noontime duties, and athletic events.

### **Certificates, Teacher Contracts, Salary Information**

Teaching certificates must be registered with the Superintendent before they may legally be paid. It is the certified staff member's responsibility to make sure this is done.

Each certified staff member must provide the superintendent's office with the following information:

- a. social security number,
- b. retirement number,
- c. withholding form W-4, and
- d. authorization to withhold for insurance benefits.

Each new certified staff member must fill out forms for retirement benefits before the first pay day as well as the family coverage of the district hospital/medical insurance program.

It is the sole responsibility of the certified staff member to inform the superintendent of any changes, including but not limited to changes in certification, endorsements, benefits plans, and salary payment information.

### **Cheating**

Students caught cheating (including plagiarizing) must be sent to the building principal for administrative discipline. The classroom teacher may also give the cheating student a zero grade for the test or assignment.

### **Check-out Forms**

All certified staff must complete a check-out form and obtain the building principal's signature on the form prior to departing for the summer. Classrooms must be tidy to allow the custodial staff to clean classrooms and work areas. Certified staff members who do not clean their work area before departing for the summer will not receive their paychecks until the work is completed.

### **Class Record Books**

A class record book is the school's official record of matters relating to each student in each teacher's class. It may be maintained in paper or electronic form and must be complete in scope and accurately maintained. All classroom teachers are required to keep class record books which list students in each class in alphabetical order and show the attendance and all grades earned by each student. At the end of each school year, classroom teachers must turn their record books into the building office. Record books are subject to examination by the building principal or superintendent at any time.

### **Classroom Management and Student Discipline**

Classroom discipline is first and foremost the responsibility of the classroom teacher. Individual teachers are expected to assume responsibility for good discipline throughout the school system. However, if a certified staff member needs assistance with student discipline, they should seek the advice and counsel of the principal or superintendent.

Classroom teachers may not leave their classrooms unless the students are supervised by a competent adult.

Classroom teachers should have a well-defined discipline plan that is known to the students. Rules and consequences should be stated clearly and posted where appropriate.

Each building has its own specific procedures concerning student discipline. Classroom teachers should consult with their building principal for more information.

Teachers may remove a student from the classroom for failure to comply



with established rules of conduct. Only an administrator can suspend or expel students from class or school and due process must be followed.

Students may be kept after school for matters relating to discipline or to assist in their academic progress. Certified staff should allow all elementary middle, and high students to allow time to arrange for parental transportation for the next day with their parents if necessary. Students who do not have transportation concerns may be kept without delay. Students may not avoid being kept after school because they have an after school practice or other school activity.

Both elementary and secondary certified staff are responsible for assisting with hallway discipline between classes and in the school lunchroom.

Classes should begin on time and end promptly. Work should continue throughout the period assigned for it. Classroom teachers have no right to waste the pupils' time. Classroom teachers may not dismiss classes early except by permission of the building principal.

Staff members may never send a student off school grounds without the authorization of the building principal.

Classroom teachers may not admit tardy students to class without an admit slip from the principal or the student's teacher from the previous period.

### **Classroom Sanitation**

#### **1. Handling of Body Fluids**

All body fluids of all persons should be considered to potentially contain infectious agents (germs). Hand washing after contact with a school child is recommended if physical contact has been made with any child's blood or body fluids. The term "body fluids" includes: blood, semen, drainage from scrapes and cuts, tears, feces, urine, vomit, respiratory secretions, and saliva.

#### **2. Infectious Diseases**

Certified staff should promptly report any indication of an infectious or contagious disease to the school nurse or building principal. Certified staff should report to the school nurse or the student's parents any pupil whom they suspect of having been exposed to any infectious or contagious disease.

### **Coaching Supplies**

Coaching supplies will be distributed by the athletic director. Such items include tape, pre-wrap, heel pads, band aids, ankle braces, game balls, etc. Coaches should request additional supplies from the activities director only when they have run out of supplies.

Coaches must fill out and submit inventory forms to the activities director immediately after the season is complete.

### **Collection of Student Money**

Staff members must comply with the school district's student fee policy before collecting any funds from students.

Money collected from students should be turned into the office on the day it is collected for deposit in the proper activity or school district fund. Any checks written by students or parents for various payments should be made out to Valentine Community Schools, unless otherwise instructed. Certified staff must submit a financial accountability form when they turn funds into the office.

When students purchase items such as coats, rings, etc., through the school district, they must pay for these and other major items before the order is sent. The sponsor of any school organization is not to give merchandise to students unless proper payment has been received.

### **Community Involvement**

Certified staff are encouraged to take part in civic affairs in the community and must do so when required by state law and board policy.

### **Computer Lab**

Students and staff who use computers owned by the district must abide by the district's acceptable use policies. Students may use the computer lab during lunch and after school. Classroom teachers may not send students to the computer lab during study halls or class unless they have made prior arrangements with the lab coordinator.

Classroom teachers who wish to bring classes to the computer lab must sign up as far in advance as possible with the lab coordinator. Absolutely no food or drink is allowed in the computer lab.

### **Display of Classroom Work in the School and the Community**

Classroom teachers are encouraged to display student work for public viewing. Students and parents enjoy viewing the display and may be even more supportive of their school because the display shows them many of the things the students do. Classroom teachers may use the window area of the central office or the commons area to display student work or they may use during a night activity. Certified staff must contact the principal before displaying student work at an evening activity.

### **Down Slips**

Teachers must notify the office of students who are failing in any subject weekly, or on a schedule determined by the building principal.

### **Duties of Certified Staff**

The duties of certified staff include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Becoming acquainted with board policies, district rules and regulations, and the state laws concerning teachers and pupils.
- b) Attending such education conferences as are required by law or administrative directives.
- c) Attending school assemblies unless excused by the principal.
- d) Instructing pupils in the proper use of equipment and instructional supplies.
- e) Reporting in writing to the principal any injury to any child while under the jurisdiction of the school, including athletic injuries.
- f) Complying with the Teachers Professional Code of Ethics which has been promulgated by the Nebraska Department of Education (92 Neb. Admin. Code § 27) and adopted by the Board of Education of the district.
- g) Discussing a student only with the child's parents and the superintendent, principal, guidance counselor or classroom teachers who may know the circumstances and have a need to know. It is unprofessional and inappropriate to discuss student or other staff members in the staff lounge.
- h) Being responsible for students whom they keep in school at times other than during regular school time. Certified staff will be responsible for any special work done by their students, including field trips, joint assemblies, school programs, etc.
- i) Refraining from joining book clubs or film clubs using the school name.
- j) Turning in all monies collected to the main office by the end of the school day.
- k) Clearing all class meetings or trips through the principal's office.
- l) Participating in Student Assistance Teams pursuant to board policy.
- m) Assisting with the administration of standardized testing as assigned by the administration.
- n) Provide homebound instruction as assigned by the administration.
- o) Performing additional duties as assigned by the administration.

### **Eligibility**

Student academic eligibility for participation in extra-curricular activities will be determined on a weekly basis. A student will become ineligible by maintaining an average of less than seventy percent (70%) in two or more classes weekly. Eligibility will be based on the weekly cumulative semester mathematical average of each student. At the discretion of the sponsor, ineligible students are expected to participate in practice. Activities affected by the eligibility rule are:

1. All interscholastic contests, including but not limited to, athletics, FFA, FBLA, speech contests, and similar organizations or events.
2. Cheerleading.
3. Music competition, performances, and clinics.

4. All school dances.
5. Other activities deemed appropriate by the principal.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Classified staff must schedule all events and other extracurricular activities at the activity director's office to avoid conflicts. Activities must be put on the school calendar located in the activity director's office at least one week before the activity. Staff should avoid or shorten practices and activities on Wednesday evenings and Sundays, in order to give students sufficient time away from school for family-related activities.

Certain activities require time be scheduled outside regular school hours. Any school sponsored activity involving students must have approval of the principal prior to the activity, including all fund raising activities.

Regular classroom work in all grades will have precedence over any other activity. Students will not be dismissed from classes to participate in extracurricular activities without permission from the principal. Make up slips must be completely signed and returned to the sponsor of the activity prior to dismissal from class. All evening activities, except practices, must have no less than two school sponsors. Non-school sponsors must be approved by the administration. If vehicles are used for transportation, the drivers must be adults who have been approved by the school.

The activities director has the responsibility for all activities. Therefore, any ruling or handbook decision he/she makes will be school regulation in lieu of further board action.

No student may participate in a field trip off school property without written permission of his or her parent or guardian.

### **Evacuations**

Early in the semester, classroom teachers should review instructions for leaving the classroom with all of their students. Classroom teachers should also periodically review with each class what to do in case of fire, tornado or other emergency.

#### **1. Fire Drills**

Fire drills will be held on a regular basis. Certified staff may or may not be notified in advance. These drills are important exercises that help ensure the safety of students in case of an emergency.

When the fire alarm is sounded, all students and staff immediately must cease the activity in which they are engaged and leave the building at once, following these regulations:

- a) Students nearest the windows will close them before leaving.

- b) The classroom teacher will be the last to leave the room. He or she will turn out all lights and close the door as he or she leaves.
- c) Classroom teachers will take their fire drill packets and class grade books with them when they leave their classrooms.
- d) The first two students reaching the exit doors will hold the doors wide open until everyone has filed out.
- e) Staff and students will move far enough away from the building to avoid possible injury from fire and falling embers, and also, to remain clear of emergency vehicle traffic.
- f) Once outside, each teacher must account for every student in the class. Classroom teachers will take roll for their class and follow safety protocols to notify school or other authorities of whether or not all students are accounted for.

The signal to return to the school building will be the short bell. It will be sounded upon completion of the drill. Students will return in an orderly manner.

## **2. Tornado Drills**

When a tornado warning has been issued, the school will evacuate classrooms and move students to the designated tornado shelters. Tornado alerts will be given via the intercom system. When a tornado alert is given, all students and staff immediately must cease the activity in which they are engaged immediately and seek shelter, following these regulations:

- a) All students and staff should proceed to the designated tornado shelter.
- b) Once in the designated area, each teacher must account for every student in the class.
- c) Classroom teachers should be sure that each student is sitting with his or her back to the wall, their knees up and their heads should be between their legs.

## **3. Protocol for all Evacuations**

Upon evacuation signals, all students and staff must exit each building. Classroom teachers should do the following:

- 1) Take the class roster;
- 2) Lock the classroom door after all occupants have exited the room;
- 3) Keep the class together and move promptly in an orderly fashion; and
- 4) Upon arriving at the evacuation point, take roll, maintain order, and supervise students.

## **Evaluations**

The appropriate district administrator will evaluate tenured and probationary teachers as required by law and district policy. Additional evaluations, both formal and informal, may be conducted as the district administration deems

appropriate. A copy of the district's certificated evaluation form is included at the end of this handbook.

### **Examinations**

Semester examinations will be given in all classes at the high school. Tests and final exams will not be given ahead of time. High school students may earn the privilege of not having to take semester tests (\*see student handbook for details.) Students are not to type tests or grade any major tests.

### **Faculty Meetings**

The superintendent and principals will call meetings as needed. Certified staff are required to be present at all faculty meetings unless excused by the administration.

### **Field Trip Request Forms**

Certified staff who wish to take students off school property must submit a request to the superintendent at least ten calendar days prior to the date of the requested activity.

Elementary grades will be limited to one field trip per year. Additional requests may be granted on a case by case basis.

### **Grading Policy**

Grades are given as letter or percentage or based on standards as determined by the building principal. No incompletes or condition grades will be given unless approved by administration, but grades may be changed by request of the classroom teacher to the principal. If a student fails the first semester and passes the second semester, a classroom teacher may pass a student for the full year.

A student is to be graded on academic performance. **A student's grade is not to be reduced for discipline.** Prejudice or favoritism has no place in grading a student. All grading should be explained in simple, understandable terms to the student.

Classroom teachers should provide students and parents with frequent updates regarding the student's progress during the quarter. At the conclusion of each quarter, students will receive an end-of-quarter report card.

### **Guest Lecturers**

Guest lecturers must be approved by the administration before they are asked to address a class. The guest lecturer must have a specific, relatable objective in his/her lecture.

### **Hall Duty**

Every classroom teacher is on hall duty as school begins as well as between

classes. Classroom teachers are responsible especially for the part of the hall adjacent to their classrooms.

### **Homework Policy**

Homework is an important part of student learning. When parents, teachers, and students work together, out-of-class assignments are a valuable part of the instructional program. Homework should provide opportunities for students to practice acquired skills, develop initiative, form independent study habits, and use community resources.

### **Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials are made available through the Education Service Unit. A catalog and order forms will be made available to all members. Films should be used as instructional materials. All media must be previewed for suitability by the classroom teacher before being shown to students.

### **Lesson Plans**

Each teacher will prepare and complete a proper lesson plan for each week. These plans must be written so that they are clear to any substitute teacher and readily available to any teacher. An up-to-date seating chart of the class or classes shall be part of the lesson plan book. Other regulations relative to lesson plans will be made by individual building principals. The lesson plans of all classroom teachers are subject to review of the building principal or other members of the school district's administration at any time.

Lesson plans must **identify major instructional objectives and show page assignments and general direction that might be followed by anyone who might be called upon to teach the classes.**

Lesson plans for the upcoming week must be submitted each week to the building principal.

### **Media Center**

The media center is set up to serve the needs of certified staff and students. Certified staff who need assistance with textbooks, literature sets, magazines and other reference materials should consult with the media specialist assigned to their building.

Students may use the media center during study halls, at lunch, after school and in the evenings. Classroom teachers may send individual students to use the media center during class time, but should contact the media staff before sending a group of students during class. The media staff may send disruptive students back to class or study hall, or may exclude unruly students from the media center for a specified period of time. Classroom teachers who send their entire class to the media center must accompany and supervise the students, unless prior arrangements have been made with the media specialist.

Audiovisual materials are available to certified staff through the media center. Certified staff may obtain these materials by filling out the required requisition form and sending it to the media specialist in their building. When certified staff return media, they should complete the film report card and return it to the media specialist.

### **Para-educators**

Para-educators provide valuable assistance in the educational process and allow teachers to carry out their responsibilities in a more efficient and effective manner. A para-educator must not, however, assume teaching responsibilities. The classroom teacher must maintain the role of leadership and responsibility for the students, with the teacher aide in a supportive role. Para-educators may be used to assist the classroom teacher by, among other tasks, assisting with instructional activities under the direction of the teacher, helping to supervise students, copying tests and other written material, organizing class materials, preparing bulletin boards, grading tests or class work, and calculating and recording grades. Para-educators are to work only on and within their assigned work days. If the classroom teacher desires the paraeducator to work hours other than the assigned work hours or assigned work day, he or she must contact the administration for approval.

### **Parent-Teacher Communication**

Students' academic success has been closely linked to parental involvement in school. Certified staff should strive to develop open and supportive relationships with parents and guardians. Each classroom teacher is responsible for keeping a student's parents informed about the student's progress. This may be done by letter, telephone, e-mail, or personal conference. Certified staff must attend parent teacher conferences, promptly return phone calls, participate in teacher events for students and parents, and where necessary utilize a planner as a communication tool. Certified staff who need additional support in communicating with parents should contact their building principal or guidance counselor.

### **Parking**

Staff members have a designated area in the parking lot reserved for them. **Students are not to park their cars in the staff area.** Staff members may not allow students to park in the staff lot when groups leave early in the morning on a school day for field trips or athletic events.

### **Parties**

1. No activities or picnics shall be held by an organization of the school without the presence of the sponsor or sponsors.
2. The number of activities and the closing hour for activities will be determined by the building principal and organization sponsor.
3. In making arrangements for activities and picnics, staff must avoid disturbing the routine of the school.



4. Cleaning up after the activity is the responsibility of the sponsor.

### **Planning Time**

Each classroom teacher is provided with duty-free time for planning, preparation of school-related materials, and a brief respite from the duties of the day.

The Board defines planning time as time for educational planning and other task-related functions that cannot normally be accomplished during instructional periods. Planning time should not be confused with personal time. **Planning time is not to be used for running personal errands, conducting personal business, or pursuing non-school hobbies and/or interests.**

### **PowerSchool and PowerSchool Pro**

All teachers will be required to use PowerSchool and PowerSchool Pro.

A "comment bank" may be developed for comments on progress reports, report cards, and discipline reports at a later date. You may use the "comment bank" or enter your own free-form comment.

Certified staff who have trouble/problems with PowerSchool, should contact their building principal.

### **Private Tutoring**

Classroom teachers must provide individual assistance to students as a part of their duties. Any certified staff member who engages in private tutoring for pay (compensation of any kind from a source other than the District) is subject to the following rules:

- Certified staff may not arrange to provide private tutoring for any child enrolled in the staff member's class.
- Certified staff are not to provide private tutoring in a school building.
- Certified staff are not to provide private tutoring during duty time.
- Certified staff are prohibited from advertising or promoting the private tutoring services in the school or in the school's communications systems except with the express permission of the Superintendent or designee.

### **Pupils' Records**

1. Each classroom teacher must keep a set of records in the daily class record book of the class recitations, tests, exams, daily work, notebook, etc. This serves as a justification of the final grade in case of dispute between teacher and pupil, or teacher and parent, and assists in making out the final grades. This book must be turned into the principal at the end of each school year.
2. Report cards will be issued within one week following the end of the quarter unless otherwise announced.

- a) Reports should be conscientiously and accurately made because they are a serious estimate of the degree of success of the pupil.
- b) Each classroom teacher should be adequately prepared to defend all decisions given on the report card.
- c) Each classroom teacher is responsible for distribution of class cards on time.
- d) Classroom teachers must confer with the principal before recording any incomplete, failing, or conditional grades on report cards.

### **Rights of Certified and Probationary Teachers**

Certified and probationary teachers are entitled to the legal and procedural rights outlined in the board policies and state and federal law with regard to the amendment, cancellation, or termination of the teacher's employment contract. For specific questions relating to those procedural or legal rights, please refer to the district's board policies.

### **School Day**

Rural attendance center teachers are to be on duty according to their building schedules. Elementary School teachers are to be on duty from 7:50 a.m. until 3:50 p.m., Middle School teachers are to be on duty from 7:40 a.m. until 3:40 p.m. daily, and High School teachers are to be on duty 7:50 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. **When the regular starting time is delayed, teachers must report thirty minutes before student arrival.** On Fridays and days preceding certain holidays or vacation periods, certified staff are permitted to leave after the students are dismissed and have cleared the building. Under special circumstances, certified staff may seek permission from their building principal to vary these duty hours. In addition, certified staff may be assigned responsibilities at other hours by the principal or superintendent for supervising or directing school activities or affairs or for participation in affairs under the direct sponsorship of the school.

Each teacher will be in his or her classroom and ready to teach 10 minutes prior to the beginning of each day. Classroom teachers will monitor class dismissal and hallways during passing time. Classroom teachers must be physically present in their classrooms at all times during class periods and conference periods.

Personal work may not be done on school time.

### **Sponsors**

Certified staff members are assigned by the superintendent as class and club sponsors. Sponsors must be present at all meetings and activities of the sponsored group. The procedure for activity accounts and meetings can be found in the student manual. Purchasing of supplies must be approved by the Superintendent.

### **Student Activities**

Staff members who sponsor extracurricular activities such as athletics, class plays, and class activities may leave the school building only after making sure that all students and other individuals have left the building. No student is to be left unattended in the school building at any time.

School-owned clothing or equipment that is checked out to students remains the property of the school. The clothing or equipment is not to be used or worn by the student except for its intended use. Each piece of equipment or clothing is to be returned to the instructor or coach when the season or the use for such clothing or equipment is over. Certified staff will be held responsible for clothing and equipment that is not returned.

### **Student Aides**

Student aides are to be directly supervised by the certified staff member and are not to leave the building or be in the halls or anywhere they are not being supervised. Student aides are not to be used to assist the certified staff member by helping supervise another student, grade tests or class work, calculate student grades, or record grades. Keys are NEVER to be given to students, whether they are student aides or not. A student aide should not be present and assisting a certified staff member without another adult present after the end of regular teacher duty hours.

### **Student Attendance**

Students are expected to arrive at each class, be seated and ready for instruction prior to the beginning of the class day or class period, as appropriate. Student tardiness is the classroom teacher's professional responsibility. Classroom teachers must insist that students be on time.

Each teacher must maintain an accurate record of student attendance each day. Classroom teachers must carefully check and record attendance information at the beginning of each school day and, in upper grades, at the beginning of each period. Students and student assistants are not permitted to check attendance. Excessive absenteeism should be reported to the building principal or guidance counselor.

Students returning from an absence must report to the office prior to going to class. A returning absentee must show each classroom teacher the admittance pass that was issued by the school office. No student should be accepted back into class after an absence without this pass.

A student who departs school during the school day must report to the office and sign out before leaving the building. A student who returns during the school day must sign in at the building office before returning to class.

### **Student Attire**

The responsibility for proper daily grooming and dress is primarily the responsibility of students and parents/guardians. However, certified staff members must insist that students do not remain in school while wearing

attire that violates the dress code set forth in the Student Handbook.

Classroom teachers must report students who are not in compliance with the dress code to the building principal. The final decision on what is considered proper grooming and appearance is the responsibility of the building principal.

### **Student Illness**

In the event of student illness or injury, classroom teachers should notify the building principal or superintendent immediately. Staff should never send a pupil home without notifying school officials and checking to see if his/her parents are home.

### **Student Medication**

Student medications should not be dispensed by staff members unless they follow the following procedures.

Only staff members who have completed medication training or the school nurse may dispense medications (prescription or over-the-counter) to students at any time. Students may, with written parental or guardian permission, self-administer medications such as aspirin and cough syrup or cough drops.

Staff members are not authorized to dispense prescription medicine without an agreement with a parent or guardian to provide a prescription container for the medicine that includes a pharmaceutical label, the physician's name, a child guard cap and directions for administering the medication.

After receiving the medication, the school employee should lock the medication in a cabinet or place it in an area where access is restricted to school employees only.

### **Student Searches**

Certified staff members may not search students or their belongings. If a staff member suspects that a student is in possession of contraband, he/she should immediately contact a member of the administration and supervise the student until the administrator arrives. Students who are suspected of having an item in violation of school rules may be directed to wait with a staff member.

### **Substitute Teaching During Planning Period**

Certified staff may be required to substitute during their planning period.

### **Teaching Controversial Issues**

Teachers may teach or lead discussions about controversial issues if they comply with the following criteria:

- The issues discussed must be relevant to the curriculum and be part of a planned educational program.
- Students must have free access to appropriate materials and information for analysis and evaluation of the issues.
- The teacher must encourage students to consider and discuss a variety of viewpoints.
- The topic and materials used must be within the range, knowledge, maturity, and competence of the students.
- The teacher must inform parents and the building principal before discussing sensitive or controversial issues.
- The teacher must keep detailed, documentary evidence to prove that both sides and/or all facts available were presented.
- Teachers must refrain from advocating partisan causes, sectarian religious views, or selfish propaganda through any classroom or a school device; however, a teacher shall not be prohibited from expressing a personal opinion as long as the student is encouraged to reach his/her own decision independently.

### **Textbooks**

Classroom teachers will issue textbooks to the pupils, keeping a record of the number and condition of the book assigned to each pupil. If the books are new, classroom teachers must make sure the books are stamped and numbered before distribution.

Textbooks are to be stored in the classroom or storeroom. Textbooks are to be checked out to the students with teachers keeping an accurate record of each book by number in the place provided in grade books. Pupils are to pay for lost or damaged books. Student textbooks must be covered with a book cover.

Workbooks do not become the property of the students and in most cases should be retained by the school.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING CLASSIFIED STAFF**

### **At-Will Employment**

Classified staff members are employed "at-will." Either you or the school district may terminate your employment at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, guaranteeing employment for any specific duration.

### **Holidays**

Classified employees will receive paid time off on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Holidays falling on a Saturday are normally observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday are normally observed on the following Monday.

Classified employees will generally be required to work their regularly scheduled hours the workday preceding and workday following the holiday in order to be eligible to receive holiday pay.

### **Hours**

Work hours vary with the classified staff member's department and position. Meetings will occasionally be scheduled before or after normal working hours.

It is vital that the district's employees arrive at work punctually and consistently. Staff members who are chronically late or excessively absent will be disciplined, up to and including discharge.

### **Overtime and Compensatory Time**

All classified staff members must keep an accurate record of all hours worked for the district. The only exceptions are those who have been notified in writing that they are exempt from this time-keeping requirement. Classified staff should not work more than forty hours in a given week without the express permission of their immediate supervisor. Those who accrue more than forty hours in a given workweek will receive overtime or compensatory time, pursuant to board policy.

### **Personal Leave**

Classified employees will receive up to 3 days of paid personal leave each school year for personal business that cannot be taken care of outside regular business hours and other events of personal significance. Personal leave must be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor or the Superintendent. There shall be no carryover of personal days from year to year. Classified employees shall be paid for any unused personal days at the end of the school year or in the event of termination of employment.

### **Reporting When School is Closed**

When school is closed due to inclement weather, classified staff should report to work based on their positions:

1. **Secretaries/Clerical staff** should not report to work unless specifically directed to do so by their supervisor or the superintendent.
2. **Paraprofessionals** should not report to work unless teaching staff are asked to report.
3. **Custodians/Maintenance staff** should report to work.

### **Sick Leave**

Classified employees will receive 5 days of sick leave. A staff member who is too ill to come to work, or who has a qualifying family member who is too ill to be left alone, must notify his or her immediate supervisor at least three hours prior to the time he/she regularly reports to work or as soon as is practicable. Classified staff members may accumulate up to 15 days of sick leave. Classified employees shall not be paid for accrued unused sick days at the end of the school year or in the event of termination of employment.

### **Vacation**

Eligible classified employees will receive paid vacation each school year. Employees should consult with their immediate supervisor for vacation information.

New employees will not be entitled to any vacation leave for the first six months of employment unless otherwise approved by administration. After the completion of the last day of the sixth month of employment, new employees will be awarded one-half of the total vacation days provided for their job assignment. After the completion of the last day of the ninth month of employment, new employees will receive the remaining days of vacation provided for their job assignment.

Eligible employees may accrue up to 10 days of vacation. Once vacation days are accrued, they may be carried forward from year to year. If an employee carries forward accrued vacation days, he/she shall receive additional vacation days for the next contract year to bring the total of accrued vacation days to the maximum number of days allowed for his/her particular job assignment. In no event shall the employee receive any additional days beyond the maximum accrual cap listed above. Classified employees shall be paid for any unused vacation days in the event of termination of employment.

## **STAFF DIRECTORY**

### **Members of the Board of Education**

Kris Larsen, President  
Clinton Assarsson, Vice President  
Jo Hand, Secretary  
Shane Kime, Treasurer  
Greg Gass, Member  
Jessica Dawson-Coyle, Member

### **Administrative Staff**

Michael Halley, Superintendent  
Andy Cronin High, School Principal  
Blake Beebout, Activities Director/Assistant Principal  
Jeff Sayer, Middle and Rural School Principal  
Lindsay Wonnenberg, Elementary School Principal

### **Teachers - Elementary**

Mary Ellen Osnes, Pre-Kindergarten  
Kelly Benson, Pre-Kindergarten  
Brandy Muirhead, Kindergarten  
Mandi Painter, Kindergarten  
Amanda Long, Kindergarten  
Shelly Parks, 1st Grade  
Kay Harte, 1st Grade  
Jaime Eggert, 1st Grade  
Claire Lancaster, 2nd Grade  
Renae Coleman, 2nd Grade  
Nicole Osnes, 2nd Grade  
Kara Brashears, 3rd Grade  
Keri McClellan, 3rd Grade  
Andrea Krueger, 3rd Grade  
Jennifer Nelsen, 4th Grade  
Beverly Brown, 4th Grade  
Shauna Day, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Lisa Eide, Music K-4  
Marcus Little, Physical Education K-4  
Kimberly Billings, Special Education  
Julia Burdick, Special Education  
Cody Holmes, Special Education  
Ashley McSweeney, Pre-K Special Education  
Katy O'Kief, Media Specialist  
Cristen Witte, Special Education Coordinator  
Melissa Rowan, Speech Pathologist  
Deb Jeffers, Title I Interventionist  
Kate Minford, Major Intervention Specialist  
Angela Jordan, Counselor



Stacey Stec School, Nurse  
Rachelle O’Kief, Badger Cub Club Director

### **Teachers – Valentine Middle School**

Melissa Rowan, Speech Pathologist  
Brooks Coleman, Physical Education, Health, Social Studies  
J.J. Thorpe, Reading, Art  
Candice Cronin, Counselor  
Sydney Franklin, Special Education  
Shawna Houdek, Agriculture  
Bethany Springer, Band, Choir  
Karen Keller, English Language Arts, Social Studies, Economics  
Kris Krolikowski, Science, Health  
Katie Galvin, Special Education  
Tammy Gass, Social Studies, English, Keyboarding  
Janell Stoeger, English, Art  
Katy O’Kief, Media Specialist  
Kevin Pettigrew, Math, Driver’s Education  
Melanie Steskal, Art, Social Studies, Reading, Computers  
Michelle Tinant, Math, STEAM  
Kate Minford, Major Intervention Specialist  
Nick Larsen, Physical Education and Health  
Solveig Perrett, Science  
Julie Foster, English, Reading, Art  
Cristen Witte, Special Education Coordinator  
, School Nurse

### **Teachers - Rural Schools**

Trinity Shipley, Cutcomb Lake  
Amanda Morrison, Simeon  
Ki Kuhre, Simeon  
Shiloh Hanzlicek, Simeon

### **Teachers – Valentine High School**

Shevaun Adams, Science  
Shane Allison, Physical Education  
Danielle Arganbright, Math  
Julie Sherbeyn, Science  
Ian Bish, Social Studies  
Shawna Houdek, Vocational Agriculture  
Kara Buechle, Special Education  
Kasy Epke Science, Spanish  
Bethany Springer Band, Choir  
Alex Jensen, Social Studies  
Marcus Nelson, English  
Julie Hoefs, Math

Janet Shelbourn, Business  
Alana Cardinal, Business  
Devin Muirhead, Industrial Technology  
Brent Nollette, Vocational Agriculture  
Katy O’Kief, Media Specialist  
Jennie Manning, Counselor  
Emilee Stoner, English  
Joan Swim, Art  
Ben Shelbourn, Math  
Margaret Stoeger, Special Education  
Cristen Witte, Special Education Coordinator  
                , School Nurse

## Support Staff

Tracy Hand, Maintenance/Custodial Staff  
Rex Gallino, Maintenance/Custodial Staff  
Bryson Cochran, Maintenance/Custodial Staff  
Mark Osborne, Maintenance/Custodial Staff  
Ruth Hobbs, Maintenance/Custodial Staff  
John Hoefs, Maintenance/Custodial Staff  
Willis Kilmer, Maintenance/Custodial Staff  
Reba Stehlik, Maintenance/Custodial Staff

Lisa Rodgers-Mathis, Business Office  
Amy Cox, Accounts Payable, Business Office  
Jamie Seipel, Administrative Assistant  
Gabriella Fuerher, Administrative Assistant  
Alison Larsen, Administrative Assistant  
Kim Jeffers, Administrative Assistant

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

Schools calendars are available on the district website at <http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org>.

# **Certificated Employee Evaluation**

## **Mission Statement**

Valentine Community Schools will prepare our students for an ever-changing world.

The Board of Education has developed a certificated employee evaluation policy in conjunction with the district's mission statement and instructional goals.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of certificated employee evaluation for the purpose of ensuring the most effective instruction, to promote professional growth, and to provide documentation for personnel decisions.

## **Procedures for Certificated Employee Evaluation**

1. Each certificated employee evaluation will focus on the following indicators of effective teaching:

- A. Foundational Knowledge
- B. Planning and Preparation
- C. The Learning Environment
- D. Instructional Strategies
- E. Assessment
- F. Personal and Professional Conduct
- G. Vision and Professionalism

2. Observations

- A. Formative observations can be brief, unannounced, and informal. The evaluator will provide a copy of the form to the certificated employee. A conference may not be required unless either party indicates a need for a conference. For the tenured teacher, one formative observation will require a conference each year.
- B. Summative observations may be announced or unannounced. These observations will be for the duration of at least one instructional period. A pre-conference may be held if the observation is announced. A post conference will always be held. The certificated employee will receive a copy of observations.

3. Evaluations

A Probationary certificated employee's evaluation will consist of formative observation(s) and at least one summative evaluation each semester.  
A Tenured certificated employee's evaluation will consist of at least one formative observation annually and at least one summative evaluation every three school years.

4. Formative/Summative Evaluation Report

A written evaluation report will be prepared by the evaluator. The report will clearly

describe strengths and deficiencies, means for correcting any deficiencies, and a timeline to implement the means of improvement.

#### 5. Evaluation Conference

A conference may be scheduled with the certificated employee following the formative/summative evaluation observation to present and explain the written evaluation report. The evaluator and the certificated employee being evaluated will both sign the formative/summative evaluation report to document that the formal evaluation has been conducted. The formative/summative evaluation report form will provide a space for the certificated employee's written response to the evaluation.

#### 6. Evaluators

Evaluators will possess a valid Nebraska Administrative Certificate. Evaluators will be prepared to use the district's evaluation system. If the administration feels additional training is needed, it will be provided by the district.

#### 7. Evaluation Policy

At the beginning of each school year, certificated employees will be provided with a written copy of the district's evaluation system and the procedures to be followed. The evaluation policy and procedures will be explained at opening in-service each year.

## **Educator Effective Practices**

### **Foundational Knowledge (Danielson 1a, 1b)**

The teacher demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards needed to provide each student with effective opportunities for learning, development, and achievement.

### **Planning and Preparation (Danielson 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f)**

The teacher integrates knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards with the established curriculum to set high expectations and develop rigorous instruction for each student that supports the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

### **The Learning Environment (Danielson 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e)**

The teacher creates and maintains a learning environment that fosters positive relationships and promotes active student engagement in learning, development, and achievement.

### **Instructional Strategies (Danielson 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e)**

The teacher uses effective instructional strategies to ensure growth in student achievement.

### **Assessment (Danielson 1f, 3d)**

The teacher systematically uses multiple methods of formative and summative assessment to measure student progress and to inform ongoing planning, instruction, and reporting.

### **Personal and Professional Conduct (Danielson 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 4f)**

The teacher acts as an ethical and responsible member of the professional community.

### **Vision and Collaboration (Danielson 4c, 4d, 4e)**

The teacher contributes to and promotes the vision of the school and collaborates with students,

families, colleagues, and the larger community to share responsibility for the growth of student learning, development and achievement.

# Valentine Community Schools Formative Certificated Employee Evaluation

District Name: Valentine Community Schools

Date: Click here to enter text.

## CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Certificated Employee Name [Click here to enter text.](#) Grade/Subject: [Click here to enter text.](#)

School(s) 1. [Click here to enter text.](#) Evaluator: [Click here to enter text.](#)

2. [Click here to enter text.](#) School Year: [Click here to enter text.](#)

3. [Click here to enter text.](#) Date of Evaluation: [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Nebraska Effective Practices.** During formative evaluation, no ratings are given for the Effective Practices. However, evaluator evidence/comments based on informal observations can be made. (Teachers may be asked to bring evidence that supports Domains 1 and 4.)

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE 1 - Foundational Knowledge (Danielson 1a, 1b)  
EFFECTIVE PRACTICE 2 - Planning and Preparation (Danielson 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f)  
**EFFECTIVE PRACTICE 3 - The Learning Environment (Danielson 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e)**  
**EFFECTIVE PRACTICE 4 - Instructional Strategies (Danielson 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e)**  
EFFECTIVE PRACTICE 5 - Assessment (Danielson 1f, 3d)  
EFFECTIVE PRACTICE 6 - Personal and Professional Conduct (Danielson 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 4f)  
EFFECTIVE PRACTICE 7 - Vision and Collaboration (Danielson 4c, 4d, 4e)

Part I: Effective Practices			
			Evidence/Comments:
Foundational Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed	
Planning and Preparation	<input type="checkbox"/> Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed	
The Learning Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed	
Instructional Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed	
Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed	
Personal and Professional Conduct	<input type="checkbox"/> Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed	
Vision and Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed	

## Part II: Certificated Employee Comments

### Areas of Strength

Based on the evidence, what components stand out as areas of strength?

### Areas for Development

Based on the evidence, what components stand out as areas for development?

### Additional Comments

Overall, how do you think the lesson went? What would you do the same, what would you change next time you taught the lesson?

Did students meet your expectations for engagement and learning? If so, what evidence supports that. If not, what evidence tells you that expectations were not met and what are some strategies that you could use next time to help students meet your expectations?

Please add any additional comments:

## Part III: Self Reflection

Description	
Distinguished	Based on a review of the evidence collected, the teacher meets district performance standards for all evaluative criteria and exceeds expected performance in many respects. This rating refers to professional teaching that involves students in innovative learning processes and creates a true community of learners. Teachers performing at this level are master teachers and leaders in the field, both inside and outside of their school.
Proficient	Based on a review of the evidence collected, the teacher meets district performance standards for the evaluative criteria on an overall basis and is actively engaged in professional development and school leadership efforts. This rating refers to successful, professional practice. Teaching practices consistently demonstrate proficiency.
Basic	Based on a review of the evidence collected, the teacher meets district performance standards for most evaluative criteria and is satisfactorily participating in an assistance plan for those criteria rated below "Proficient." This rating refers to teaching demonstrating the potential knowledge and skills necessary to be successful, but the application is inconsistent (perhaps due to recently entering the profession or transitioning into a new curriculum, grade level, or subject).
Unsatisfactory	Based on a review of the evidence collected, the teacher does not meet district performance standards for a significant segment of the evaluative criteria and improvement efforts have been inadequate. This rating refers to actions that do not adhere to the concepts underlying the component. This level of performance is doing harm and is a detriment to student learning.
Evidence/Comments	
Click here to enter text.	
Which of the Effective Practice(s) needs improvement?	
Click here to enter text.	

<b>Which of the Danielson Indicator(s) needs improvement?</b>
Click here to enter text.
<b>What is your goal for improvement?</b>
Click here to enter text.
<b>How do you plan to reach this goal?</b>
Click here to enter text.
<b>How would you know you have met this goal?</b>
Click here to enter text.

<b>Part IV: Overall Evaluator Comments:</b>
<b>Areas of Strength</b>
Click here to enter text.
<b>Areas for Development</b>
Click here to enter text.

<b>Additional Comments</b>
Click here to enter text.

<b>Meets District's Standards</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Evaluator's Comments</b>	
Click here to enter text.	

**Evaluator Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Certificated Employee Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*My signature certifies that the evaluation results have been discussed with me. I understand my signature does not necessarily indicate agreement and that I may respond in writing to any issues contained in the evaluation.*



# Valentine Community Schools Certificated Employee Summative Evaluation

ALIGNED TO THE DANIELSON FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

District Name: Valentine Community School

## CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE INFORMATION:

Certificate Employee Name: [Click here to enter text.](#) Grade/Subject Area: [Click here to enter text.](#)

School(s) 1. [Click here to enter text.](#) [Click here to enter text.](#) Evaluator: [Click here to enter text.](#)

2. [Click here to enter text.](#) [Click here to enter text.](#) School Year: [Click here to enter text.](#)

3. [Click here to enter text.](#) [Click here to enter text.](#) Date of Evaluation: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Formative Evaluation Dates:

### Part I: Nebraska Effective Practices (see detailed Frameworks rubrics)

**EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: (1) Foundational Knowledge (Danielson 1a, 1b).** The teacher demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards needed to provide each student with effective opportunities for learning, development, and achievement.

Evaluator Rating	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished	The teacher demonstrates a current and comprehensive knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards needed to provide each student with effective opportunities for learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	The teacher demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards needed to provide each student with effective opportunities for learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic	The teacher demonstrates limited knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, or standards needed to provide each student with effective opportunities for learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	The teacher demonstrates a lack of knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, or standards needed to provide each student with effective opportunities for learning, development, and achievement.
<b>Evidence/Comments</b>	
<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	

**EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: (2) Planning and Preparation (Danielson 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f).** The teacher integrates knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards with the established curriculum to set high expectations and develop rigorous instruction for each student that supports the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

Evaluator Rating	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished	The teacher purposefully and consistently integrates a comprehensive knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards with the established curriculum to develop units, lessons, and other learning experiences that support the growth of individual student learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	The teacher consistently integrates knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards with the established curriculum to develop coherent and rigorous units, lessons, and activities that support the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

<input type="checkbox"/> Basic	The teacher demonstrates a basic knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and curriculum standards, but fails to integrate them consistently to develop units, lessons, and learning activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	The teacher displays a very limited knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, or curriculum standards, and/or fails to develop coherent and rigorous units, lessons, and learning activities.
<b>Evidence/Comments</b>	
<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	

<b>EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: (3) The Learning Environment (Danielson 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e).</b> The teacher creates and maintains a learning environment that fosters positive relationships and promotes active student engagement in learning, development, and achievement.	
<b>Evaluator Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished	The teacher creates and consistently maintains an exceptional learning environment that fosters positive relationships and promotes active student engagement in learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	The teacher creates and maintains an effective learning environment that fosters positive relationships and promotes active student engagement in learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic	The teacher strives to create and maintain a learning environment that fosters positive relationships and promotes active student engagement in learning, development, and achievement; however, the results are not consistent. The teacher fails to create and/or maintain an effective or engaging learning environment.
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	The teacher fails to create and/or maintain an effective or engaging learning environment.
<b>Evidence/Comments</b>	
<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	

<b>EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: (4) Instructional Strategies (Danielson 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e).</b> The teacher uses effective instructional strategies to ensure growth in student achievement.	
<b>Evaluator Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished	The teacher consistently uses highly effective instructional strategies that result in continuous growth in learning for each student.
<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	The teacher regularly uses effective instructional strategies to ensure growth in student achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic	The teacher strives to use effective instructional strategies to ensure growth in student achievement, but has inconsistent results.
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	The teacher fails to use effective instructional strategies and growth in student achievement is below expectations.
<b>Evidence/Comments</b>	
<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	

<b>EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: (5) Assessment (Danielson 1f, 3d).</b> The teacher systematically uses multiple methods of formative and summative assessment to measure student progress and to inform ongoing planning, instruction, and reporting.	
<b>Evaluator Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished	The teacher is viewed as an assessment leader for the building/district. He/she consistently and systematically creates and uses multiple methods of formative and summative assessment to measure student progress. The teacher disaggregates data for use in planning, preparing for instruction, and reporting.
<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	The teacher consistently and systematically develops and uses multiple methods of formative and

	summative assessment to measure student progress. The teacher uses assessment results when planning, preparing for instruction, and reporting.
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic	The teacher has limited understanding of the various methods of assessment, and/or the teacher uses assessment results inconsistently.
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	The teacher has little or no understanding of assessment methods and uses them inconsistently or incorrectly. Assessment results are ignored or not used appropriately.
<b>Evidence/Comments</b>	
<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	

<b>EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: (6) Personal and Professional Conduct (Danielson 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 4f).</b> The teacher acts as an ethical and responsible member of the professional community.	
<b>Evaluator Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished	The teacher serves as a role model for ethical and responsible behavior and serves as a leader in the professional community.
<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	The teacher consistently models ethical and responsible behavior as a member of the professional community.
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic	The teacher understands ethical and responsible behavior, but is inconsistent in demonstrating a high level of professional practice
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	The teacher fails to act in an ethical and/or professional responsible manner.
<b>Evidence/Comments</b>	
<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	

<b>EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: (7) Vision and Collaboration (Danielson 4c, 4d, 4e).</b> The teacher contributes to and promotes the vision of the school and collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and the larger community to share responsibility for the growth of student learning, development and achievement.	
<b>Evaluator Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished	The teacher takes a leadership role in the contributing to and promoting the vision of the school and continuously collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and the larger community to share responsibility for the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	The teacher contributes to and promotes the vision of the school and collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and the larger community to share responsibility for the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic	The teacher strives to promote the vision of the school and to collaborate with students, families, colleagues, and the larger community to share responsibility for the growth of the student learning, development, and achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	The teacher fails to contribute to and promote the vision of the school. The teacher fails to recognize his/her responsibility to collaborate with students, families, colleagues, and the larger community, and to share responsibility for the growth of student learning, development and achievement.
<b>Evidence/Comments</b>	
<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	

## Part II: Overall Rating

<b>Evaluator Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished	In the judgment of the evaluator based on a review of the evidence collected, the teacher meets district performance standards for all evaluative criteria and exceeds expected performance in many respects. He/she takes a leadership role in professional development and school leadership activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	In the judgment of the evaluator based on a review of the evidence collected, the teacher meets district performance standards for the evaluative criteria on an overall basis and is actively engaged in professional development and school leadership efforts.

<input type="checkbox"/> Basic	In the judgment of the evaluator based on a review of the evidence collected, the teacher meets district performance standards for most evaluative criteria. Participating in a plan for assistance is required for those criteria rated below “Proficient.”
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	In the judgment of the evaluator based on a review of the evidence collected, the teacher does not meet district performance standards for a significant segment of the evaluative criteria and improvement efforts have been inadequate. Participating in a plan of improvement is required.

#### Areas of Strength

Click here to enter text.

#### Areas of Development

Click here to enter text.

- ☐ Plan for Assistance attached (required for rating of “Basic” on any of the Effective Practices 1-7)
- ☐ Plan for Improvement attached (required for rating of “Unsatisfactory” on any of the Effective Practices 1-7)

### Part III: Local District Standards

Local District Standards Meets District Standards	Meets District Standards	
Foundational Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Planning and Preparation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
The Learning Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Instructional Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Personal and Professional Conduct	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Vision and Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### Recommend for Continued Employment

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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#### Certificated Employee Comments

Click here to enter text.

Evaluator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Certificated Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*My signature certifies that the evaluation results have been discussed with me. I understand my signature does not necessarily indicate agreement and that I may respond in writing to any issues contained in the eval*

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the **Valentine Community Schools District Staff Handbook** which includes the district's drug-free workplace policy statement. I understand that, as a condition of my employment, I am required to read and abide by the provisions of the handbook and by all board policies governing my employment. Further, if I have any questions about any provision of this handbook or any board policy, I should confer with my supervisor, building principal, or superintendent.

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Signature

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Date

## **Negotiated Agreement, Salary Schedule, and Extra Duty Schedule**

Negotiated Agreement for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 -

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JUPkWZ0xQ5GxddcL3gbiUnqw9GyyPTsTuYOEebgDAZM/>

Appendix C - Salary schedules for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/10kbcby\\_YvvXc26dsDtNso8j\\_4-VgaBkW/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10kbcby_YvvXc26dsDtNso8j_4-VgaBkW/view?usp=drive_link)

Appendix D - Extra Duty Schedule -

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DYV4kRGU-SUu4vuvKANr2b30DbqCKMeqHF7m9fC3J6M/edit?usp=drive\\_link](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DYV4kRGU-SUu4vuvKANr2b30DbqCKMeqHF7m9fC3J6M/edit?usp=drive_link)