

# HASTINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## TEACHER HANDBOOK



HASTINGS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Assuring the essential.  
Expanding the possible.

REVISED 07/2019

## **Intent of Handbook**

Welcome to the Hastings Public Schools! We are a professional learning community focused on student learning, committed to working together, and striving to use student results to improve our performance as individual professionals, as individual schools, and as a district. Our work is critical to our community and our schools must strive to exceed expectations.

This handbook is intended to be used by teachers and other certificated staff to provide general information about the Hastings Public Schools and to serve as a guide to the District's policies, rules, and regulations, benefits of employment, and performance expectations. References in this handbook to "teachers" are intended to apply to all certificated staff, including administrative staff to the extent the handbook deals with professional expectations and conduct.

Each teacher is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained in it. Although the information found in this handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, the handbook is not intended to be all encompassing so as to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise. This handbook is intended to supplement other documents that deal with your employment, including your employment contract, the negotiated agreement between the Hastings Public Schools and the Hastings Education Association, and the policies and regulations of the Board of Education. In reading this handbook, please understand that where a direct conflict exists, state or federal law, the Master Agreement, and Board policies and regulations will prevail.

This handbook does not create a "contract" of employment. Staff positions and assignments which do not legally require a certificate or are otherwise not protected 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 for a contract approved by the Board of Education.

The administration will be responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook and shall have the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time. Should a situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon applicable school district policies, state and federal statutes and regulations, and the best interests of the District.

This handbook will be in effect for the 2019-2020 school year and subsequent school years unless replaced in whole or in part by later revisions and/or additions.

# **Section 1 – HPS, Calendar, and Schedule Changes**

## **Information About HPS**

The Hastings Public Schools was founded 1872. Today, the District serves students from preschool through the twelfth grade (birth to age 21) with an enrollment of approximately 3,700 students. Five elementary schools serve K-5 students and are located throughout the community. Hastings Middle School serves students in grades six, seven, and eight with almost 800 students. Hastings Senior High School provides a comprehensive secondary school program for students in grades nine through twelve. The enrollment at the Senior High School is almost 1,000 students. The District employs approximately 561 staff members. Approximately 310 of the staff members are teachers, while the remaining 251 are administrators, custodians, maintenance workers, paraeducators, and secretaries. All employees of the District must work every day to carry out our Mission.

### **Mission**

Our fundamental purpose is to assure all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential to be successful individuals and responsible citizens.

### **Vision**

As the cornerstone of educational excellence in our community, we will continuously and passionately strive to be high performing. Our learning community will effectively meet the unique learning needs of each and every student. To attain our mission we must:

- maintain a clear and shared focus on student learning;
- continuously implement, in all grades and subject areas, an articulated and effective curriculum that aligns with recognized standards and is supported by appropriate instructional and assessment practices;
- set and maintain appropriately high expectations for students and for each other;
- frequently and systematically monitor the learning of each student to appropriately respond to each student's learning needs and to improve our ability to be a high-performing learning community;
- expect and provide for high levels of commitment, collaboration, and communication among students, parents, staff, and community members;
- provide a safe and supportive environment for learning and teaching;
- value diversity in ways that enrich student learning and our community;
- implement professional development activities for staff that support their efforts to appropriately use the best practices of high-performing schools; and
- provide effective leadership for each classroom, each building, and the District.



# 2019 - 2020 Hastings Public Schools Calendar



AUGUST 2019						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Days: 12 S / 17 T

SEPTEMBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Days: 19 S / 20 T

OCTOBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Days: 20 S / 22 T

NOVEMBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Days: 18 S / 18 T

DECEMBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Days: 15 S / 15 T

**August 2019**  
 August 6 .....New Teachers Only  
 August 8-9 & 12-14.....Teacher Pre Service  
 August 14.....First Day of Classes for Grade 7 & 8  
 (Do not attend August 15)  
 August 15.....First Day of Classes All other Grades (K-6) (9-12)

**September 2019**  
 September 2.....No School PK-12 - Labor Day  
 September 27.....No School PK-12 Professional Development Day

**October 2019**  
 October 16.....End of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter  
 October 17.....No School PK-12 Work Day  
 October 18.....No School PK-12 P/T Conf. Payback Day  
 October 21.....No School PK-12 Fall Break

**November 2019**  
 November 27-29.....No School PK-12 Thanksgiving Break

**December 2019**  
 December 20.....End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter/Semester  
 (Early Dismissal - time TBA)  
 December 23 - 27 & 30-31.....No School PK-12 Winter Break

**January 2020**  
 January 1-3.....No School PK-12 Winter Break  
 January 6.....No School PK-12 Work Day  
 January 7.....Beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester  
 January 20.....No School Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**February 2020**  
 February 14.....No School PK-12 P/T Conf. Payback Day  
 February 17.....No School PK-12 Professional Development Day

**March 2020**  
 March 6.....No School PK-12 Spring Break  
 March 12 & 13.....No School PK-12 Spring Break  
 March 19.....End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter  
 March 20.....No School PK-12 Work Day  
 March 27.....No School 9-12 Hastings High Invitational Track Meet

**April 2020**  
 April 10 & 13.....No School PK-12 Late Spring Break

**May 2020**  
 May 17.....Graduation  
 May 20.....End of 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter/Semester  
 May 21.....Work Day

### School Hours

Elementary: 8:10am - 3:20pm  
 Wednesday Early Dismissal: 2:30 pm

Middle School: 8:10am - 3:35 pm  
 Wednesday Early Dismissal: 2:35 pm

High School: 8:05am - 3:30pm  
 Wednesday Early Dismissal: 2:45 pm

**KEY:**  
 ☆ First/Last Day of School

- No Classes/School Break
- Beginning/End of Quarter
- No Classes/Professional Day
- New Teachers Only
- Payback Day for P/T Conf.
- No Classes 9-12 Only

JANUARY 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Days: 18 S / 19 T

FEBRUARY 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Days: 18 S / 20 T

MARCH 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Days: 18 S / 19 T

APRIL 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Days: 20 S / 20 T

MAY 2020						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Days: 14 S / 15 T

\*\* The calendar, including time for learning teams, may be adjusted by the District in response to inclement weather or other needs\*\*

School Days by Quarter				
1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	Total
43	41	47	41	172

## **Severe Weather and School Cancellations**

In the case of hazardous or emergency conditions, the Superintendent of Schools may alter school, transportation, and other schedules of the District as appropriate to the particular condition. Such alterations may include the closure of all schools, the closure of selected schools or grade levels, the postponement or cancellation of before and after school activities, the delayed opening of schools, and the early dismissal of students.

Decision to Close Schools. A decision to close school is made when conditions exist that make it unwise for students to attend school or a school activity. When possible and as appropriate, a decision about the next school day will be made by approximately 9 p.m. However, the Superintendent reserves the right to delay a decision to close school until approximately 6:30 a.m. on the day in question. Also, in some instances, schools may be open, but certain services may be cancelled (bus transportation, pre-school, student activities, etc.) In addition, some staff may be designated as being required to come to school even in the event of a school closing. In all cases, unless such announcement would actually increase the risk to students and staff, an announcement will be made to the news media and using other outlets (staff calling trees, telephone announcements, District web-page, etc.) when schools will be closed.

While School Is In Session. Generally, the Hastings Public Schools will not deviate from a regular schedule once school is in session. However, the District reserves the right to start late or dismiss early should such action be in the best interest of students and staff. As much advance notice as possible will be given in the case of a late start or an early dismissal. If school is closed during the day, staff will be notified by means appropriate to each building and parents will be notified by media broadcasts and other means. Teachers will be responsible for remaining with students until all students have safely left school or the administration has made arrangements for remaining students.

Parental Decisions. Parents may decide to keep their children at home in inclement weather. Students absent because of severe weather, when school is in session, will be marked "school excused" absent provided parents properly notify the school of their decision. Except during the height of a severe storm (for example, during a tornado warning), parents may pick up their children in inclement weather 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.

Emergency Conditions. The Hastings Public Schools uses designated alerts to either evacuate the building or to move students and staff to safer areas of the building. All regular drills will be held as required by law throughout the school year. All staff should have access to the District's Crisis Response Manual and are responsible for following the guidelines provided unless otherwise directed by the administration.

## **Contract Days**

First-year teachers are contracted for 187 days. All other teachers are contracted for 185 days. Individual teachers on varying schedules, as established by the Board of Education and administration, shall provide such contract days.

**Make-Up Days**

In the event teachers are not required to report for duty due to inclement weather conditions or other circumstance, such days shall not be credited as a contract day served unless credited as such by the Superintendent. Make-up days may be scheduled by the administration during the contract year as needed to allow all teaching staff to serve the full number of contract days.

## **Section 2 – Employment, Compensation and Benefits**

### **Master Agreement**

For further information pertaining to salary and benefits, please refer to the Master Agreement between the Hastings Education Association and the Hastings Public Schools Board of Education.

### **Employment**

A teacher is employed by the Hastings Public Schools when the teacher signs the Teacher's Contract and the Board of Education approves such contract of employment. The teacher's employment continues absent action by the Board of Education to accept a resignation by the teacher or to non-renew, terminate, amend, or cancel the teacher's employment contract.

On or after March 15 of each school year a teacher may be requested to accept employment for the next school year and may be required to signify such acceptance on or before April 15 or such other date as may be designated. It is important for teachers to respond to the request to signify acceptance as a failure to signify employment by April 15 or the other designated date may constitute cause for amendment or termination of the teacher's contract. If a teacher signifies acceptance of employment for the next school year, the teacher will be issued a Contract Renewal Agreement.

Should a teacher wish to resign from employment, the teacher shall provide written and signed notice of the resignation to the Superintendent. The request to resign will be acted upon by the Board of Education. Mid-year resignations and resignations provided after March 31 for the following school year may present significant planning problems for the District. A mid-year resignation will not be considered by the Board of Education unless the teacher provides the District with sixty calendar days notice prior to the effective date of the resignation, the effective date of resignation coincides with the end of a grading period, and a suitable replacement can be found. In addition, the Board of Education may reject a resignation, without suitable replacement, if the resignation is submitted after March 31. The District will enforce the continuing contract of teachers accepting employment for the next school year under applicable provisions of state statute.

### **Assignments**

The professional duties to be performed by a teacher with the District shall be subject to assignment by the Superintendent. A teacher will be expected to devote full time during days of school to the teacher's position and to diligently and faithfully perform the assigned duties to the best of the teacher's professional ability.

In addition to the normal duties required of teachers, a teacher may be assigned an extra-standard assignment to support the programming and efforts of the District. Such assignment shall be on such terms and conditions and at such additional rate of compensation as the teacher and District may agree upon or as is set forth in the Master Agreement. The extra-standard programming and efforts of the District are an integral part of the District's Mission. As such, a teacher shall not unreasonably refuse to accept an extra-standard assignment.

## **Personnel File**

The District will follow the requirements of state and federal law and regulation with regard to a teacher's personnel file. Any teacher, upon his or her request, shall have access to his or her personnel file and shall have the right to attach a written response to any item in such file with the exception of written letters of recommendation solicited by the teacher which may appear in the personnel file. No other person except school officials, while engaged in their professional duties, or individuals designated in writing by the teacher, shall be granted access to such file and the contents of the file shall not be divulged in any manner to any unauthorized person.

## **Grievances and Complaints**

Teacher grievances regarding salary and benefits of employment set forth in the Master Agreement shall be governed by the grievance procedure in the Master Agreement. All other grievances or complaints shall be addressed through the chain of communication and through procedures provided in policy. While complaints may encompass a broad range, grievances are only appropriate when it appears the Master Agreement, policy, or law is being violated.

## **Expense Reimbursement**

The District will reimburse teachers for their actual and necessary expenses. Actual and necessary expenses are only those expenses that are associated with authorized travel, conference attendance, and official function, or other business related activities necessary to attain the outcome specified by the District. Such may include meals, lodging, transportation, parking, and other expenses directly related to the travel of a teacher as an employee of the District. Expenses that shall not be reimbursed, and generally should not appear on any reimbursement request submitted to the District, would include additional expenses associated with the attendance of a person not employed by the District, the purchase of alcoholic beverages, and the purchase of items for personal use or personal entertainment.

A teacher must adequately account for and provide adequate supporting information for all expenses to be reimbursed. Claims submitted to the District must generally be supported and substantiated with receipts or cancelled checks supported by itemized bills.

The District will not reimburse employees for expenses that are reimbursed by outside agencies. For further guidance, please see Board of Education Rule 402.08.

## **403(b) Salary Reduction Agreements**

The District will cooperate with any teacher who chooses to participate in an investment program under an IRS Section 403(b), provided the teacher executes a salary reduction agreement provided by the District and the vendor of the 403(b) Plan elected by the teacher has entered into a service provider agreement with the District.



## Section 3 – Absences from Work

The Hastings Public Schools provides the following leaves for teachers:

**Personal Illness or Injury** – Also known as sick leave. Teachers are entitled up to ten days of paid leave per year for personal illness or injury. Whenever a teacher has been absent due to illness or injury less than ten days in a work year, the difference between the ten days and the number of days actually used by the teacher are accumulative. Teachers who have exhausted their sick leave allotment may apply for additional sick leave through the District's Sick Leave Bank.

**Family Illness** – A teacher may use his/her sick leave allowance and accumulation for the illness or injury of an immediate family member. Immediate family is defined as spouse; son; son-in-law; daughter; daughter-in-law; father; father-in-law; mother; mother-in-law; sister; sister-in-law; brother; brother-in-law; grandchild; grandfather; grandmother; aunt; uncle; niece; nephew; a person standing in loco parentis to an employee; or a person permanently residing in the household of the employee, regardless of the relationship to the employee.

**Bereavement** – A teacher may use up to five days of paid leave per occurrence in the event of the death of a member of his or her immediate family.

**Personal** – A teacher may use four days of personal leave per school year. Two days may be taken for private business with no loss of pay. On the other two days available, a teacher's salary will be reduced by an amount equal to the gross compensation which would have to be paid by the District for a substitute teacher during the each day of absence, regardless of whether such substitute teacher is hired or not. No more than one teacher per elementary building per day, no more than two teachers per Middle School per day and no more than three teachers per Senior High per day may be granted such leave. The Superintendent or designee may make exceptions to this limitation. Also, a substitute teacher, acceptable to the Principal of the building, must be available.

**Jury Duty** – Teachers who are required to serve on a jury shall suffer no loss of pay, provided that all jury fees, except reimbursement for expenses, received by the teacher are turned over to the District.

**Military and Family Military Leave** – Granted in accordance with applicable law.

**Long-Term Leave of Absence** – Such leave may be granted upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and at the discretion of the Board of Education. Long-term leave will be granted only under the following conditions:

- a. This leave will be without pay.
- b. Application must be filed with the Superintendent at least one month in advance of the date the leave is to take effect. If the absence is anticipated for the ensuing school year, an application for leave must be filed no later than May 31 of the preceding year.
- c. A teacher requesting this leave must have been employed by HPS for at least five years.
- d. A teacher who is granted this absence will be reinstated to employment with the District only if there is a vacant position for which he or she is qualified.

**Professional** – Teachers may be granted leave days to attend workshops, seminars, conferences, etc., provided that approval is granted in advance by the building principal.

**Sabbatical** – Such leave may be granted for not less than one semester or more than one year. Teachers who have completed five years of continuous and satisfactory service in HPS are eligible. Teachers may be granted a sabbatical leave for the following purposes:

- a. Study at an accredited institution in an area directly related to elementary and secondary education in a public school setting.
- b. Travel that will enhance the teacher's professional growth and development.
- c. Observations of schools and schoolwork for the purpose of conducting research.

**Family Parenting** – Teachers will be granted five days of paid parenting leave upon the birth or adoption of a child. Such leave must be taken within thirty calendar days of the birth or adoption of a child or immediately following the end of the period of disability associated with the pregnancy and childbirth. The days may be consecutive or non-consecutive days spread through the thirty-day period. Family Parenting Leave is non-cumulative from year to year.

**Grandparent** – If a teacher's accumulative sick leave total will provide a sufficient number of days, a teacher may use up to five days of his or her sick leave upon the birth of a grandchild or a step grandchild or upon adoption of an infant by a child or step-child. This leave must be granted by the Superintendent and taken within sixty calendar days of the birth of the grandchild, a step-grandchild, or the adoption.

**Family and Medical** – See Board of Education Policy 410.03 or Appendix G of the most current Master Agreement.

**Payroll Deductions for Absences in Excess of Paid Leave** – Should a teacher be absent from work in excess of the teacher's accumulated sick leave or other paid or semi-paid leaves called for by the Master Agreement, the teacher's salary shall be reduced by the day or days of work missed on a per diem basis.

**Unpaid Leave** – When a teacher has exhausted the personal leave days provided, he or she may be granted additional days of personal leave at full loss of pay, provided the proceedings and conditions set forth for personal leave are met. Additional days for family travel, vacations, or trips for personal pleasure shall not be granted.

*For a more detailed description of each leave, teachers should review Article 9 of the most-recent Master Agreement between the Hastings Education Association and the Hastings Public Schools.*

## **Section 4 – Duties and Responsibilities**

### **Hours and Meetings**

Regular, dependable attendance at work is an essential function of a teacher's employment position.

The Board of Education recognizes that teacher's responsibilities to their students and their profession generally involve the performance of duties and the commitment of time beyond the normal working day, but also recognizes that teachers and other educational professionals are entitled to regular time and work schedules on which they can rely in the ordinary course of events and which will be fairly and evenly maintained to the extent possible throughout the District.

Schools have different starting and ending times for the student day. The normal day of work for teachers is eight hours including a duty-free lunch period of thirty minutes. Teachers may have earlier or later arrival or departure times and be permitted to leave the building during the normal workday on an individual basis, provided that permission is obtained from his or her Principal or designee.

Teachers may be required to serve on playground, lunchroom, before-school, after-school, hall supervision, study hall supervision, or other general areas of supervision as assigned by the Principal. The Principal will attempt to make an equitable distribution of such assignments.

Teachers shall attend meetings called by the Superintendent, Directors, Principals, Liaisons, Team Leaders, and other leaders, except those meetings which are designated for optional attendance.

### **Lesson Plans**

Teachers will prepare lesson plans on a weekly basis. Plans will be kept by the teacher in a place known to and accessible to building administrators. The Principal may further require teachers to provide copies of lesson plans to the school office at reasonable times and intervals as determined by the Principal.

The lesson plan should be of sufficient length and substance to allow a substitute teacher to carry on the course of study and should provide a means by which Principals and supervisors may monitor instruction to assure that the educational program in a particular class or activity is related to the District-approved course of study. In addition, the lesson plan should identify the essential or key concept each lesson addresses.

Although the District will provide lesson plan books, Principals may request another system or format for the presentation of lesson plans provided the format meets the purpose of planning. Principals may also require more detailed or specific plans to assist individual teachers.

It is recognized that provision for flexibility is essential within the lesson plan to allow for unexpected changes and varying learning rates.

## Daily Class Records

Every teacher is required to keep a complete and printable record of the attendance and achievement of every student in the District's student information management system. The record must be kept current and accurate.

While there is no minimum requirement for the frequency of recorded grades, be sure to assess and grade frequently enough to readily and realistically justify the term and final grade reported to the student and the student's parent.

Information pertaining to a student should not be shared or seen by other students or parents.

## Classroom and School Procedures

Teachers are expected to adhere to the following classroom and school procedures in the performance of their duties:

a. Room Appearance

Classrooms are to be well-organized and orderly in appearance. Bulletin boards, if available, should be well-organized, orderly, relevant to the curriculum, and periodically changed to maintain relevance.

b. Textbook and Room Inventory

All school purchased materials must be inventoried using procedures determined by each Principal. Teachers are to maintain accurate inventory records.

c. Use of Cell Phones

Teachers shall not use personal cell phones for any non-school purpose during teacher duty time. Teachers may use cell phones for personal reasons only during planning periods if such use is of short duration, intermittent, and necessary to facilitate the work of the teacher or to address an emergency. Personal cell phone use, of course, is not prohibited during a teacher's duty free lunch.

Teachers are not to use wireless cell phones or to otherwise engage in distracted driving while transporting students. This rule applies to the driver when the vehicle is in motion.

Teachers will abide by all rules of the road and any applicable rules of the Nebraska Department of Education and the District relating to driving a motor vehicle. Seat belts and child restraint systems will be utilized by all occupants.

d. Recording of Others

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of student information, no person is authorized to record or transmit any sound or image of any person (including themselves) without the prior consent or authorization of either (1) the person or persons being recorded or whose image or sound is being transmitted or (2) the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee. While this prohibition

applies to all persons, including staff, students and community members, regardless of the content or context of the image or sound, this provision shall not apply to recordings that are used to further school purposes or District-sponsored athletic or activity events where the focus of the recording or transmission is on the student performances or activity. Nothing in this provision shall prohibit the recording of an Individualized Education Program meeting if the recording is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the IEP or the IEP process or to implement other parental rights guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. When a question arises, staff are to consult with his or her building administrator.

e. Use of Paraeducators

Paraeducators provide valuable assistance in the educational process and allow teachers to carry out their own responsibilities in a more efficient and effective manner. A paraeducator must not, however, assume teaching responsibilities. The teacher must maintain the role of leadership and responsibility for students, with the paraeducator in a supportive role. Paraeducators may be used to assist the 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 and other visual displays, grading tests or class work, and calculate and record grades. Paraeducators are to work only to their assigned hours per day and within their annual day allotment. If the teacher desires a paraeducator to work hours other than the assigned work hours or assigned work day, the teacher needs to contact the appropriate Principal for approval.

f. Use of Student Aides

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

g. Use of Equipment

All equipment must be checked out using procedures established by the Principal or District. All school equipment must only be used for school purposes. No school equipment may be directed to the personal use of a teacher or another District employee except as provided by policy. No equipment or supplies ordered through the District may be directed to the personal use of a teacher or another District employee.

h. Requisition of Equipment and Supplies

Books, equipment, and other supplies needed for instruction are to be requested using the acquisition procedures of the District and with the approval of the Principal.

- j. E-mail  
Each teacher will be assigned a school e-mail address for the purposes of intra-school and inter-school e-mail correspondence. Teachers should check for e-mail throughout the day, and should timely respond to e-mails which require a response, but should avoid checking and responding to e-mails during instructional time. Use of the District's e-mail system for personal communications should be limited and is subject to the rules governing overall computer usage found in Board policy.
- k. Teacher Mailbox  
Each teacher will be assigned a mailbox located in his or her assigned building or buildings. Teachers should check for mail each morning or when they arrive at a building and also later in the school day, if possible. If something requires an answer, teachers are responsible for responding promptly. While teacher mailboxes may include non-school correspondence, such correspondence may be totally ignored and disposed of by the teacher.
- l. Meetings  
Meetings will be periodically held. All teachers are expected to be present for each meeting, unless they are absent from school and/or have made prior arrangements.

### **Supervision of Students**

Proper supervision of students is an important responsibility for teachers and other adults responsible for our students. Teachers and other adults responsible for student supervision are expected to meet the following:

- a. Proper Supervision
  - Report for all duty assignments early, but at a minimum, on time.
  - Circulate through your duty area paying particular attention to areas and/or activities that pose an increased risk of injury.
  - Be vigilant while supervising students. Classrooms, when students are present, are not to be left unattended (the need to make a copy is not greater than the need to supervise students). If an emergency requires that you leave your classroom, request that another nearby staff member cover your class or notify the office so that someone can provide assistance. If you are on recess or hallway duty, your responsibility is to supervise students in your assigned area. When talking with other adults or students, please remember that your primary responsibility is supervision. At all times, you are to be aware of what all students in your supervision area are doing.
  - If you have seen or have been informed that a particular student has a propensity to act dangerously or in an unpredictable manner, your supervision of that student must increase with the known risk of injury. Please remember, however, that this type of information about a student is confidential – do not share confidential information about students except with other staff who need to know the information to carry out their responsibilities.

-Be careful with touching students. Use of corporal punishment, in any form, is prohibited by the Hastings Public Schools. Please refer to Board of Education Policy 505.06 for directions on the use of reasonable force. In general, the touching of students should be limited to that necessary to protect the student or others from harm and that which professional educators determine appropriate for the purposes of building a proper student/teacher relationship.

-Be careful of your language. Profanity or abusive language should not be used. Be a good role model for students. If a student uses profane or abusive language, you should correct the student and take such disciplinary action as is appropriate.

b. Proper Instruction

-Proper instructions are important in reducing the risk of injury when students undertake an activity, particularly when the activity has an increased risk of harm to students.

-Repeat the instructions on how to complete a task that has a heightened risk of danger as often as needed. Do not assume because students heard the directions once that they will remember them.

-When you go over safety rules with students, try to note in a written record (a calendar, lesson plans, journal, etc.) that you did so.

-Review playground and classroom safety rules with students as often as needed to assure a safe environment. Again, try to note in a written record that you did so. Be mindful of absent students. If any student is absent when you review rules or safety procedures, you need to review those rules or safety procedures with that student when they return to school. Again, try to note in a written record that you did so.

c. Proper Maintenance of Buildings, Grounds, and Equipment

-Conduct periodic inspections of equipment under your control or in your area of supervision.

-If equipment is broken and presents a risk of injury, immediately take it out of service and notify the office so that repairs may be undertaken. If the piece of equipment cannot be moved, tape a "Do Not Use" sign to it.

-Check your communication device, if one has been issued to you, to make sure you can communicate with the office immediately in the event of an emergency.

d. Proper Warnings

-If you have knowledge of a hazard that can likely cause injury, take steps to warn other staff and students. Tell the office so additional warnings may be given.

### **Contact the Office for Assistance**

The office administration should be contacted immediately when a situation exists that could cause injury to students or others. Examples include, but may not be limited to:

-students fighting;

-student health problem (fainting, bleeding, high temperature, difficulty breathing, etc.); if the office can not be immediately contacted, call 911 if the problem appears to be of immediate and serious concern;

- a report or a suspicion that a student has a weapon or other dangerous item or drugs, alcohol, or other illegal substances; and
- the presence of an intruder (anyone who refuses to go to the office when directed to do so).

### **Student Searches**

Administrators should be contacted before performing any searches of students or their belongings. Teachers are to direct a student suspected of having an item in violation of school rules to wait with you until another adult is present or to follow you to the office if you can leave your assigned area without causing risk of harm to others. Teachers shall not use physical force to detain the student or to make the student accompany the teacher except as when reasonable and necessary to protect the student or others.

### **Student Rights**

Students should be treated fairly and given the same treatment without consideration of race, color, sex, marital status, national origin, religion, or disability. Students who need special accommodations should be given those accommodations as needed for them to participate in school and school activities. Further, students have the right to have their school records kept confidential. Such information should be shared only with other school staff with a need to know the information to perform their duties.

### **Managing Student Conduct**

Discipline is everyone's responsibility. It begins with the student being responsible for his or her behavior and understanding the consequences it may cause. It continues with parents who expect their child to be held accountable and who support the legitimate and proper efforts of educators. The teacher is responsible for articulating classroom expectations at the beginning of the school year, implementing the classroom expectations on a consistent basis, and being familiar with the student handbook of each assigned building. ALL staff are responsible for ALL students in the hallways, restrooms, at assemblies, at activities, at lunch, and at other school functions where students and teachers gather. Consequences for inappropriate behavior should be applied to misbehaving students as provided by the student handbook, administrative regulations or directives, and the policies of the District.

### **Dispensing Medication**

Teachers are not permitted to give any medication to students unless trained under the Medication Aid Act. Students who need to take prescription medicine must have a signed parent release form on file in the office. Medications are to be taken in the presence of the office staff, the nurse, or medication aid and are to be stored in the office. Medical procedures are not to be administered in the classroom except in accordance with the District's protocols (asthma/anaphylaxis protocol, CPR).

### **Reporting Child Abuse**



Nebraska law and District policy mandates school officials to make a report to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protective Services) when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, or a child is in a situation which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect. According to Nebraska law, abuse or neglect means knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be:

- Placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health;
- Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;
- Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care;
- Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor child is six years of age or younger;
- Sexually abused; or
- Sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to solicit for or engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions.

Teachers are to inform their Principal that they intend to make a report. Administrative staff may sometimes choose to make the report for the teachers. However, informing a Principal or other administrator does not end the teacher's responsibility; teachers are obligated to make certain a report was made if they do not do it themselves.

### **Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment**

The curriculum of the Hastings Public Schools shall articulate what students are to know and be able to do in each subject, at each grade or content level. At a minimum, the curriculum shall document the learning that is essential and the assessment method(s), formative and summative as appropriate, that will be used to determine the learning of each student. To the greatest degree possible, the learning experiences of students shall reflect the written, intended curriculum. To support this curriculum, the District will obtain supportive materials and/or resources. While the obtained materials and resources shall be used to deliver the curriculum, they do not, at any time, replace the written curriculum of the District.

Curriculum development, implementation, and review shall be an ongoing process in the School District. Each curriculum area shall be reviewed and revised by teachers and administrators when necessary according to the timelines set out by the Superintendent. These timelines will provide for periodic review of each curriculum area.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for establishing a plan for the systematic development, implementation, and review of each subject area curriculum by the appropriate teaching staff. In making recommendations to the Board, the Superintendent shall propose a curriculum that will:

- a. fulfill the Philosophy, Mission, and Vision of the School District;
- b. reflect the developmental needs of students while specifying the learning essentials (what students need to know or be able to do) for each subject area at each grade or course level;
- c. articulate courses of study from pre-kindergarten through grade twelve;
- d. provide for the objective monitoring of a student's progress;

- e. provide for an evaluation of whether the intended curriculum and supportive materials help students to attain what is essential;
- f. include, if feasible, the course offerings requested by the students; and meet the requirements of the Nebraska Department of Education. In meeting the requirements of the Nebraska Department of Education, the Board of Education of the Hastings Public Schools has adopted the academic standards of the State, as adopted, and subsequently adopted or amended, by the State Board of Education in the areas of Language Arts (reading and writing), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

Teachers are to continue to refine their instructional knowledge and skills using the language and direction provided by the District's adopted instructional framework.

Teachers are to use appropriate and effective assessment practices within best or recommended practice, guidelines provided by the District and/or, as applicable, by state and federal guidelines.

## **Section 5 – Personal and Professional Conduct**

## **Professional Ethics Standards**

The Hastings Public Schools expects its certificated employees to adhere to the professional ethics standards established by the Nebraska Department of Education as such standards may be modified from time to time. The professional ethics standards which certificated employees are expected to adhere to include those set forth below. References to “educator” shall include all certificated employees of the District.

### Preamble

The educator shall believe in the worth and dignity of human beings. Recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, the devotion to excellence and the nurture of democratic citizenship, the educator shall regard as essential to these goals the protection of the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator shall accept the responsibility to practice the profession to these ethical standards.

The educator shall recognize the magnitude of the responsibility he or she has accepted in choosing a career in education, and engages, individually and collectively with other educators, to judge his or her colleagues, and to be judged by them, in accordance with the provisions of this code of ethics.

The standards listed in this section are held to be generally accepted minimal standards for public school certificate holders in the State of Nebraska and for all educators, including administrators, with respect to ethical and professional conduct.

### Principle I - Commitment as a Professional Educator:

Fundamental to the pursuit of high educational standards is the maintenance of a profession possessed of individuals with high skills, intellect, integrity, wisdom, and compassion. The educator shall exhibit good moral character, maintain high standards of performance and promote equality of opportunity.

In fulfillment of the educator's contractual and professional responsibilities, the educator:

- A. Shall not interfere with the exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities of students, colleagues, parents, school patrons, or school board members.
- B. Shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, marital status, age, national origin, ethnic background, or handicapping condition.
- C. Shall not use coercive means, or promise or provide special treatment to students, colleagues, school patrons, or school board members in order to influence professional decisions.
- D. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact for which the educator is responsible.
- E. Shall not exploit professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, school patrons, or school board members for personal gain or private advantage.
- F. Shall not sexually harass students, parents or school patrons, employees, or board members.

- G. Shall not have had revoked for cause in another state a teaching certificate, administrative certificate, or any certificate enabling a person to engage in any of the activities for which a special services counseling certificate is issued in Nebraska.
- H. Shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties.
- I. Shall report to the Superintendent any known violation of paragraphs G, E, or B above.
- J. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported a violation of this rule.

Principle II - Commitment to the Student:

Mindful that a profession exists for the purpose of serving the best interests of the client, the educator shall practice the profession with genuine interest, concern, and consideration for the student. The educator shall work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator:

- A. Shall permit the student to pursue reasonable independent scholastic effort, and shall permit the student access to varying points of view.
- B. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter for which the educator is responsible.
- C. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions which interfere with the learning process or are harmful to health or safety.
- D. Shall conduct professional educational activities in accordance with sound educational practices that are in the best interest of the student.
- E. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes, or is required by law.
- F. Shall not tutor for remuneration students assigned to his or her classes unless approved by the Board of Education.
- G. Shall not discipline students using corporal punishment.

Principle III - Commitment to the Public:

The magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the education process requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage. The educator bears particular responsibility for instilling an understanding of the confidence in the rule of law, respect for individual freedom, and a responsibility to promote respect by the public for the integrity of the profession.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the public, the educator:

- A. Shall not misrepresent an institution with which the educator is affiliated, and shall take added precautions to distinguish between the educator's personal and institutional views.

- B. Shall not use institutional privileges for private gain or to promote political candidates, political issues, or partisan political activities.
- C. Shall neither offer nor accept gifts or favors that will impair professional judgment.
- D. Shall support the principle of due process and protect the political, citizenship, and natural rights of all individuals.
- E. Shall not commit any act of moral turpitude, nor commit any felony under the laws of the United States or any state or territory.
- F. Shall, with reasonable diligence, attend to the duties of his or her professional position.

Principle IV - Commitment to the Profession:

In belief that the quality of the services to the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to improve service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education. The educator shall believe that sound professional relationships with colleagues are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator:

- A. Shall provide upon the request of an aggrieved party, a written statement of specific reasons for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
- B. Shall not misrepresent his or her professional qualifications, nor those of colleagues.
- C. Shall practice the profession only with proper certification, and shall actively oppose the practice of the profession by persons known to be unqualified.

Principle V - Commitment to Professional Employment Practices:

The educator shall regard the employment agreement as a pledge to be executed both in spirit and in fact. The educator shall believe that sound personnel relationships with governing boards are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.

In fulfillment of the obligation to professional employment practices, the educator:

- A. Shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or responsibility on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.
- B. Shall not knowingly withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or employer, or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
- C. Shall give prompt notice to the employer of any change in availability of service.
- D. Shall conduct professional business through designated procedures, when available, that have been approved by the employing agency.

- E. Shall not assign to unqualified personnel, tasks for which an educator is responsible.
- F. Shall permit no commercial or personal exploitation of his or her professional position.
- G. Shall use time on duty and leave time for the purpose for which intended.

### **Teacher Evaluation**

Appraisals of the performance of teachers are to be conducted in accordance with District policy. The Teacher Observation and Evaluation Handbook will be distributed at the beginning of the year and is also available online at [www.hastingspublicschools.org](http://www.hastingspublicschools.org) under STAFF, then under EMPLOYEE LINKS & FORMS you will find the “Teacher Observation and Evaluation Handbook”. The Marzano Instructional Framework will be used and the evaluation tool will be iObservation. Teachers are expected to be familiar with the evaluation model. Teachers are also expected to participate constructively and positively in the appraisal process and to implement constructive suggestions and improvement strategies provided by the administrative instructional leaders responsible for the appraisal and supervision of instruction.

### **Role Model Responsibilities**

Teachers serve as role models for students and their actions and conduct reflect on the school as a whole. Teachers are, in all respects, to conduct themselves in a professional manner.

#### Notification of Arrest, etc.

Employees must notify Superintendent by the next business day after:

1. Arrest or Criminal Charges. The employee is arrested, ticketed, or issued a criminal charge where:
  - a. The maximum penalty for the crime equals or exceeds six months incarceration;
  - b. The crime relates to abuse, neglect or endangerment of a minor, a minor was allegedly a victim or a witness, or the crime involves alleged sexual misconduct;
  - c. Conviction would impact performance of employee’s job responsibilities, including offenses that:
    - i. Would impact the responsibility to be a role model for students or relations with other employees of Hastings Public Schools;
    - ii. Would impact the employee’s ability to operate a motor vehicle if the employee at times needs to travel during duty time or the employee at times drives students; or
    - iii. Would impact the employee’s Commercial Drivers License if the employee’s job requires that the employee have a CDL.
  - d. The arrest or the alleged criminal activity occurred while the employee was on duty, on property of Hastings Public Schools, or in a school-owned or utilized vehicle, or at a school-supervised activity or school-sponsored function.

Employees must also promptly report to the Superintendent whenever the employee has been sentenced to be incarcerated for any period of time, even if the offense is not otherwise reportable.

2. Certificate or License. The employee becomes aware that a complaint has been filed against the employee that could affect a certificate or license required for the employee's position. This includes proceedings of the Nebraska Department of Education related to an alleged violation of the NDE Standards of Conduct and Ethics, Chapter 27, and proceedings of the Health and Human Services related to an alleged violation of the professional standards of conduct for the employee's position.
3. Child Abuse. The employee becomes aware that a report of child abuse or neglect has been made against the employee under the Child Protection Act. Further, employees must give full disclosure of any Child Protection Act investigation that resulted in an "inconclusive" determination that occurred at any time. As a condition of employment, applicants for employment must give such disclosure post-offer but prior to the actual commencement of employment. Any hiring made without such disclosure may be subject to being immediately revoked in the event the required disclosure was not given.

Failure to notify as required here may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Civility**

All employees shall behave with civility, fairness, and respect in dealing with fellow employees, students, parents, patrons, visitors, or anyone else having business with the Hastings Public Schools. Uncivil behaviors are prohibited. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination for engaging in uncivil behaviors.

Uncivil behaviors are any behaviors that are physically or verbally threatening, either overtly or implicitly, as well as behaviors that are coercive, intimidating, violent or harassing. Such interactions are prohibited in all forms of communication, including telephone conversations, voice mail messages, face-to-face conversations, written communications, and e-mail messages.

Any employee aware of another employee's uncivil behavior shall report the conduct to the employee's immediate supervisor or to the Superintendent. There will be no retaliation against a person for making such a report in good faith.

### **Visitors to Employees**

Employees are not to have visitors while on duty other than as appropriate for the performance of their duties except on a short-term basis and only with permission of the Superintendent or designee. Included in the definition of visitors are family members of the employee. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their visitors follow posted procedures for being on Hastings Public Schools property. Employees are not to bring their children to work with them in lieu of taking them to childcare or providing other means for their care.

## **Tobacco Free Facilities and Property**

It shall be the policy of the Hastings Public Schools that all uses of tobacco and tobacco products (including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, and chewing tobacco), vapor products (such as e-cigarettes), alternative nicotine products, tobacco product look-alikes, and products intended to replicate tobacco products either by appearance or effect, will be prohibited within the District's facilities and the property owned by the District.

At no time will the use of tobacco and tobacco products, vapor products, alternative nicotine products, tobacco product look-alikes, or products intended to replicate tobacco products either by appearance or effect be permitted in classrooms, corridors, restrooms, locker rooms, work areas, cafeterias, offices, faculty lounges, gymnasiums, or other rooms located within the District's facilities.

It shall further be the policy of the Hastings Public Schools that the use of tobacco and tobacco products, vapor products, alternative nicotine products, tobacco look-alikes, and products intended to replicate tobacco products either by appearance or effect will be prohibited in all vehicles owned, leased, or operated by the District.

District employees and students enrolled in the District's schools will not be permitted to use tobacco and tobacco products, vapor products, alternative nicotine products, tobacco look-alikes, and products intended to replicate tobacco products either by appearance or effect while they are participants in any class or activity in which they represent the Hastings Public School District.

This does not preclude adults from wearing non-visible nicotine patches or using nicotine gum (without displaying the product container), as a part of a tobacco cessation program.

It is the intention of the Board of Education that this policy will become effective on August 1, 2014. It shall apply to all employees of the Hastings Public Schools, to all students enrolled in the Hastings Public Schools, to all visitors, to employees of agencies who work with students and/or employees of the Hastings Public Schools, to spectators at various contests and activities, and to all other persons who are authorized to be in the District's facilities or on property owned by the District.

## **Complaints or Concerns of Employees**

Employees are to inform the Hastings Public Schools of any complaints or concerns about the operations of the Hastings Public Schools using the established chain of command (immediate supervisor, next higher level supervisor, etc.) on all matters that require administrative attention; that is, on all matters or issues that their job responsibilities require them to report to a supervisor.

It is important to the efficient and successful operation of Hastings Public Schools and a duty of all of the District's employees to share any such complaints or concerns in a responsible, professional manner such as to: (1) not disrupt the proper functioning of their office, department, or position; (2) not undermine the authority of their co-workers, supervisors, or superiors; (3) maintain close working relationships with their co-workers, supervisors, and superiors; and (4) ensure that all applicable laws and regulations are followed. All employee



official communications must be accurate, demonstrate sound judgment, and promote the Hastings Public Schools' Mission. Employees must ensure that all applicable laws and regulations are followed by the Hastings Public Schools and its employees. In the event an employee becomes aware of any such non-compliance, the employee is to report such to the employee's immediate supervisor (or the next higher level, if the supervisor is responsible for the problem) and maintain the confidentiality of the report so that the problem can be appropriately corrected in the best interests of Hastings Public Schools.

Employees are to use the appropriate complaint or grievance mechanism for matters involving discrimination or harassment or other established mechanisms specific to the nature of the complaint or concern as provided by policy.

Hastings Public Schools will not tolerate unlawful retaliation against an employee for engaging in legally protected activity. A protected activity includes an employee's act of opposing an unlawful practice prohibited by employment discrimination or other laws that protect the conduct in question. Any act of unlawful retaliation by a supervisor or other employee may result in serious disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any employee may file a complaint with their building administrator or with the appropriate district administrator if the employee feels that they have experienced unlawful retaliation in any form.

## **Relationships**

It is important for teachers to maintain an effective working relationship with the administration and all co-workers, including other teachers and support staff. Teachers are also to maintain appropriate relationships with students. Appropriate relationships are established by extending social courtesies, following through on commitments and promises, complying with administrative directives and Board policies, being honest and consistent, and not intruding into personal matters outside the scope of duties or gossiping or spreading rumors about others.

### Professional Boundaries Between Employees and Students

The following non-exclusive list of actions will be regarded as violations of the professional boundaries that employees are expected to maintain with a student:

- Using electronic media or other avenues of communication (e.g., e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, social networking sites, telephone, etc.), to discuss with a student a matter that does not pertain to school-related activities such as the student's homework, class activity, school sport or club, or other school-sponsored activity.
- Posting material on networks, publicly available to those in the school community, that do not reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and that impairs the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents or impairs the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children.
- Engaging in conduct of an inappropriate, romantic, or sexual nature with a student.
- Purposefully invading a student's physical privacy (e.g., walking in on the student in a restroom) without appropriate justification.

- Hugging or other physical contact with a student initiated by the employee when the student does not seek or want this attention.
- Allowing a specific student to get away with conduct that is not tolerated from other students, except as provided for that student by a 504 Plan or IEP.
- Discussing with a student the employee's problems that would normally be discussed with adults (e.g., marital problems).
- Giving a student a ride in the employee's personal vehicle without the express permission of the student's parent or a school administrator (unless another adult is in the vehicle).
- Taking a student on an outing without obtaining the prior express permission of the student's parent or a school administrator.
- Inviting a student to the employee's home without the prior express permission of the student's parent and a school administrator.
- Going to the student's home when the student's parent or a proper chaperone is not present.
- Giving gifts of a personal nature to a specific student.

Appropriate exceptions are permitted to the foregoing for legitimate health or educational purposes and for reasons of family relationships between employees and their children who are students in the District.

### **Professional Attire**

It is important for teachers to project a professional image to students, parents, and co-workers. Appropriate attire and grooming is one of the means of projecting a professional image. Teachers are expected to maintain conservative, appropriate, safe, and professional attire and grooming when on duty. As professionals, teachers are expected to be aware of the standard to be maintained. As a minimal guide, teachers should not wear clothing that students would not be permitted to wear at school. The administration may establish more detailed guidelines for individual teachers should they believe such guidelines are necessary.

### **Private Tutoring**

Teachers are encouraged to provide individual assistance to students as a part of their position. Teachers who engage in private tutoring for pay (compensation of any kind from a source other than the District) are subject to the following:

- The teacher may not arrange to provide private tutoring for any child enrolled in the teacher's class.
- The teacher is not to provide private tutoring in a school building.
- The teacher is not to provide private tutoring during duty hours.
- The teacher is not to advertise or promote the teacher's private tutoring services in the school or in the school's communications systems except with the express

permission of the Superintendent or designee.

### **Outside Employment**

Teachers shall not perform duties unrelated to the District employment during duty hours. In addition, teachers shall not engage in employment that conflicts with their school duties. The Board may request the teacher to cease outside employment as a condition of continued employment with the District.

### **Safe Transportation**

Generally, the transportation of students shall be in vehicles owned or leased by the District and driven by an employee. In some cases, it may be more economical, efficient, or staff preferred for the District to allow an employee of the District to transport students in the employee's vehicle. Employees who transport students for school purposes must have permission from the appropriate administrator. When driving and transporting students, employees are to abide by all rules of the road and any applicable rules of the Nebraska Department of Education and the District. Seat belts and child restraint systems will be utilized by all occupants. When transporting students, employees are not to use cell phones or to otherwise engage in distracting activity while the vehicle is in motion. The only exception would be in the case of an emergency where transportation and communication are essential.

## **Section 6 – Use of School Facilities and Equipment**

### **Drug-Free School and Community**

It is absolutely prohibited for any employee of the District to engage in the possession, use, or distribution of alcohol or illicit drugs on school premises or as a part of any of the District's activities, or for any employee to be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs while on school premises or while attending any school activity. It shall be the policy of the District to require an employee who has been charged or convicted of a violation of any statute pertaining to the use of alcohol or illicit drugs to report such charge or conviction to the Superintendent or designee. Any employee having concerns about an admission constituting self-incrimination shall bear the burden of seeking his/her own legal advice regarding any such potential self-incrimination. Sanctions and procedures that may be taken in response to an employee's non-compliance may be found in Board of Education Policy 404.08.

### **Tobacco-Free Facilities and Property**

It shall be the policy of the Hastings Public Schools that all uses of tobacco and tobacco products (including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, and chewing tobacco), vapor products (such as e-cigarettes), alternative nicotine products, tobacco product look-alikes, and products intended to replicate tobacco products either by appearance or effect, will be prohibited within the District's facilities and the property owned by the District.

This does not preclude adults from wearing non-visible nicotine patches or using nicotine gum (without displaying the product container), as a part of a tobacco cessation program.

### **Weapon-Free School**

Possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon and look-a-likes, including, but not limited to, guns and knives, is prohibited. Weapons under the control of law enforcement officials shall be exempt from this policy. A teacher may possess an item that may be considered a weapon where such item is used for instructional purposes and the teacher has received approval of the administration to possess the item, provided it is used in a manner approved and is maintained in a manner as directed by the administration.

### **Use of District Computer Network and Internet**

Teachers have access to the District's computer network and the Internet for the enhancement and support of student instruction. Occasional and intermittent personal use that the Superintendent or designee determine to facilitate the work of staff in attaining the Mission of the District are not prohibited. It is important to remember that the equipment and the software are the property of the school district.

In using the computers and the Internet, teachers are agreeing to the following:

1. Since copyright laws protect software, teachers will not make unauthorized copies of software found on school computers by any means. Teachers will

- not give, lend, or sell copies of software to others unless the original software is clearly identified as shareware or in the public domain.
2. If a teacher downloads public domain programs for personal use or non-commercially redistributes a public domain program, the teacher assumes all risks regarding the determination of whether a program is in the public domain.
  3. Teachers shall not access material that is obscene, child pornography or an otherwise inappropriate matter for educational or work-related uses or contrary to the District's Mission. Teachers are not permitted to knowingly access information that is profane, obscene or offensive toward a group or individual based upon race, gender, national origin or religion. Further, teachers are prohibited from placing such information on the Internet.
  4. Teachers will protect the privacy of other computer users' areas by not accessing their passwords without written permission. Teachers will not copy, change, read, or use another person's files. Teachers will not engage in "hacking" or otherwise attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment.
  5. Teachers will not use computer systems to disturb or harass other computer users by sending unwanted mail or by other means.
  6. Teachers will not disclose their passwords and account names to anyone or attempt to ascertain or use anyone else's password and account name.
  7. Teachers will not attempt to login to the system as a system administrator unless given permission to do so by the system administrator and under the conditions established by the system administrator.
  8. Teachers understand that the intended use of all computer equipment is to meet instructional objectives.
  9. Teachers will not waste or take District supplies including, but not limited to paper, printer ribbon, toner, etc.
  10. Teachers will not use the network for financial gain or for any commercial or illegal activity.
  11. Attempts to bypass security systems on computer workstations or servers, or vandalism, will result in cancellation of privileges and may result in further consequences. Malicious attempts to harm or destroy data of another teacher, or data that resides anywhere on the network or on the Internet, or the uploading or creation of computer viruses are forbidden.
  12. The District will not be responsible for any liabilities, costs, expenses, or purchases incurred by the use of the District's telecommunications systems such as the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the purchase of on line services or products. The teacher is solely responsible for any such charges. The teacher's acceptance of an email account is an acceptance of the teacher's agreement to indemnify the District for any expenses, including legal fees, arising out of the teacher's use of the system in violation of the agreement.
  13. The Internet will be supplied for your use on an "as is, as available" basis. The District does not imply or expressly warrant that any information you access will be valuable or fit for a particular purpose or that the system will operate error free.
  14. The District is not responsible for the integrity of information accessed or the software downloaded from the Internet.
  15. The District reserves the right to refuse posting of files and to remove files.

16. The District further reserves the right to inspect a teacher's computer and computer usage at any time. Teachers have no privacy rights or expectations of privacy with regard to use of the District's computers or Internet system.
17. The computer system is not a public forum. It is provided for the limited purpose of advancing the District's Mission.
18. A technology protection measure is in place that blocks and/or filters Internet access to prevent access to Internet sites that are not in accordance with policies and regulations. In addition to blocks and/or filters, the District may also use other technology protection measures or procedures as deemed appropriate. The technology protection measure that blocks and/or filters Internet access may be disabled only by an authorized staff member for bona fide research or educational purposes: (a) who has successfully completed district training on proper disabling circumstances and procedures, (b) with permission of the immediate supervisor of the staff member requesting said disabling, or (c) with the permission of a building administrator. An authorized staff member may override the technology protection measure that blocks and/or filters Internet access for a minor to access a site for bona fide research or other lawful purposes provided the minor is monitored directly by an authorized staff member.

Any violation of any part of this agreement or any other activity which school administrators deem inappropriate will be subject to disciplinary action. Discipline could include but would not be limited to, the immediate suspension or termination of the teacher's Internet account and computer privileges, reprimand, suspension, or termination.

Please see Appendix A for "Social Media Guidelines for Faculty and Staff" and Appendix B for "Website Standards and Guidelines."

### **Use of School Facilities**

Teachers will be issued keys to the school. Teachers must not loan their keys to non-school employees for any reason. Teachers are permitted to have access to school facilities during non-school time provided such access is basically for work-related purposes. When teachers leave the building, they are to close all windows, lock their classroom door, and make sure that the entry door used to gain entry is fully closed and locked. This is especially important when teachers are using the school facilities prior to the beginning of the school year and during any weekend or evening usage.

School property is to be used for approved work-related purposes and not for personal purposes or for personal gain or benefit. Use of school supplies (paper, staples, etc.), school equipment (copiers, fax machines, telephones, etc.), and school postage are for approved school-related purposes only.

### **Use of Telephone**

District telephones should rarely if ever be used to make calls of a personal nature except in the event of an emergency. Occasional and intermittent local calls of a personal nature, that the Superintendent or designee determine to facilitate the work of staff, are not prohibited. Telephone usage by teachers, whether using District or personal resources, should be limited to before school, after school, or planning periods. Teachers should not use

telephone resources during class or when supervising students except in the event of an emergency.

### **Visitors**

Teachers are not to have visitors on school property except on a short-term basis and only with the permission and knowledge of the Principal or designee. Included in the definition of visitors are family members of the teacher. Visitors should follow posted procedures for being on school property. Teachers are not to bring their children to school with them in lieu of taking them to childcare.

### **Salespersons**

A teacher need not allow, and should not permit, any salesperson or representative of any commercial enterprise or theatrical presentation to contact him/her while engaged in carrying out his/her teaching responsibilities. Contact before school, after school, and during a planning period remain at the discretion of the teacher as long as such contact does not prevent the teacher from carrying out his or her teaching responsibilities.

Teachers shall not use classrooms, buildings or other school property for personal use or profit without specific approval from the Superintendent or designee. Teachers shall not use time for which the teacher is on duty or paid by the District to engage in any activity for personal financial profit. Any violation of this policy is an act of insubordination.

### **Security of Desks and Storage Devices**

Offices, teacher desks, lockers, file cabinets and other such storage devices are owned by the school and are to be properly cared for and maintained. Appropriate security measures should be used to protect school and personal property kept in storage devices from theft or vandalism and to protect confidential student records.

The school exercises exclusive control over school property and reserves the right to search offices and storage devices provided to or used by employees where permitted by law, such as where reasonable grounds exist for suspecting that a search will turn up evidence that the employee has committed work-related misconduct, or that a search is necessary for a non-investigatory work-related purpose, such as to retrieve a file. School-related documents or records must remain readily available to administration and other appropriate school staff. Any personal items a teacher wants to have kept private should be kept in a separate personal storage device, such as a brief case, purse or backpack.

The District is not responsible for any personal property teachers may bring to school.

### **Video Surveillance**

The Board of Education has authorized the use of video cameras on District property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all staff, students and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.

Notice is hereby given that video surveillance may occur on District property. In the event a video surveillance recording captures a student or other building user violating school

policies or rules or local, state or federal laws, the video surveillance recording may be used in appropriate disciplinary proceedings against the student or other building user and may also be provided to law enforcement agencies.

### **Copyright and Fair Use Policy**

It is the school's policy to follow the federal copyright law. Teachers are reminded that, when using school equipment and when performing school duties, they also must follow the federal copyright laws. The federal copyright law governs the reproduction of works of authorship. Copyrighted works are protected regardless of the medium in which they are created or reproduced; thus, copyright extends to digital works and works transformed into a digital format. Copyrighted works are not limited to those that bear a copyright notice.

The "fair use" doctrine allows limited reproduction of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. The relevant portion of the copyright statute provides that the "fair use" of a copyrighted work, including reproduction "for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research" is not an infringement of copyright. The law lists the following factors as the ones to be evaluated in determining whether a particular use of a copyrighted work is a permitted "fair use," rather than an infringement of the copyright:

- the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- the nature of the copyrighted work;
- the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and
- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Although all of these factors will be considered, the last factor is the most important in determining whether a particular use is "fair." Teachers should seek assistance from administration if there are questions regarding what may be copied.

### **Safety**

Guidelines for safe work practices that teachers should follow include:

1. Never stand on chairs, counters, tables, etc. Only use step stools, ladders and locking stools to stand, climb, etc., to reach high places, put things on bulletin boards, etc.
2. Always wear protective equipment (i.e., goggles, aprons, gloves, and ear protection).
3. Wipe up spills or report promptly to appropriate personnel. DO NOT assume someone else will do it.
4. Be aware of your surroundings. Pick up clutter, keep your work area or room clean and free of clutter, debris, etc.
5. Identify and report all hazards (i.e., broken equipment, broken or uneven floor surfaces, non-operating tools, windows, doors, etc.). Follow up if not repaired.
6. Do not use equipment if you are not familiar with it or operate machinery without proper training.
7. Do not carry heavy or bulky objects. Get a cart, dolly or assistance. Know how to properly lift.



8. Report any injuries or medical problems to your supervisor immediately and complete the employee accident report.
9. Wear seatbelts when in vehicles where provided.
10. Do not do repetitive tasks for long periods of time (i.e., keyboarding, dipping cookies, cutting out things, filing, typing, etc.). Take breaks, learn and do stretching exercises, etc.

### **Accidents**

Every accident in the school building, on school grounds, at practice sessions, or at any activity event sponsored by the school must be reported in a timely fashion to the Principal or designee. In the event the injury involves a student, the teacher responsible for the student as teacher, coach or sponsor and the teacher who directly observed the injury, are responsible for making the report.

### **Workers Compensation**

Teachers are required to immediately report any work-related injury or work-related medical condition to the supervisor and to complete all appropriate paperwork.

## **Section 7 – Policy, State, and Federal Matters**

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

The Hastings Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, religion or age in admission or access to, or treatment of employment, in its programs and activities.

### **Harassment Policy**

Harassment of employees, students, volunteers, or visitors will not be tolerated in the School District. School District includes School District facilities; School District property or property within the jurisdiction of the School District; while on school-owned or school-operated transportation; while attending or engaged in school activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the District.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, racial, religious, national origin, marital status, disability and sexual harassment. Harassment by Board members, administrators, employees, parents, vendors, and others doing business with the School District is prohibited. Employees whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to the investigation procedure which may result in discipline up to and including discharge or other appropriate action. Other individuals whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by the Superintendent or Board.

Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, education, or participation in school programs or activities;
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting such individual's employment or education; or
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

Sexual harassment as set out above, may include, but is not limited to, the following:

4. verbal or written harassment or abuse or unwelcome communication implying sexual motives or intentions;
5. pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
6. unwelcome touching;
7. unwelcome and offensive public sexual display of affection;

8. suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's job, promotions, recommendations, etc.

Harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, marital status or disability means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble individuals when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of an individual's participation in school programs, activities, or employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or
- creating an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning or work environment.

Harassment as set forth above may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse;
- repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, etc.;
- demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at an individual.

Employees, students, volunteers, or visitors who believe they have suffered harassment shall report such matters to the investigator for harassment complaints. However, claims regarding harassment may also be reported to the alternate investigator for harassment complaints.

Upon receiving a complaint, the investigator shall confer with the complainant to obtain an understanding and a statement of the facts. It shall be the responsibility of the investigator to promptly and reasonably investigate claims of harassment and to pass the findings on to the Superintendent, who shall complete such further investigation as deemed necessary and take such final action as appropriate. Information regarding an investigation of harassment shall be confidential to the extent possible, and those individuals who are involved in the investigation shall not discuss information regarding the complaint outside the investigation process.

No one shall retaliate against an employee or student because they have filed a harassment complaint, assisted or participated in a harassment investigation, proceeding, or hearing regarding a harassment charge or because they have opposed language or conduct that violates this policy. This policy should be used when an employee is the alleged harasser or the alleged victim. It is strongly recommended the investigator and alternate investigator be of opposite sexes.

## **Problem-Solving Procedure**

A complaint is an assertion by an employee that there has been a violation, misinterpretation or inequitable application of district policies, regulations and procedures, existing laws, or other actions that adversely and directly affect the employee personally and/or his/her job performance.

Grievances regarding the misinterpretations, misapplication or violation of the provisions of negotiated agreements between the Board of Education and the Hastings Education Association shall be resolved through a grievance procedure established specifically for that purpose.

It is the intent of this procedure that employee complaints will be identified and corrected at the earliest possible time and at the lowest level of supervision.

Complaint processing should be viewed as a positive and constructive effort which seeks to establish the facts upon which the complaint is based and to come to a fair conclusion.

The employee filing a complaint must personally participate in the problem-solving procedure. An employee may bring a representative with him/her at each step of the procedure.

There will be no reprisals against an employee who files a complaint.

The employee has the right to withdraw the complaint at any time.

### Procedures

1. Level I: An employee will present a complaint orally and informally to his/her immediate supervisor. If the complaint is not promptly resolved, it must be put in written form and submitted to the immediate supervisor.

Within three working days of receiving the complaint, the immediate supervisor will render a decision, in writing, to the employee who filed the complaint.

2. Level II: Within three working days after receiving the written decision at Level I, the employee may appeal the decision, in writing, to the appropriate Central Office administrator.

Within five working days, the Central Office administrator will meet with the employee, discuss the complaint and render a written decision. A copy of the decision will be sent to the employee and his/her immediate supervisor.

3. Level III: Within three working days after receiving the decision at Level II, the employee may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Superintendent of Schools. If the complaint was filed with the Superintendent of Schools at Level II, then Level III will be eliminated in the procedure.

Within five working days of receipt of the written complaint, the Superintendent of Schools will meet with the employee, discuss the complaint and render a written decision. A copy of the written decision will be sent to the employee

and to his/her immediate supervisor.

4. Level IV: Within three working days after receiving the written decision at Level III, the employee may appeal the written decision to the Board of Education. The President of the Board of Education will then determine whether the ad hoc committee of the Board or the full Board of Education will meet with the employee to discuss the complaint.

Within twenty working days after receipt of the appeal, the Board of Education will render a decision on the appeal. A copy of the written decision will be sent to the employee and the immediate supervisor.

If an ad hoc committee of the Board meets with the employee, then the committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Education for resolving the problem. The full Board of Education will then consider the recommendation of the ad hoc committee and render a decision.

The decision of the Board of Education will be the final step in the problem-solving procedure.

### **Grievance Procedure**

Section 4.1 - Definition of Grievance: For the purposes of this Agreement, the term "grievance" shall mean a dispute or difference of opinion raised by an employee against the Board involving the meaning, interpretation, or application of the express provisions of the Master Agreement.

Section 4.2 - Grievance Procedure:

Level 1: The parties agree that a bona fide effort shall be made to resolve a grievance informally before it is put in writing. To this end, any employee who has a grievance shall submit it orally to his/her principal or other administrator designated for this purpose within fifteen (15) school days after the employee had knowledge, or should have had knowledge, of the first occurrence of the event giving rise to the grievance.

The principal or other administrator designated for this purpose shall give his/her response within five (5) school days after presentation of the oral grievance.

Level 2: If the grievance is not resolved at Level 1 and the employee wishes to appeal the grievance to Level 2, the employee shall submit the grievance in writing to his/her principal or other administrator designated for this purpose within five (5) school days of the response presented at Level 1.

The grievance shall set forth in detail all the relevant facts on which it is based, the provision(s) of the Agreement that are allegedly violated, and the relief requested.

The principal or other administrator designated for this purpose shall give his/her written response within five (5) school days after receipt of the written grievance.

Level 3: If the grievance is not settled at Level 2 and the employee wishes to appeal the grievance to Level 3, it shall be referred in writing and signed by the aggrieved employee and forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools or designee within five (5) school days after the receipt of the response at Level 2.

The Superintendent or designee shall discuss the grievance with the aggrieved employee within ten (10) school days after the receipt of the written appeal to Level 3. If no settlement is reached through such discussion, the Superintendent or designee shall send his/her written response to the employee and the employee's immediate supervisor within five (5) school days following such meeting.

Level 4: If the grievance is not settled at Level 3 and the employee wishes to appeal the grievance to Level 4, it shall be referred in writing and signed by the aggrieved employee and forwarded to the Board of Education within ten (10) school days after the receipt of the response at Level 4.

Within twenty (20) school days of the receipt of the grievance, the Board of Education, either through the Executive Committee or as a full Board, shall meet with the aggrieved employee to resolve the grievance. Within ten (10) school days following the meeting with the aggrieved employee, the decision of the full Board of Education shall be rendered in writing to the aggrieved employee.

Section 4.3 - Time Limits: Failure at any level of this grievance procedure to appeal a grievance to the next level within the specified time limits will be considered to be acceptance of the decision rendered at the preceding level. Failure at any level of this procedure to communicate the decision on a grievance within the specified time limits will permit the aggrieved party to proceed to the next level. The parties may, by mutual agreement, in writing, eliminate any level as outlined above in Section 4.2 and/or extend any of the time limits set forth in this article. For purposes of this article, the term "school day" shall mean any day on which employees are scheduled to work.

In the event a grievance is filed at such time that it cannot be processed through all levels of this grievance procedure by the end of the school year, the parties shall meet for the purpose of agreeing upon reduction of time limits set forth herein so that the grievance procedures may be exhausted prior to the end of the school year or within a maximum of thirty (30) days thereafter.

Section 4.4 - Withdrawal of Grievance: The aggrieved party may withdraw his/her grievance at any time during the procedure without prejudice.

Section 4.5 - Separate Grievance File: Grievances, responses to grievances, and appeals shall not be placed in the personnel files of any of the participants.

Section 4.6 - No Reprisals: No reprisals shall be taken by the Board or any member of the administration against any aggrieved employee, any representative of the aggrieved employee, or any other participant in the grievance procedure.

Section 4.7 - Rights of Employees to Representation: Any aggrieved person may be represented at all stages of the grievance procedure by himself/herself and, at his/her option, by a representative selected or approved by the Association. It is further recognized that any adjustment reached without a representative of the Association present shall be without prejudice to the Association.

### **Confidentiality of Student Records (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) give parents and students over 18 years of age rights of access and confidentiality with respect to education records. Employees are expected to provide access rights and maintain the confidentiality of education records in accordance with FERPA and Board Policy.

### **Disclosure of Staff Qualifications**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 gives parents/guardians the right to get information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. To comply with this aspect of NCLB, the District designates the following information as directory information and will give parents/guardians such information upon request:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or provisional teaching certificate.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher along with information about other graduate certification or degrees held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the parent/guardian's child has been assigned or taught, for four or more consecutive weeks, by a teacher who does not meet the requirements of NCLB.

### **Breakfast and Lunch Programs**

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program. Employees are expected to keep information about the participation of each student in the program confidential.

## **HASTINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **Social Media Guidelines for Faculty and Staff**

#### **Purpose for Social Media Guidelines:**

The Hastings Public Schools realize that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. To this aim, the HPS District has adapted the following guidelines to provide direction for instructional employees, students and the community when participating in online social media activities. Whether or not an employee chooses to personally participate in a blog, wiki, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion, it is his or her own decision. Free speech protects individuals who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled that school districts can discipline employees if their speech, including online postings, disrupts school operations. The Hastings Public Schools District social media guidelines allow employees to participate in online social activities both personally and professionally. These guidelines have been created as a resource for you. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability; keeping in mind that information produced by HPS District employees and students is a reflection on the entire District and is subject to the District's Acceptable Use Policy. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, podcasts or other social media for classroom or district use, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read them carefully before participating in any social media application.

#### **What is Social Media?**

User created content online designed in a collaborative environment where users share opinions, knowledge, and information with each other. Tools include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs (Blogger, WordPress, etc.)
- Wikis (Wikispaces, Google Sites, etc.)
- Social Networking sites (Facebook, Ning, MySpace, Twitter, etc.)
- Photo and Video Sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Diigo, Delicious)
- Podcasting and Vodcasting

#### **Personal Responsibility**

- The HPS District requires teachers with a personal online presence to be mindful of the information they post. Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face. Even if you delete that information, it still may be stored on the Web site's server for a longer period of time.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying yourself as a HPS employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at HPS.
- It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the appropriate security settings for any social media (personal or professional) that you use. Be sure that the settings are such that any personal content may be viewed by your intended audience only. Be aware that, even if your privacy settings are set properly, it is still possible for anyone who you've allowed to see your profile to copy and paste text and send it to someone else. Similarly, if you enable settings such as



Facebook's ability to allow "friends of friends" to view your content, it is extremely likely that unintended viewers will have access to pictures and other personal content.

- It is unprofessional and inappropriate to use e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging or social networking sites to discuss with a student a matter that does not pertain to school-related activities. Appropriate discussions would include the student's homework, class activity, school sport or club, or other school-sponsored activity. Electronic communications with students are to be sent simultaneously to multiple recipients, not to just one student, except where the communication is clearly school-related and inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (for example, emailing a message about a student's grades).
- Engaging in social-networking friendships on MySpace, Facebook, or other social networking sites is prohibited with students, and strongly discouraged with parents or guardians of students. The District recognizes that because of the tight-knit community of HPS, many staff members may have students or parents of students, who are family members or close personal friends. However, the District cautions staff members against engaging in such social-networking friendships with these individuals.
- Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community must reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and not impair the District's or employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents/guardians or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children.

### **Professional Responsibility**

- Social media can be a powerful communication tool and educational tool for students and parents. HPS employees are encouraged to use social media for these purposes.
- HPS employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.
- Remember that social media in the classroom is an extension of your physical classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- Teachers who use social networking to interact with students in an educational manner must find a way to interact without giving students access to their personal information and posts. Many social network sites allow you to create "groups" or "pages" where you can interact with students without giving them access to your personal account. Please see detailed Facebook guidelines for more information.
- Teachers who use social networking to interact with students or parents as a communication tool must find a way to interact without giving students, or parents, access to their personal information and posts. Many social network sites allow you to create "groups" or "pages" where you can interact with students without giving them access to your personal account. Please see detailed Facebook guidelines for more information.
- When contributing online do not post confidential student information. Do not post pictures of any students on your personal sites.

### **Overall Guidelines for Using Social Media**

The following are general guidelines for using social media whether personally or professionally.

## **Be Transparent**

How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity or misrepresenting your identity. Be honest about who you are, where you work and what you do.

## **Always a School Employee**

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world, you will always be considered to be a District employee. Whether it is clearly communicated or not, you will be identified as an employee of the School District in what you do and say online. If you don't want it on the 10:00 news - don't share it online.

## **School Values**

Represent the District values. Express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. All communications should be done in good taste. Build trust and responsibility in your relationships. Do not denigrate or insult others including students, staff, administrators, parents, or other districts. Any online contributions must be in accordance with policy, building handbooks or other guidelines provided by the District. Consider carefully what you post through comments and photos. A violation of these guidelines could be regarded as a form of professional misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

## **Build Community/Positively Represent School**

Represent the District and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about students or colleagues (including administrators) nor the District in general. Negative comments about people may amount to cyber-bullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offence. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. Do not comment on nor forward unsupported information, e.g. rumors. You are responsible for what you and others post, even if on a personal page, be certain it is accurate and supports your organization. It is a good idea to monitor your profile page to ensure that all material posted by others doesn't violate these guidelines. Once posted you can't take it back.

## **Share your Expertise**

Write what you know to be accurate. Add value to the discussion. Post something useful. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. A district's most valuable asset is its staff represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on the school. Speak in the first person with your own voice and perspective.

## **Respect and Responsible**

Employees, parents, and students reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Be respectful for others' opinions in your posts or comments. You are responsible for the content you post. Do your tags, descriptions, and your image portray you and the District in a professional manner?

## **Own and Correct Mistakes**

If you make a mistake, admit the mistake and correct it quickly. Share your error with your Principal, and the PR Specialist so they can help address the issue effectively. Clearly state if you've corrected a previous post. Even though damage may be done, it is best to admit your mistake and correct it. Apologize if appropriate.

### **Confidential Information**

Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information whether it is internal school discussions or specific information about students or other staff. What you post will be seen by others and will be online for a long time. It can be forwarded or shared in just a few clicks. Do not write about colleagues or students without their expressed permission.

### **School Logos**

Obtain permission from the Superintendent before using any school or district logo or image. School logos may only be used in a professional capacity. When using social media in a professional manner all images and colors should match the organization's logo or mascot when possible.

### **Posting Photos or Movies without Permission**

Do not post or tag photos or movies of others without their permission. If you use photos or movies taken at school you must follow the District guidelines. Photos of foster children are prohibited unless there is written permission on file. If you have questions, please contact your supervisor.

### **Responding to Negative Comments and Criticism**

How you respond to a negative comment or criticism will say more about you and your character than what you post. When in doubt, it's best not to give it credibility by acknowledging it with a response publicly; perhaps a private response would be more appropriate.

### **Response and Post Regularly**

To encourage readership, post regularly. Don't post to your blog and then not post for three weeks. Readers won't have a reason to follow you if they cannot expect new content regularly. Respond to other's posts. Answer questions; thank people even if it's just a few words. Make it a two-way conversation.

### **Spell Check and Abbreviations**

Any online contribution should be well written. What you post will be online for the world to read. Follow writing conventions including proper grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Be cautious about using common abbreviations. While your circle of friends may understand what you are saying, you may have readers from across the world who won't understand. When in doubt, define the abbreviation at least once in a post or include a definitions page on your site.

### **Copyright and Fair Use**

Please respect copyright and fair use guidelines. Share what others have said by linking to the source and using embedded content. Be sure to cite your source when quoting. When using a hyperlink confirm that link goes where it should and that the content is appropriate.

### **Personal Information**

Be careful about sharing too much personal information. People seem to share personal information such as their pet names, their parents and children's names, where they grew up, and more. This information may help a hacker guess your passwords. If you share that you will be out of town, a criminal may use this to target your home for a burglary. Do not share with a student your personal problems that would normally be discussed with adults. Be smart and don't share too much information.

## **Video**

The Internet is becoming an increasingly popular educational tool and place to share personally created movies. You are responsible for all you do, say, and post online including video. Anything you post online should represent you in a professional manner, as others will see you as connected to the School District. You should preview anything you show in your classroom in its entirety, prior to any student seeing it. Consult a supervisor if you feel the content may be questionable.

## **Staff-Student Relations**

Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of unprofessional relationships include, but are not limited to: employees fraternizing or communicating with students as if employees and students were peers such as writing personal letters or e-mails; personally texting or calling students, or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework, class work, or other school-related business; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing to students personal matters about their private lives or inviting students to do the same (other than professional counseling by a school counselor); and engaging in sexualized dialogue, whether in person, by phone, via the Internet, or in writing. Employees who post information on Facebook, MySpace or similar Web sites that include inappropriate personal information such as, but not limited to: provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, abuse of alcohol, drugs or anything students are prohibited from doing must understand that if students, parents or other employees obtain access to such information, their case will be investigated by school and district officials.

## **Adapted From:**

Social Media Guidelines Wiki

## **Referenced Sites and Resources**

- Barrow County Schools <http://www.barrow.k12.ga.us/>
- Social Media Guidelines for Educators (Facebook group):  
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=80354045978>
- Social Media Guidelines for Schools - Andy Mann, Calhoun ISD  
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/28430149/Social-Media-Guidelines-for-Schools>
- Social Media Guidelines for Schools Wik <http://socialmediaguidelines.pbworks.com/>
- Social Media Suggestions: <http://blogs.stvrain.k12.co.us/helpdesk/2010/03/29/social-media-suggestions/>
- Think Social Media Guidelines: <http://thinkingmachine.pbworks.com/Think-Social-Media-Guidelines>
- This is created to be shared, edited, updated and has been licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- Noncommercial-Share Alike license.

### Website Standards & Guidelines

The purpose of the HPS Website Standards are to ensure that all web pages across District sites maintain the most professional image possible and make it easy for users to find and consume the information contained within. The look and feel of all of the sites and pages should remain consistent with design practices and standards and should be easy to read and not distracting.

#### DESIGN GUIDELINES

##### Images/Sounds/Videos

1. Try to keep image file sizes below 200k. This will ensure that page loading is as quick as possible.
2. Do not upload inappropriate or unnecessary audio/video/images to your teacher pages.
3. If you use photos of students, be certain that their parent or guardian has signed off and authorizes that photos can be used for the current school year.
4. Photos and images must be saved as a jpg, gif or png to be used.

##### Text

1. Please run your content through a spell checker, and check grammar, spelling and punctuation carefully. Improper grammar and spelling reflects poorly on HPS.
2. All text must be easy to read and on a background that allows for easy reading.
3. All text on pages must be kept current (meaningful in the present).

##### Links

1. When creating links, check to make sure they work properly.
2. Keep up with the links throughout your web site on a regular basis to make sure that they are all still valid, especially outside links.
3. Do not create "page under construction" pages. If a link is on your site, it should point to a page that contains valid information.
4. Longer documents should be placed in pdf format with a link created to download or open the document. (Do not use an entire webpage to host more than a **one**-page document.)

##### Tables

1. There are several options including borders, cells, text color, headers, background images, and others. Be sure that the colors and design allow for easy reading of the information contained within.

## CONTENT GUIDELINES

1. Published documents may not include a child's phone number, street address or box number, or names of other family members.
2. Documents may not include any information that indicates the physical location of any student at any given time other than attendance at a particular school or participation in school activities.

Online posting of school bus schedules detailing dates/times/locations (ie: field trips) is prohibited on school-affiliated websites.

3. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying yourself as a HPS employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at HPS.
4. All work submitted by staff to the District web pages must relate to the District's academic program. Student/class submissions should reflect current curriculum and related activities or projects. Staff submissions must relate to their positions within the District either by class/ school assignment or area of specialty. Links to game or entertainment sites which lack educational value are not allowed. Links to educational and community resource sites are encouraged.
5. Material (**pictures, videos, music**) submitted to the District web pages may not contain copyrighted material without explicit permission of the copyright holder. Such permission must be included in the material submitted for publication, and will appear on the same page as the copyrighted matter. Unless otherwise noted, always assume that work published on the web is copyrighted. It is NOT necessary that the copyright symbol © be displayed.

***Copyright becomes effective as soon as any work is created, so unless there's specifically been a creative commons license, or works are visibly put into the public domain, in writing and published by the creator, using them is copyright infringement.***

***Public domain refers to works that are not protected by copyright and are publicly available. They may be used by anyone, anywhere, anytime without permission, license or royalty payment.***

6. Material published on the HPS web sites must not display or access content that is offensive. All published material on District websites must have educational value and/or support the district goals and policies. (*Offensive content is at the District's discretion.*)
7. Individual pages of the HPS web site are not to be used for individual gain or profit. There will be no advertising, sale or solicitation by individuals on sites sponsored by the HPS District. External sites linked from the HPS District that contain excessive ads may have their link removed if the ads distract from the educational value of the page.
8. Every school home page will include as a minimum the following components -- School name, address, phone, school hours, links to: handbook, staff directory, newsletters, calendar, lunch menus, and a link to the district web site.

## TEACHER PAGES

1. Teacher pages must **not** give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions

or otherwise making statements on behalf of the District or any school in the District, unless appropriately authorized (explicitly or implicitly) to do so.

2. Class description must be listed.
3. A brief bio (including a photo) must be included. (Do not go into long detail)
4. Delete unused boxes or headings under those you are not going to post any information for.

**HASTING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**TEACHER HANDBOOK**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My signature below indicates that I have received and have been encouraged to read the Hastings Public Schools Teacher Handbook. I understand the Teacher Handbook is designed to provide my supervisors and me with significant information to assist me in my work as an employee of the District. I understand the information provided by this Handbook does not create a contract of employment or replace District policy. I further understand that where this Handbook may conflict with binding agreements, District policy, or state and federal statute or relevant court decisions, the binding agreements, District policy, or state and federal statute or relevant court decisions will prevail. Finally, I understand the information provided by the Teacher Handbook shall not infringe upon the right of the Administration or the Board of Education to effectively operate the schools of the District according to contracts, policy, statute, and binding court decisions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***Please sign and return this acknowledgement to the Principal's Office of the building that is designated as your "home school."***