

# School District of Altoona



Let "life-long learning;" the "emotional well-being of our students;" and "large school opportunities with a small school approach " define us.

Updated: 07/01/16

## Support Staff Handbook

Effective: August 2013 for Food Service Employees and Other Nonunion/Non-Contracted Support Staff  
Effective: July 2014 for Custodial/Maintenance and Clerical/Aides Employees

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## ***OUR VISION***

The vision of the Altoona School District, in partnership with our students, their families, and our community, is to build a foundation for life-long learning and the emotional well-being of our students.

We are dedicated to offering large school opportunities with a small school approach.

## ***OUR MISSION***

*We strongly believe in:*

- Promoting our students' emotional well-being and enabling them to meet all the state standards for core subject areas while encouraging competency in problem solving and critical thinking skills;
- Utilizing technology to transform teaching and learning so students can find global opportunities for study or jobs and expand their capacity for celebrating diversity;
- Preparing our students for post-secondary education, or for the contemporary job market;
- Supporting the learning of students with special needs and prepare them for adult life;
- Attracting and retaining strong teachers and evaluating them by measuring their performance, effectiveness and innovation;
- Strategically monitoring and being responsible stewards for the Altoona School District, and always advocating for public education;
- Jointly planning and sharing resources with outside entities including local government, businesses, and non-profit groups;
- Engaging the community by providing unique learning and recreation opportunities for adults and encouraging partnerships between parents, teachers, students and community members.

Adopted: July 2, 2012  
Amended: July 15, 2013

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **WELCOME**

We are pleased to have you as support staff in the School District of Altoona. The five members of the Altoona School Board believe that every employee makes a contribution to the success of every student. The skills and commitment each support staff brings to his/her job makes an important contribution to our vision and mission as we work in partnership to build a foundation for life-long learning and the emotional well-being of our students from 4-year-old kindergarten through twelfth grade.

The Superintendent is delegated with the responsibility for overall administration of the schools and implementation of Board policies.

It is each employee's responsibility to read and become familiar with this information and to comply with the policies adopted by the Board and the administrative guidelines available electronically on the District website, as well as the rules and regulations contained herein. Any section in the handbook that is governed by a Board policy will note the policy number for easy access.

This *Support Staff Handbook* has been written to provide information and guidance. Given the reality of a complex, ever-evolving organization, the information in this handbook is not all-inclusive. We recognize that support staff may have questions relating to their specific position or responsibilities. You are encouraged to direct any specific inquiries you may have to your building principal or supervisor.

For purposes of this handbook, the category Support Staff includes foodservice employees, clerical and aide employees, custodial and maintenance employees, crossing guards, playground and lunchroom aides, and other nonunion/non-contracted support staff who may be added to the work force on a permanent, temporary or seasonal basis.

We are pleased to have you as a member of our team and hope that you find that the satisfaction gained from doing your job matches the effort you put into your work.

### **DISCLAIMER**

This *Support Staff Handbook* has been prepared for informational purposes only. None of the statements, policies and administrative guidelines, rules, or regulations contained herein constitutes a guarantee of employment, a guarantee of any other right or benefit, or a contract of employment, express or implied. All of the district's employees are employed at will and employment is not for any definite period, unless otherwise provided by individual contract.

Violations of the terms of the *Support Staff Handbook*, policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment (see Grievance Procedure - Policy 527).

The provisions set forth in this Handbook may be altered, modified, changed, or eliminated at any time by the District. This *Support Staff Handbook* supersedes any and all previous handbooks, statements, policies and administrative guidelines, rules, or regulations given to employees, whether verbal, written or established by past practice.

This Handbook is not all-inclusive of the information for which staff members are responsible for knowing and following.

# ***EMPLOYMENT POLICIES***

## **THE ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT**

Certain rights and responsibilities are imposed by state and federal laws and regulations. Many of these rights and responsibilities have implications for policies and procedures governing employment. For this reason, the Employer reserves any and all management rights regarding employee's employment status.

General Guidelines: The role of management includes, but is not limited to, the right to:

- a. Manage and direct employees;
- b. Hire, promote, schedule, transfer and assign employees;
- c. Layoff and recall employees;
- d. Discharge employees or take disciplinary action;
- e. Schedule overtime as required;
- f. Develop job descriptions;
- g. Assign work duties;
- h. Introduce new or improved methods or facilities or change existing methods or facilities;
- i. Contract out for goods and services;
- j. Discontinue certain operations; and
- k. Direct all operations of the School District of Altoona.

## **HARASSMENT**

The School District of Altoona is committed to maintaining and ensuring a working environment that is free of harassment or intimidation. The District will not tolerate any form of harassment, and will take necessary and appropriate action to eliminate it.

As noted in Policy 512, "Harassment" is defined as behavior toward an individual based, in whole or in part, on a person's sex, race, religion, national origin, color, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or other protected status which has the purpose or effect of: (1) creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or learning environment; (2) interfering with a person's work or educational performance; or (3) otherwise adversely affecting a person's employment opportunities. Unlawful harassment can occur as a result of a single incident or a pattern of behavior and includes conduct that takes place off the job that relates to the work environment. It may occur from student to student, student to staff, staff to student, staff to staff, members of the public to student or staff, male to female, male to male, female to male, or female to female.

Any individual who believes he/she has been subjected to unlawful harassment by any other person should report the incident immediately via the Employee Harassment Form (512-Exhibit) to their building principal or immediate supervisor unless the principal or supervisor is the subject of the complaint, in which case it must be delivered to the Superintendent. It is the intent of the District to establish an atmosphere where complaints are timely investigated and any allegation of harassment is appropriately addressed.

The District forbids retaliation against anyone who has reported harassment or cooperates in a harassment investigation.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The District values the comments and suggestions of its employees concerning work methods and operations. Support staff should follow Policy 521.1 – Staff Communications and Lines of Responsibility, which is illustrated in the Lines of Responsibility and Communications flow chart (521.1-Exhibit), when offering a suggestion or comment.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICAL STANDARDS**

Support staff are expected to maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and professional conduct. Further, staff members are expected to perform their duties in a manner free from conflict of interest pursuant to §19.59 and § 946.13 Wisconsin Stats.

## **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

The District seeks to provide a safe, drug and tobacco-free workplace for all of its employees. The manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, controlled substances, substances represented to be such (i.e. fake or look-alike substances), or unauthorized prescription medication, is prohibited on school premises, in school vehicles, or at school activities. In addition, the District will not condone the involvement of any employee with illicit drugs, even where the employee is not on District premises. Employees of the school system shall not possess, use, be under the influence of, or distribute any illegal drug, unauthorized prescription medication or alcoholic beverage as defined in Wisconsin Statutes while on school premises, during working hours or while responsible for chaperoning students on school-sponsored trips. Any employee who possesses, uses, or distributes any illegal drug, unauthorized prescription medication or alcoholic beverage on school premises, during working hours or while responsible for chaperoning students on a school-sponsored trip may be disciplined, up to and including discharge. All school employees shall cooperate with law enforcement agencies in investigations concerning any violation of this provision.

As a further condition of employment, an employee who is engaged in the performance of a federal grant shall notify the Superintendent of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than three days after such conviction. Within ten days of receiving such notice – from the employee or any other source – the District shall notify the federal granting agency of the conviction 41 U.S.C. 702(a) (1) E).

After receiving notice from an employee of a conviction for any drug statute violation occurring in the workplace, the District shall (1) take appropriate personnel action against the employee, up to and including termination of employment, and/or (2) require the employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, or local health agency, law enforcement agency, or other appropriate agency. 41 U.S.C. 703 [This notice complies with notice requirements imposed by the federal Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C. 702)].

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Board of Education does not discriminate in the employment of any qualified staff on the basis of any characteristic protected under State or Federal law including, but not limited to, race, color, age, sex, creed or religion, genetic information, handicap or disability, marital status, citizenship status, veteran status, military service (as defined in §111.32, Wis. Stats.), sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry,

arrest record, conviction record, use or non-use of lawful products off the District's premises during non-working hours, or any other characteristic protected by law in its employment practices.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the District will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that the individual can perform the essential functions of his/her job.

## **IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE**

The District is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. Therefore, in accordance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, employees must complete an I-9 form before commencing work and at other times prescribed by applicable law or District policy.

## **PERSONNEL FILES**

It is critical to effective human resource management and necessary for satisfaction of legal obligations that the Board maintains accurate personnel records. If an employee has a change in any of the following information, the employee is expected to contact the Payroll Office as soon as possible:

1. Legal name
2. Home address
3. Telephone number
4. Emergency contact
5. Marital status
6. Change of beneficiary
7. Exemptions (W-4 Tax Form)

Any access granted for review and inspection of a personnel file must be completed in accordance with state law. The District shall maintain personnel records of employees and grant access to inspect or review those records as provided for in §103.13 Wis. Stats.

If there is any disagreement with the content or information contained in an employee's personnel record, the employee may request that a correction be made to the information in question or to have the content in question removed from the file. However, the administration retains full discretion to grant or deny such request or removal.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF STAFF**

Because political activities may be disruptive, divisive, and distracting to a positive learning environment, such activities are not appropriate within the school setting. The Board prohibits political activities on all District owned and used property, within all school buildings, in school buses and vehicles, and at all school sponsored activities unless part of a Board approved curriculum.

*Definition of Political Activities:* Political activities include partisan and non-partisan elections and referendums. Any political activity must be conducted independent of your role as an employee. The following guidelines are not exhaustive, but are intended to help in differentiating between those activities that may be viewed as harmful to workplace functioning and those activities that generally fall

outside the “political” activities subject to employer restrictions and intervention. Employees are expected to avoid the following political activities:

- Using working hours or employer resources to solicit money or signatures or to make political contributions;
- Using non-work hours to solicit contributions, signatures or services from other employees who are on work time;
- Posting political materials in areas open to the public (generally, individual work stations that are not available to the public are exempted from this restriction);
- Using the employer’s mailing address as the return address for political solicitations;
- Providing employer mailing lists to any individual or organization for political solicitations if this information is not generally available to the public. (Note: the use and distribution of employer mailing lists to outside parties always requires prior authorization including an assessment of whether fees should be charged to cover production costs);
- Providing a forum for an individual candidate to promote his or her campaign without giving an equal opportunity to other candidates, for the same office, to participate in the forum;
- Political advocacy in the form of clothing items, armbands and buttons that cause a disruption in operations and/or violate the rights of others including the right to be free from discrimination, harassment and intimidation in the workplace.

# ***EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS***

## **EXPECTATIONS**

### **Attendance**

The District expects support staff to make every effort to be present for work. All support staff are expected to adhere to their assigned schedule. In order for the District to operate effectively, support staff are expected to perform all assigned duties and work all scheduled hours during each designated workday, unless the support staff has received approved leave. Breaks and meal periods may only be taken during times designated by the support staff's building principal/supervisor and as further specified in other parts of this *Support Staff Handbook*. Any deviation from assigned hours must have prior approval from the support staff's building principal/supervisor.

Support staff that are unable to report to work shall follow the procedures for reporting his/her absence and obtaining a substitute, if required. Any time spent not working during a support staff's scheduled day must be accounted for in Employee Access. The District monitors attendance and absence patterns. Failure to notify the District of an absence and failure to report to work on such day could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Failure to return to work the day following the expiration of an authorized leave of absence may result in termination of employment depending upon the circumstances.

### **Child Abuse Reporting Requirement**

Wisconsin Statutes 48.981 requires all school district employees to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. Each support staff employed by the District who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect shall be responsible for reporting immediately every case, whether ascertained or suspected, of abuse or neglect resulting in physical or mental injury to a student by other than accidental means. The support staff shall immediately notify their building principal or supervisor according to the District's reporting procedure for Student Abuse or Neglect.

A reporting staff member shall not be dismissed or otherwise penalized for making a report of child abuse or neglect. Failure to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect shall result in discipline, up to and including discharge.

### **Confidentiality**

Wisconsin Statutes 118.125 and 118.126 outline the confidentiality of all student records including behavioral, health, and academic records. The District interprets these statutes to mean that unless an individual has a "right to know," the academic, health, and behavioral records of students are not to be shared. This can be carried forward to both the written record and verbal conveyance of student health, academic, and behavior progress (or lack thereof). Open discussion of student progress, behavior, or health issues with individuals that do not have a "right to know" could be contrary to Wisconsin Statutes and could compromise professional accountability. These statutes are not intended to restrict staff from asking for assistance or ideas on how to handle a particular situation.

Failure to maintain the confidentiality of student records may result in discipline, up to and include discharge.

## **Copyright**

A variety of machines and equipment for reproducing materials to assist employees in carrying out their assignments are available to support staff in the school setting. Infringement on copyrighted material, whether prose, poetry, graphic images, music audiotapes, video, or computer-programmed materials, is a serious offense against federal law, a violation of Board policy, and contrary to ethical standards for District employees. All reproduction of copyrighted material shall be conducted strictly in accordance with applicable provisions of law. Unless otherwise allowed as “fair use” under federal law, permission must be acquired from the copyright owner prior to reproduction of material in any form. Employees are further advised that copyright provisions apply to all forms of digital media.

## **Crisis Management Plans**

The District has standardized procedures for use when the situation requires emergency safety measures. Each support staff is responsible for posting the evacuation, hold and lockdown procedures in their classroom/workplace and for familiarizing themselves with the contents of the Staff Crisis Response Guidelines “plastic sleeve.” Employees must follow the prescribed procedures during any emergency drill or situation.

## **District Property**

The District may supply an employee with equipment or supplies to assist the support staff in performing his/her job duties. All employees are expected to show reasonable care for any equipment issued and to take precautions for theft.

Employees may not utilize District property for personal use or gain. Limited use of telecommunications equipment, computer equipment, software, and minimal duplication-for-a-fee copy machine use are exceptions when used in a manner that does not interfere with the work responsibilities of the support staff and does not violate Handbook provisions.

Any equipment, unused supplies, or keys issued must be returned prior to the support staff’s last day of employment, including, but not limited to employee identification badges, parking permit, keys, and the key fob for building entry.

## **Emergency Drills**

Every school conducts emergency drills in accordance with state law. All employees present in a building at the time of an emergency drill are required to participate in the drill and follow procedures during any and all emergency drills.

## **Equipment Disposal or Relocation**

All District-owned equipment intended to be moved to another building site or declared surplus must first be approved by the principal/supervisor for such change in use. Procedures for disposal of school property are specified in Policy 690.

## **False Reports**

Employees may be disciplined for filing false reports or statements including, but not limited to, the following: accident reports, attendance reports, insurance reports, investigatory interviews, physician’s statements, pre-employment statements, paid leave requests, student records, tax withholding forms, and work reports.

## **Information Technology**

The School District of Altoona has established policies that specify the rules for employee use of District-owned technology. Support staff are expected to know and abide by the District’s policies and administrative guidelines related to use of technology.

Users of the District's information technology should have no expectation of privacy in the content of their personal files and records of their online activity while on the District's network.

### **Electronic Media and Social Media Use**

It is the policy of the employer that information, in all its forms, written, spoken, recorded electronically, or printed, will be protected from accidental or intentional unauthorized modification, destruction, or disclosure. All electronic media must be protected from misuse, unauthorized manipulation, and destruction. It is further the policy of the employer that employees may not use social media technology to engage in or post communications or material that would violate any Handbook policy, including, but not limited to, using technology to post communications or materials that are derogatory or offensive with respect to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or any other legally protected class status. Guidelines for electronic media and social media use, reporting of policy deviations, and possible result of policy violation are listed in Policy 522.71.

### **Injuries to Employees**

Support staff are covered under Workers Compensation Insurance. Workers' compensation is to provide for payment of medical expenses and for partial salary continuation in the event of a work-related accident or illness. The amount of benefits payable and the duration of payment will depend upon the nature of the injury or illness.

Any employee who is injured on the job shall report the injury to his/her principal/supervisor prior to seeking medical attention, if at all possible. In the event of an emergency, the employee shall notify his/her principal/supervisor within twenty-four hours after the occurrence of the injury or as soon as practicable. The employee shall complete an accident report form available on the District website.

The support staff may be assigned alternate duties subject to permission from their physician.

Some types of injuries suffered while at work may not be covered by worker's compensation insurance.

### **Injuries to Students**

Support staff are responsible for reporting any student injury to the school office immediately. Each school's procedures for first aid, medical assistance, emergency assistance, parental contact, and appropriate written reports will be followed.

### **Legal Actions Involving Employees**

Every support staff shall notify his/her principal/supervisor as soon as possible, but no more than three calendar days after any felony conviction.

Support staff must also report an offense of operating under the influence, revocation or suspension of license, and driving after revocation or suspension if the employee drives or operates a District vehicle or piece of mobile equipment or transports students or staff in any vehicle. Failure to report under this section may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Such report shall be made as soon as possible, but in no circumstance more than three calendar days after the event giving rise to the duty to report. The District may conduct criminal history and background checks on its employees.

Nothing herein shall prohibit the District from placing an employee on administrative leave pending investigation of a legal matter that may be substantially related to employment.

### **Licensure/Certification**

All matters related to obtaining and renewing a license or certification is the support staff's personal responsibility. Each support staff who is required to be licensed or certified by law must provide the District with a copy of his/her current license or certificate to be maintained in his/her personnel file. Support staff are expected to know the expiration date of their license/certification and meet the requirements for re-licensure or certification in a timely manner. Support Staff are required to maintain the licenses that are in effect upon hire or as otherwise required; failure to maintain licensure may result in discipline, up to and including discharge from employment.

### **Operation of Personal Vehicle**

Support staff that is required to drive their personal vehicle for District business or activities will be reimbursed at the IRS rate. The employee's personal insurance shall serve as the first level of coverage.

### **Outside Employment**

Outside employment is regarded as employment for compensation that is not within the duties and responsibilities of the support staff's regular position with the District. Support staff shall not be prohibited from holding employment outside the District as long as such employment does not interfere with assigned school duties as determined by the District. The Board expects support staff to devote maximum effort to the position in which employed. A support staff will not perform any duties related to an outside job during the additional time that the responsibilities of the District's position require; nor will support staff use any District facilities, equipment, or materials in performing outside work.

### **Physical Examination**

Examination: Upon initial employment, physical examinations shall be required of District employees in accordance with section 118.25 of the Wisconsin Statutes. When hired, support staff will be given a conditional offer of employment, contingent on evidence that the support staff is of sound health and able to perform the essential functions of their job.

Fitness for Duty: The District may require a physical and/or mental examination, at the expense of the District, in order to determine the support staff's ability to perform the essential functions of his/her job, if the inquiry is job-related and consistent with business necessity, and consistent with the limitations imposed by applicable State and Federal law. The examination is to be conducted by a physician of the District's choosing. Failure to comply with this request or failure to provide a doctor's certification of fitness for duties assigned may result in discipline up to and including discharge/termination.

### **Professional Appearance/Dress Code**

Support staff are judged not only by their service but also by their appearance. It is the District's expectation that every support staff's appearance is consistent with the high standards we set for ourselves as a District. Support staff are expected to present a well-groomed, professional appearance and to practice good personal hygiene as employees represent the District to students, parents and the public.

The District will not tolerate dress or attire from support staff that is considered disruptive, inappropriate, of a political nature or which adversely affects the educational atmosphere.

Enforcement of this policy must be non-discriminatory with regard to sex, race, religion or other legally-protected class status.

## **WORK DAY/HOURS OF WORK**

**Food Service: As scheduled by Food Service Supervisor**

**Clerical: 40 hour work week**

**Aides: As scheduled**

**Custodial/Maintenance: 40 hour work week**

**Other: As scheduled**

### **Emergency School Closing**

When school is closed due to inclement weather or situations beyond the control of the District, Food Service Workers shall not report to work and therefore will not be compensated.

The Superintendent shall make the decision regarding emergency closings. Make-up time for emergency closures shall be in keeping with state statute and shall be at the discretion of the Board. Support staff shall receive their regular rate of pay in the event the District requires missed day(s)/time to be made up with or without students.

This section will be rewritten to address clerical/aides and custodial/maintenance employees when appropriate.

### **School Calendar**

The school calendar shall be determined by the Board. The determination of the structure of the days, (example: instructional, inservice, workdays, etc.) shall be at the discretion of the Board. The number and length of the days required are subject to change.

## **EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION**

### **Employee Evaluation**

The District views employee evaluation as an ongoing process: (1) to raise the quality services to the children of our community; (2) to promote the growth of support staff; (3) to identify strengths and weaknesses with the intent of improving performance; and (4) to support the community's expectation that performance is evaluated, monitored and improved. The process for evaluation of the support staff is specified in Policy GDN – Evaluation of Support Staff.

### **Employee Discipline**

The Board or designee has the right to discipline and to discharge an employee. A support staff may be disciplined for violations of Board or Handbook policy or for other failure to meet the expectations and obligations of their position. No employee may be subject to arbitrary or capricious disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action will normally follow a progressive discipline model that is designed to correct inappropriate conduct on the part of employee. As long as it is not arbitrary and capricious, the Superintendent may skip one or all steps in the progressive discipline model. Discipline, including termination, may occur for any other reason depending upon the seriousness of the offense, the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the incident(s), and the employee's record of prior disciplinary actions. Any support staff that are suspended without pay or discharged shall be given written notice of

the reasons for such action. A copy of such notice shall be made a part of the support staff's personnel record. Instances of discipline are subject to the employee grievance procedure. See Board Policy 527, Grievance Procedure, for issues that are subject to the formal Grievance Procedure.

Not all disputes are covered by the formal Grievance Procedure. Employees with concerns that cannot be addressed in the Grievance Procedure are encouraged to promptly discuss their concern(s) with their supervisor and if, after discussion, the issue remains unresolved, employees are encouraged to prepare a written report, indicating the specific relief being requested and asking for a written response from their supervisor. If the dispute remains unresolved following this step, employees may forward their report, and their supervisor's written response, to the Superintendent for review and recommendation.

## **EMPLOYEE STATUS**

### **Employee Definitions**

Regular Employees: Regular Employees are defined as support staff that the District considers continuously employed on a fiscal year basis (12 months), until the District, at its discretion, changes the status of the employee.

Regular Full-time School Year Employee: A regular full-time school year employee is defined as support staff that are scheduled to work a minimum of 1,800 hours per year.

Regular Part-time School Year Employee: A regular part-time school year employee is defined as support staff that are scheduled to work less than 1,800 hours per fiscal year.

Exclusions: A regular full-time or regular part-time employee does not include student, substitute, temporary, or summer school employees.

Summer Employees: A summer employee is defined as support staff that are hired to work for the District during the summer.

### **Determination of Assignments**

The Superintendent, in conjunction with the building principal and/or supervisor, is responsible for the assignment of all support staff in conformance with any legal requirements or certification requirements. Every effort will be made to issue assignments for the forthcoming school year no later than the end of the previous school year. However, circumstances may arise that cause the Superintendent/supervisor to delay issuance of any or all assignments. Should this occur, the Superintendent/supervisor will inform the affected support staff no later than the end of the school year of the delay and issue the assignments as soon as practicable. After assignments are issued, changes may be necessary and the Superintendent/supervisor's decision shall be final.

### **Job Vacancy and Posting**

When the Superintendent/supervisor determines that a vacancy or new position shall be filled, the District shall typically post an internal notice (posting) of such vacancy or new position for a minimum of three week days if reasonable and appropriate to do so. The posting shall include the title of position, the date the position is to be filled and any requirements. The District retains the right to determine whether and when to recruit outside applicants. In most cases, all employees who meet the minimum qualifications for the position and who request transfer will be given the opportunity to interview for the opening. All employees who interview for a position will be notified of the selection outcome.

The decision of the Superintendent/supervisor shall be final as to the assignment of support staff.

### **Support staff Layoff and Recall**

The District retains the right to lay off support staff, in whole or in part, and to retain those employees who are most qualified to perform the available work.

The District's need to provide services in the best interests of students shall be the prime consideration used to determine which support staff are to be laid off. The rehiring of support staff from layoff will be determined by the District based on the need for the most qualified person to perform the available work.

### **Resignation**

Employment of support staff may be terminated

Any support staff who plans to leave the District shall notify his/her principal/supervisor at the earliest possible date of his/her decision to leave. Support staff may resign in accordance with the terms of his/her employment contract. A resignation, once submitted and accepted by the Board or its designee, is final and may not be rescinded without approval by the Board

### **Standard for Discipline and Termination**

Support staff may be disciplined or terminated. Such discipline or termination shall not be arbitrary or capricious and shall be subject to the grievance procedure provisions governed by Policy 527.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Policy 527 specifies the exclusive internal method for resolving grievances concerning discipline, termination, and workplace safety. A determined effort shall be made to settle any grievance at the lowest possible level in the grievance procedure. The Board maintains the right to modify the Grievance Procedure, in accordance with state statute, at any time at its sole discretion.

## **COMPENSATION**

### **PAYROLL INFORMATION**

Unless the annual exception is requested, all support staff will be put on the school year payroll cycle (20 paydays) and paid on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month, September through June. Food Service employees will be paid on an hourly basis during the school year. If a payday falls on a holiday or weekend the pay date will be the last work day preceding the holiday or weekend.

Pay is subject to all deductions required by law, federal tax, Social Security, Medicare, and state and local income taxes, as applicable. The amount of the deductions will depend on earnings and information furnished on individual W-4 forms regarding the number of exemptions claimed. If an employee wishes to modify the number of exemptions, he/she must complete a new W-4 form and turn it in to the Business Office. Only an employee may modify his/her own W-4 form. Verbal or written instructions are not sufficient to modify withholding allowances. Support staffs are encouraged to regularly check their pay-related information on the online Employee Portal.

The annual W-2 form reflects how much of an employee's earnings were deducted for these purposes. Any other mandatory deductions to be made from paychecks, such as court ordered garnishments, will be

explained whenever the District is ordered to make such deductions. Questions about pay and deductions should be discussed with the Business Office.

All support staff shall have their pay checks (after all appropriately authorized amounts have been deducted) directly deposited into a designated bank account(s) of the employee's choosing. Any changes to direct deposit information may be made by notifying the Business Office. Direct deposit changes may take up to two payroll periods to take effect.

It is the District's policy to comply with applicable wage and hour laws and regulations. If you have any questions or concerns about your status or you believe that any deduction has been made from your pay that is inconsistent with your status, you should immediately raise the matter with the Business Office who can assist you in understanding the information that is required in order to investigate the matter. The District is committed to investigating and resolving all complaints as promptly, but also as accurately, as possible within a reasonable period of time. If an investigation reveals that you were subjected to an improper deduction from pay, you will be reimbursed and the Employer will take whatever action it deems necessary to ensure compliance in the future.

## **WAGES AND RELATED COMPENSATION**

### **Wage**

Wage information for support staff is contained in the *Salary & Stipend Guide*.

### **Separate Increment Assignment (Extracurricular) Stipends**

Activity assignments will be offered to the individual who, in the sole discretion of the District, is the most qualified applicant. The stipend for extra-curricular activities shall be specified in the separate increment assignment letter. The letter shall not be deemed a contract, and individuals holding extra-curricular positions are at-will employees. Payments for extra-curricular activities shall be made in accordance with the *Salary & Stipend Guide*.

### **Substitute Assignment**

Support staff may be assigned to serve as a substitute during his/her workday.

### **Training**

The District may occasionally request or require that support staff attend a workshop or training that may be helpful or necessary for employment, . Eligibility for compensation, registration fees and expenses will be determined by the District in accordance with wage and hour regulations.

### **Summer Work**

If summer employment is available, the District may offer summer employment to qualified support staff of the District's choosing. The District is free to use outside providers to perform such work at its discretion. The terms and conditions of employment for summer work shall be established by the District at the time of hire.

# ***BENEFITS***

## **DISTRICT PROVIDED BENEFITS**

The Board provides a competitive and comprehensive package of benefits to its employees. The Board retains the final authority to establish, modify, rescind, add, or in any way affect employee benefits. In conjunction with the budget process, the anticipated share cost of all employee benefits, specifying both the employee and employer share, shall be approved through Board action.

Insurance coverage will commence on the support staff's first day of employment for eligible employees. Support staff whose employment is terminated at the conclusion of a school year shall have their health, dental, life, and long-term disability insurance coverage's continued and paid at the same District rate through August of the same year in which the employment was terminated. Support staff whose employment terminates during the school year shall have their health, dental, life, and long-term disability insurance coverage's continued and paid at the same District rate through the last day of the last month of their employment.

### **Wisconsin Retirement**

Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) Contributions: Once eligible for coverage under WRS, coverage is mandatory and an employee may not "opt out" of WRS. Employers and employees are required to pay a percentage of each payment of earnings equal to "one-half of the total actuarially required contribution rate." Employee contributions are pre-tax.

### **Health and Dental Insurance**

The District reserves the right to select the carrier(s) and to determine the plan benefits including deductibles, co-pays, and other coverage's for health and dental insurances. The District reserves the right to change the structure of the benefit plan, including eligibility, at any time. Specific information concerning the plan may be found in the appropriate Summary Plan Description which governs all conditions of coverage. The plan documents are maintained in the Business Office and provided to employees who enroll in the coverage. Eligible employees who are covered under fully insured group health and dental plans are assured the privacy protections required by Federal and State Law.

### **Eligibility for Health and Dental Insurance**

Each support staff employed by the District for 1,235 hours or more per year is eligible to participate in the District's health and dental insurance. Support staff whose assignments are less than 1,235 hours are not eligible to participate in the District's health and dental insurance.

### **Premium Contributions for Health Insurance**

Full-time support staff who qualify for single or family benefits as determined by the insurance contract are eligible to have a percentage of the monthly premium rate paid by the District. The District paid portion of the premium will be prorated consistent with the employees' full-time equivalency (FTE) for part time employees. The percentage of the District contribution, which will be set annually by the Board, will be listed in the *Salary and Stipend Guide*.

### **Premium Contributions for Dental Insurance**

Support staff who qualify for single or family benefits as determined above are eligible to have the monthly premium paid by the District at the rate of full time equivalency (FTE).

### **Alternate Benefit**

The Board shall provide an Alternate Benefit Plan (ABP) to full-time support staff under the Internal Revenue Service code that permits employees to choose cash in lieu of family plan health insurance benefits.

Support staff who are eligible for family insurance coverage who decline all health insurance coverage from the District and who have other health insurance coverage shall receive \$7,000 each year the support staff declines all health insurance coverage from the District. The cash payment shall be paid into a Section 125 plan with a cash option and shall be subject to appropriate taxation as defined by the IRS and the State of Wisconsin. It is understood that this ABP payment is not considered compensation by the WRS.

The ABP will be discontinued at any time the District does not “break even” by offering this benefit as determined solely by the District. The termination of the ABP will not confer any additional benefits on those enrolled in the ABP other than the benefits described in this handbook.

### **Group Long-Term Disability Insurance**

Long term disability insurance will be made available at no cost to all full time support staff. The insurance carrier(s), program(s), and coverage(s) will be selected and determined by the Board.

### **Liability Insurance**

Employees are covered by the District’s liability policy while acting within the scope of their defined duties and responsibilities. The District’s liability policy shall be in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes.

### **Travel Expenses**

In accordance with advance authorization by the principal or immediate supervisor, the District may provide for reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses, including travel expenses, of support staff that are incurred in the course of performing services for the District, whether within or outside the District. Mileage will be reimbursed at the IRS mileage rate. Meals will be covered up to a maximum of \$50 per day.

## **VOLUNTARY BENEFITS**

### **State Life Insurance**

The Board shall participate in the State Life plan and provide the benefits under that plan to employees who are eligible and choose to participate in that plan, or the Board shall provide equivalent benefits through another carrier for employees who choose to participate. The Board shall pay 41% of the cost of providing the State Life plan benefits for those employees who choose to participate. If the Board chooses to provide equivalent benefits through another carrier, the Board shall pay an amount equal to 41% of the cost of the State Life plan benefits, for those employees who choose to participate in that alternative plan.

### **Short-Term Disability**

The Board shall make short-term disability insurance available to eligible employees at the employee’s expense. The insurance carrier(s), program(s), and coverage(s) will be selected and determined by the Board.

### **Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA)/403(b) Retirement Plan**

The District will maintain a TSA program without regard to the employee's current or former employee's contribution amounts. Employees shall have the opportunity to participate in the District's Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Code 403(b) Savings Program and invest his or her money through salary deferral in annuities and other qualifying IRS Code 403(b) investment vehicles. Employees will be permitted to have their contribution remitted via payroll deduction to an Investment Vehicle offered by a vendor listed as a District-approved vendor, as required by the IRS Code and as directed by the District's plan document.

### **Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC)/457(b) Retirement Plan**

The District will make available and employees shall have the opportunity to participate in Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) program described in the IRS code section 457(b). Deferred compensation programs allow eligible employees to save and invest before-tax and after-tax (Roth) dollars for retirement. Employees will be permitted to have their contribution remitted via payroll deduction to WDC.

### **Section 125/Flexible Spending Account**

The District will provide an Internal Revenue Service authorized cafeteria plan/flexible spending account (FSA) under applicable sections of the Internal Revenue Code (§ 105, § 106, § 125 and § 129) to permit employees to reduce their salary and contribute to an FSA to cover the following expenses:

- a. Payment of insurance premium amounts (IRC § 106);
- b. Permitted medical expenses not covered by the insurance plan (IRC § 105)
- c. Dependent care costs (IRC § 129) subject to the limitations set forth in the Internal Revenue Service Code.

Payments and the designation of amounts to be contributed to the employee's account will be subject to the procedures, rules and regulations of the plan's administrating agency. The provision of this plan shall be contingent upon the continuance of this benefit under the applicable Internal Revenue Code Sections (§ 105, § 106, § 125 and § 129).

### **VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT**

(Updated 04/18/16; Effective 07/01/16)

The Board may provide, at its sole discretion, a post-retirement benefit for eligible support staff, and reserves the right to modify or terminate this benefit at any time.

Support staff must meet all of the following requirements in order to access the early retirement benefit:

- Must have been employed the equivalent of fifteen (15) years of full-time employment as a support staff in the School District of Altoona;
- Must submit a written, voluntary letter of retirement to the Superintendent no later than March 1 of the school year at the end of which the support staff will retire;
- Must achieve at least the minimum age of fifty-seven (57) on or before July 1 of the year of retirement.

## SECTION 1 – Fifteen (15) or more years of service as of June 30, 2016

- Employees who retire, and had fifteen (15) years of service in the District prior to June 30, 2016, shall receive \$250 per month into a qualified health reimbursement account (HRA) in the employee's name for five years or until the employee is eligible for Medicare, whichever comes first.
- Employees who retire, and had twenty (20) years of service in the District prior to June 30, 2016, shall receive \$375 per month into a qualified health reimbursement account (HRA) in the employee's name for five years or until the employee is eligible for Medicare, whichever comes first.
- Employees who retire, and had twenty five (25) years of service in the District prior to June 30, 2016, shall receive \$500 per month into a qualified health reimbursement account (HRA) in the employee's name for five years or until the employee is eligible for Medicare, whichever comes first.
- These payments will be pro-rated on a 2,080 (12 month, full-time) annual hour basis.

## SECTION 2 – Less than fifteen (15) years of service as of June 30, 2016

- Eligible retirees shall be paid twenty-five percent (25%) of the accumulated sick leave at the wage rate in effect at the time of retirement. This payment is not to exceed a maximum of \$2500.

## ***TIME OFF AND LEAVES***

### **PAID LEAVE DAYS**

Each support staff will have access to his or her paid leave balances through the Employee Portal. Paid leave may be taken in quarter-day increments. The responsibility for applying for and claiming leave rests with the support staff. In all cases of absence, it is the responsibility of the support staff to contact his/her principal/supervisor in a timely manner.

### **Paid Leave Bank (Sick, Bereavement, Emergency)**

#### **Sick Leave**

Effective July 1, 2013 part-time support staff working less than 1,235 hours will not receive additional sick time. Employees hired before this date will keep their current accumulation only.

Yearly sick leave credit of ten (10) days shall be granted to the full-time support staff (pro-rated accordingly for part-time employees who work more than 1,235 hours) on the first day the support staff reports to work for the contract year. Sick leave will accumulate to a maximum of one hundred (100) days.

Support staff beginning work after the first day of the contract year shall receive a pro-rated amount of sick leave. Support staff who leave the District's employment prior to the completion of his/her contract year shall have a pro-rated amount of sick leave removed from his/her account; if the support staff has exceeded his/her account total, then the amount exceeded shall be deducted from the final amount of salary due to the support staff.

Sick leave shall cover necessary absences from duty because of personal illness, bodily injury, hospitalization or surgery. Sick leave may be used to care for a member of the immediate family. Immediate family shall be father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, domestic partner, child, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, grandparent and grandchildren.

It is expected that whenever possible medical or dental appointments for the employee or family member be scheduled outside of regularly scheduled work hours. When appointments cannot be scheduled outside of the regularly scheduled work hours, support staff are expected to return to work after the appointment if the time frame permits them to do so. When support staff intends to be absent for a medical/dental appointment or other non-school business for less than a quarter of a day, the support staff may avoid use of sick leave if the support staff makes arrangements with a colleague for coverage and notifies the principal/supervisor of the arrangements in advance of the absence; if the principal/supervisor, school office, or sub caller is used to provide a substitute, then the support staff will be charged with a half-day of sick leave if the absence is limited to either before lunch or after lunch, and a full-day of sick leave if the absence includes time both before and after lunch.

In the event an employee becomes eligible for benefits under the District's long term disability insurance program, the employee will no longer be allowed to use sick leave or accumulated sick leave.

Whenever the District deems such verification appropriate, the support staff may be required to furnish the District with a certificate of illness signed by a medical provider verifying the reason for the absence. Such certificate should include a statement releasing the support staff to return to work and a statement as to whether any limitations or restrictions are placed upon the work which may be performed. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as limiting the District's ability to discipline or discharge employees for excessive absenteeism.

When applicable, State and Federal FMLA shall run concurrently. For employees eligible for Federal FMLA, the District may require use of applicable accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave; for employees only eligible for State FMLA, the employee may request, but the employer may not require, substitution of applicable accrued paid leave.

Compassion Clause: Sick leave days may be given by support staff to another support staff upon written notice by both employees to the District Business Office. Staff members can give one day for every 10 days accumulated, to any staff member that has used all their sick days. The days given are for sick and emergency purposes, not for personal reasons. Once the days are given, they cannot be taken back.

No more than 30 days can be given to an individual employee in a given school year. Extenuating circumstances will require Board approval.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Support staff shall be granted Bereavement Leave in the event of a death in the family or close relationship. Bereavement Leave shall be deducted from the employee's Paid Leave Bank. It is the support staff's responsibility to submit the appropriate form to his/her principal/supervisor in advance of taking such leave. Support staff that access Bereavement Leave consisting of multiple days for the same death shall confer with his/her principal/supervisor in advance for the purpose of maintaining smooth school operations in his/her absence. The District may require proof of the death, the relationship, travel itineraries, or other documentation from the support staff whenever the District deems such verification appropriate.

### **Emergency Leave**

In the event of an emergency not covered by illness in the family as indicated in the Sick Leave section or death as indicated in the Bereavement Leave section, the support staff may apply for Emergency Leave to be granted by the Superintendent. Emergency Leave shall be deducted from Paid Leave Bank and will be granted only if sufficient evidence is submitted to satisfy there is a compelling reason for absence. Usually this leave will be granted only under extraordinary and uncontrollable circumstances. These circumstances will usually fall under the classification of an unforeseen nature that could not possibly be foreseen by the employee, such as damages to the support staff's residence or vehicle caused by fire, flood, tornado, or other unforeseen emergency.

### **Personal Day**

One (1) contracted day per school year will be granted to support staff working more than 1,235 hours per year for personal matters which require absence during a work day. A Personal Day is defined as leave from a regular work day to conduct personal business which cannot be conducted outside the regular work day. Personal leave is accumulative to a maximum of three (3) days.

After five (5) years of continuous service to the District the support staff will be granted two (2) personal leave days per school year with an accumulation to three (3) days.

Requests for Personal Days must be made by email to the immediate Supervisor as early as possible but not less than two (2) days prior to the day requested. If the event which gives rise to the request is unknown at that time, such request must be made as soon as the employee becomes aware of the necessity for this leave and can reasonably communicate with the building principal or supervisor. All personal leave days require supervisor approval and are granted/denied at administrator's discretion.

Typically, no more than two (2) support staff in a building or five (5) support staff in the District may use a Personal Day on the same day. No Personal Day leaves will be granted on the first or last week of school, on the day before or after a holiday, or on an inservice or Parent-Teacher Conference day.

Up to two (2) unused personal days may be paid out at year-end at \$75 per day.

### **Chaperone Day**

Support staff whose child is enrolled in the Altoona School District may apply for the equivalent of one (1) paid day per child per year, allocated in half-days, to serve as a field-trip chaperone, classroom assistant, or participant in a school-sponsored activity in which the child is involved. This day is non-accumulative and is in addition to the annual Sick Leave and Personal Leave allocation. Application for such leave shall be made in accordance with the rules and limitations of the Personal Leave calendar and shall require submission of the appropriate form.

### **Administratively-Approved Leave**

A support staff may request Administratively-Approved Leave (with or without pay) for absences not covered under Sick Leave, Personal Leave, Bereavement Leave, or Emergency Leave provisions. Paid Administratively-Approved Leave shall access the support staff's Sick Leave account. Unpaid Administratively-Approved Leave shall include payment by the support staff of daily benefit costs after three (3) continuous leave days. This leave and the conditions thereof, including compensation, shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent whose decision shall be final and without appeal.

Requests for Administratively-Approved Leave shall be made with the appropriate form at least 15 days prior to the absence if advance notice is available. In the event that 15 days advance notice is not

available, the support staff shall be responsible for submitting the appropriate form as soon as the information is available. Administrators retain full discretion to grant or deny said request.

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

Where a support staff is absent as a result of performing jury duty or acting as a witness in a matter on behalf of the District, the support staff will be paid his/her full salary provided that all payments, less mileage, due the support staff for performing jury duty shall be endorsed to the District. Support staff shall report to work if released from jury duty or the witness stand when at least a half-day remains in the scheduled work day. Support staff are required to submit proof to verify the amount of the payment and/or their requirement/request to appear.

### **National Guard Duty**

Where a support staff is absent due to required service in the National Guard or Reserve, the support staff will be paid his/her full salary for a period of up to five (5) days for such absence, barring any overriding provision by the state or federal government. This leave will be granted without any deduction from the support staff's Sick Leave account, provided that the support staff endorses to the District all payments by the military for the days covered by paid leave from the District.

### **Military Leave for Active Duty**

Support staff will be granted a military leave of absence for absences from work due to serving in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and state law.

### **Military Caregiver Leave and Exigency Leave**

Military Caregiver and Exigency Leave will be provided to qualifying employees in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

Eligible support staff may have access to absences covered by the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Wisconsin Family Medical Leave Act (WFMLA). Questions regarding FMLA leave should be directed to the District's Business Office.

## **LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

Employees may request, and the District will consider, leave requests after the support staff has exhausted applicable accrued leave. Such leave requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

**This is a duplicate copy of the form.  
Please retain this copy with your handbook for reference.**

*An original signed and dated copy of this form must be submitted to the School Office by the announced deadline as a condition of continued employment.*

The *Support Staff Handbook* describes important information about the School District of Altoona. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Altoona School District's *Support Staff Handbook*. I understand that I should consult my building principal or supervisor if I have any questions that are not answered in the handbook.

I understand and acknowledge that there may be future changes to the information, policies, and benefits in this handbook. I also understand that the School District of Altoona may add new policies to the *Support Staff Handbook* as well as replace, change, or cancel existing policies. I understand that handbook changes can only be authorized in writing by the Superintendent or by the Altoona Board of Education.

I understand and acknowledge that the district handbook is not a contract of employment or legal document. I understand and acknowledge that the *Support Staff Handbook* does not alter my employment status or guarantee employment for any definite period of time. I have received the district handbook and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and follow the policies contained in this handbook and any changes made to it.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_