



**Northwest Public Schools Teacher Handbook
2026-27 School Year**

FOREWORD

Intent of Handbook

Welcome to Northwest Public Schools. This handbook is intended to be used by teachers and other certificated staff to provide general information about Northwest 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. This includes 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 Northwest Public Schools and the Northwest Public Schools Education Association, and the policies and regulations of the Board of Education. In reading this handbook, please understand where a direct conflict exists, state or federal law, the negotiated agreement, and Board policies and regulations will control.

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 hanged 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 decide 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 2025-26 school year and subsequent school years unless replaced by a later edition.

Article 1 – MISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Section 1 School Mission Statement

At Northwest Public Schools our mission is to connect students, educators, and the community to inspire a passion for knowledge, creativity, and social responsibility. We strive to empower all learners to grow academically, socially, and emotionally, preparing them to thrive in an ever-changing world.

We will...

- Establish a learning community where every individual is valued, respected, involved, and supported by modeling compassion, integrity, flexibility, and kindness.
- Empower students to take ownership of their learning by utilizing evidence-based instructional strategies that promote autonomy, self-regulation, and engagement.
- Provide every student with rigorous, standards-based curricula, and create meaningful learning experiences that develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills for future success

The District seeks to provide essential education by developing and maintaining:

1. A curriculum that is based on state standards; comprehensive, coordinated, and sequential and is directed toward locally approved goals and standards for student learning. It draws upon research, best practice and reputable theory and provides the foundation for standards-based instruction. The instructional program focuses on achievement and provides for the diverse learning needs of all students including learners with disabilities and high ability learners. Curriculum and instruction help students develop content and skill mastery, analytical thinking, problem solving, work ethics, creativity, and respect for diversity.
2. An instructional program that focuses on achievement and provides for the needs of all students including learners with disabilities and high ability learners. It draws upon research, best practice, and reputable theory broad enough yet with sufficient depth to allow education for all the students.
3. Assessment procedures and results that assist teachers in planning and providing appropriate instruction for all students. Assessment results also provide information for monitoring program success, and for reporting to parents, policy makers, and the community. The school periodically reviews procedures to improve assessment quality and increase student learning. The information assists schools in establishing and achieving improvement goals.
4. A library/media/technology program that provides a wide range of accessible print and electronic resources that expand opportunities for learning, contribute to information literacy, support the local curriculum, and enhance and enrich learning experiences for all students. The program provides materials through onsite and electronic access that complement, supplement, and enrich curriculum and instruction. It facilitates research,

- supports and encourages personal interest reading and the study of current events, and develops technological and other skills for accessing, evaluating, and using resources.
5. Instructional staff who have appropriate training and preparation to work with the students assigned to them, who are knowledgeable of principles of child growth and development and of the curriculum content for which they are responsible, who use teaching strategies that engage students actively in learning, and who help students understand and apply content across subject areas. Staff development activities that support the school's efforts in curriculum development, instructional improvement, assessment, and general school improvement to achieve school improvement goals.
 6. Administration that exercises leadership in the development and implementation of school goals and policies. Administrators who demonstrate leadership in management and operation of the school system and in the improvement of curriculum and instruction. Building administrators who provide leadership to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school improvement. They guide staff and students in achieving goals and fulfill other functions supportive of quality learning.
 7. A systematic ongoing process that guides planning, implementation, and evaluation and renewal of school improvement activities to meet local and statewide goals and priorities. The school improvement process focuses on improving student learning. The process includes a periodic review by visiting educators who provide consultation to the school/community in continued accomplishment of plans and goals.
 8. A school system that demonstrates accountability to the school community. School staff periodically assesses and report student progress toward accomplishment of academic content standards. Results are used to plan and make needed changes to improve instruction for all students.
 9. School facilities and a general environment that supports quality learning. Facilities and grounds are safe, orderly, and well maintained, and facilities that have adequate space, lighting, and furnishings. The system has plans or provisions for climate-controlled buildings to the extent feasible. The environment is emotionally safe and supportive and promotes respect, trust, and integrity.
 10. A Board of Education that governs through orderly procedures which focuses efforts of the school upon quality learning, result in equitable opportunities for learning for all students, and ensures accountability to the local community.
 11. An activities program that is scheduled outside the regular school day focuses on active participation of all students involved in the activity and promotes a positive image of the school and community.
 12. A welcoming environment for parents and the community.

Section 2 Members of the Board of Education

Name	Contact Information
Dan Leiser, President	dan.leiser@ginorthwest.org
Zach Mader, Vice President	zach.mader@ginorthwest.org
Robin Schutt, Secretary	robin.schutt@ginorthwest.org
Artie Moeller, Treasurer	artie.moeller@ginorthwest.org
Aaron Buhrman, Member	aaron.buhrman@ginorthwest.org
Paul Mader, Member	paul.mader@ginorthwest.org

Section 3 Administrative Staff

Name	Position	School	Contact Information
Jeff Edwards	Superintendent	Northwest Public Schools	308-385-6389, Ext 5112
Traci Pedersen	Business Manager	Northwest Public Schools	308-385-6398, Ext. 5111
Kiley Fredrick	Director of Teaching and Learning	Northwest Public Schools	308-385-6389, Ext 5146
Tara Retzlaff	Director of Student Services	Northwest Public Schools	308-385-6394
Brian Gibson	Technology Coordinator	Northwest Public Schools	308-385-6389, Ext 5142
Heather Callihan	Technology Integrationist	Northwest Public Schools	308-384-6389, Ext 5171
Chad Pieper	Head of Maintenance	Northwest Public Schools	308-385-6389, Ext 5124
PJ Smith	Principal	Northwest High School	308-385-6394, Ext 5119
Bill Bombeck	Assistant Principal	Northwest High School	308-385-6394, Ext 5121
Marty Moser	Assistant Principal	Northwest High School	308-385-6394, Ext 5123
Jaimi Stelk	Principal	Cedar Hollow Elementary	308-385-6306
Steve Retzlaff	Principal	1-R Elementary	308-385-6352
Jacob Ritzdorf	Principal	St. Libory Elementary	308-687-6475
Scott Jorgensen	Activities Director	Northwest High School	308-385-6389, Ext 5120

Section 4 Contract Days

Teachers are contracted for 185 days (hereinafter referred to as the “contract year”). Such contract days will be serviced by individual teachers on varying schedules as established by the Board of Education and administration.

Section 5 Make-Up Days

In the event teachers are not required to report for duty due to inclement weather conditions or other circumstances whereby a duty day is canceled, such days shall not be credited as a contract day served. 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 6 Severe Weather and School Cancellations

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized by the Board of Education to close public schools in case of severe weather. Representatives of the Superintendent’s staff will notify local news media when inclement weather warrants such action. The information is broadcast regularly by radio and television stations. Notifications of staff will also be made with a district-wide automated notification system. Staff may be designated as being required to come to school even in the event of a school closing.

After School Starts. Every attempt will be made to avoid closing school once classes are in session. In some instances, closing school during the day is inevitable if children are to safely return home before the brunt of a major storm hits. In these cases, as much advance notice as possible will be given. If school is closed during the day staff will be notified and parents will be notified via media broadcast. 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 because of personal circumstances. Students absent because of severe weather when school is in session will be marked absent. You should treat the absence like any other absence for legitimate causes provided parents properly notify the school of their decision. Parents may pick up their children in inclement weather (except in case of a tornado) at any time during the school day. Students will not normally be dismissed from school during severe weather based on a telephone request.

Emergency Conditions. Northwest Public Schools have a signal which, when activated, includes the necessity to either evacuate the building or to move to safer areas of the building. All regular drills are held as required by law throughout the school year. There are plans for an Emergency Exit system, Tornado Warning System, and Critical Incident Response. In the event of an emergency exit alert or tornado warning, you should implement the school’s established safety procedures.

Article 2 - EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Section 1 Employment

A teacher is employed by Northwest 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 administration or the Board of Education to non-renew, terminate, amend or cancel the teacher's employment contract with the school district, or action by the Board of Education to accept a resignation of employment.

On or after March 15 of each school year a teacher may be requested to accept employment for the next school year and shall be required to signify such acceptance on or before April 1 or on such other date after March 15 as may be designated in the notice. It is important for teachers to respond to the request to signify acceptance as a failure to signify acceptance of employment by April 1 or other designated date shall constitute cause for amendment of termination of the teacher's contract. If a teacher signifies acceptance of employment for the next school year the teacher may either be issued a new Teacher's Contract or a "Contract Renewal Agreement."

Should a teacher wish to resign from employment, the teacher should give written notice of resignation to the Superintendent. The request to resign will be acted upon by the Board of Education. Mid-year resignations and resignations given late in the spring for the following school year can present significant planning problems for the District. If a mid-year resignation for the current school year is submitted, or a resignation for the following school year is submitted after the teacher has signified acceptance of employment for the next school year, the Board of Education may act to not accept the resignation unless a suitable replacement can be found. The District will enforce the continuing contract of teachers accepting employment for the next school year under the provisions of Neb Rev. Stat. §79-820.

Section 2 Assignments

The professional duties to be performed by a teacher with the District shall be subject to assignment by the Superintendent of the District with the approval of the Board of Education. 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. Job descriptions, where available, provide additional information about the position duties. In addition to the normal duties traditionally required of teachers, a teacher may be assigned such "extra duty" assignments to support the extracurricular programs of the District, which shall be upon such terms and conditions and at such additional rate of compensation as the Teacher and the District may agree upon or as set forth in the negotiated agreement. The extra-curricular program of the school district is an integral part of the overall educational program of the school district. As such a teacher shall not unreasonably refuse

to accept such extra-duty assignments. In addition, performance in an extra duty assignment is a part of the evaluation of the teacher's overall performance to the District.

Section 3 Personnel File

The District will follow the requirements of state and federal law and regulation with regard to a teacher's personnel file, including but not limited to Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-8,109.

Section 4 Grievances and Complaints

Teacher grievances regarding wages, hours, and conditions of employment set forth in the negotiated agreement shall be governed by the grievance or complaint procedure in the negotiated agreement. All other employment-related grievances or complaints shall be addressed through the administrative chain of command following the process set forth in board policy.

Section 5 Compensation

Regular Salary and Extra-Duty Compensation. Compensation is paid only as authorized by the Board of Education. Teachers are paid a salary based on placement on the salary schedule set forth in the collectively bargained negotiated agreement between the District and the collective bargaining agent for the certificated teaching staff (referred to in this handbook as the "negotiated agreement"), and the extra-duty salary schedule also incorporated into the negotiated agreement.

Changes in Salary Schedule Placement. Changes in a teacher's placement on the salary schedule shall be governed by the provisions of the negotiated agreement. Teachers are expected to provide the Superintendent with a transcript for all graduate hours earned for purposes of advancement on the salary schedule on or before September 1 of the school year in which such hours are to be credited for the teacher's placement on the salary schedule. Failure to timely provide an official transcript from the post-graduate institution of the graduate hours earned will result in a loss of such credit for such school year.

Salary Payments. Salary is payable in twelve equal installments. Teachers will be paid on the 15th of the month. In emergency cases exceptions may be made, subject to the approval of the Board.

Additional compensation over and above regular compensation, extra-duty pay, and supplemental pay shall be disbursed as it is earned and deductions from compensation due to unpaid leave shall be taken out as they are reported to the payroll office. Reimbursements for mileage or other expenses will be considered separate from compensation.

Section 6 Extended Duty Pay

Extended duty for any teacher beyond the number of contract days established by the Board of Education for the school year shall be paid on a per diem basis for such teacher's extended time.

Section 7 Benefits

Teachers are provided benefits in accordance with the negotiated agreement, group health insurance plan requirements, and the school district's Section 125 Plan document. Teachers shall make annual fringe benefit selections by September 1 of each school year. Should a teacher fail to make such an election, the teacher election from the immediately preceding school and contract year shall be continued. Each teacher is responsible for informing the Office of the Superintendent in writing of any changes in benefit status.

Continued health insurance benefits are available through COBRA subject to certain qualifying requirements. A Notice of COBRA Continuation Coverage Rights is attached to this handbook as Appendix "A".

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) provide rights and protections for participants and beneficiaries in group health plans. HIPAA includes protections for coverage under group health plans that limit exclusions for preexisting conditions; prohibit discrimination against employees and dependents based on their health status; and allow a special opportunity to enroll in a new plan to individuals in certain circumstances. HIPAA may also give you the right to purchase individual coverage if you have no group health plan coverage available and have exhausted COBRA or other continuation coverage. Further information may be obtained from the Plan Administrator of the group health plan.

Section 8 Payroll and Payroll Deductions

Salary and benefits are paid in accordance with the individual employment contracts and negotiated agreement. Payroll deductions shall be made in accordance with law and the negotiated agreement.

Section 9 Expense Reimbursement

Reimbursement for authorized mileage will be paid to teachers required to drive their own vehicles during their regular scheduled working hours between two or more work sites. Claims for reimbursement should be submitted to the appropriate supervisor. The allowable rate shall be governed by Board policy, unless otherwise required by law. The District is not liable for physical damage to employee vehicles.

Materials necessary for instruction are provided by the District. If teachers need additional materials for instruction or school-related purposes, the request should be made to the Principal.

Reimbursement of purchased materials or for meals or other expenses related to travel must be submitted to and approved by either the Principal or, if the expense relates to an activity, by the Athletic Director. The request for reimbursement should include a voucher sufficient to establish that the expense was actually incurred and that the expense was reasonable and related to a school-purpose.

Section 10 403(b) Salary Reduction Agreement

The District will cooperate with any teacher who chooses to participate in an investment program under a Internal Revenue Code Section 403(b) provided that the certificated employee 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 holding the District harmless from any liability that may arise out of such 403(b) Plan, including, but not limited to, the calculation of the maximum exclusion allowance, tax reporting, notices and income withholding.

Section 11 Overtime

Teaching professionals are classified as exempt from overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The overtime exemption for teaching professionals is not dependent on whether the employee is paid on a “salary basis.” Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime or compensatory time.

The District’s policy is to authorize unpaid disciplinary suspensions of a full day or more for infractions of workplace conduct rules and to apply such policy uniformly to all similarly situated employees, including exempt employees who are required to meet a “salaried basis” test for the exemption to be applicable. Unpaid disciplinary suspensions of a partial day or of a full day or more may be implemented for infractions of safety rules of major significance. Deductions of pay of a partial or of a full day or more may be made for FMLA leaves and in the first and last weeks of employment. In addition, based on principles of public accountancy, deductions from pay on a partial day or of a full day or more will be made for absences for illness, injury or personal reasons when accrued leave is not used or not available, and for absences due to any budget-required furlough.

Article 3 - ABSENCES FROM WORK

Section 1 Paid Leave - Sick and Personal Leaves

Teachers are provided with paid sick and personal leave (professional leaves, bereavement leaves, etc.) in accordance with the negotiated agreement. During such paid leaves, teachers shall continue to receive all salary and fringe benefits called for by the negotiated agreement.

The leaves provided by the District are to be used for the purpose intended. Abuse of leave privileges affects the students, other staff, and the entire District and will not be tolerated.

Requests for Leave

Advance reporting of the need to take a leave and having effective lesson plans and materials prepared and readily available for the substitute are important. To guard against depletion of available substitutes, requests for will be approved on a first come first serve basis. Personal leave requests of three or more school days in a row, over parent teacher conferences or extending already planned leaves must be submitted to the building administrator to be reviewed and considered at the District bi-weekly administrative meeting.

A teacher who becomes ill and is unable to work is to contact the appropriate attendance personnel for the building before 6:00 AM. Before the end of the school day on the first day of sick leave, and on each subsequent day of absence, a report should be made to the appropriate attendance personnel as to whether the teacher will be able to return to duty on the next duty day. For illnesses or medical situations where the need for the leave can be determined in advance, the teacher is to make such advance report of need for leave as soon as possible.

For any absence, a Request of Leave form is to be submitted online through the SUI program at least five school days prior to the leave, or such other advance notice as is practical under the circumstances.

Return from Leave

Upon return from leave, teachers are to review information supplied by the substitute teacher as to progress made in the class and any student behavior concerns. The substitute should be contacted directly if the written information supplied is not adequate.

A teacher who is absent for any period of time because of injury requiring care from a physician or health care provider, or for a period of one week or more due to illness, must present a written statement to the Principal from the teacher's physician or health care provider stating that the teacher is physically able to return to duty. This statement is to be presented in person before the teacher returns to duty in order that the present stage of convalescence can be observed and discussed.

Section 2 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 leaves called for in the negotiated agreement, the teacher's salary shall be reduced by the days missed on a per diem calculation.

Section 3 Leaves of Absence

A teacher may apply to the Board of Education for a leave of absence from the teacher's duties. The Board of Education will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis. No leave of absence shall extend beyond one school year. All leaves of absence shall be without pay except for the payment of health insurance benefits as may be required under applicable state or federal laws.

Section 4 Jury Duty

A teacher who is summoned for jury service shall promptly notify the Principal of such summons. The teacher's salary will continue during time spent in jury service, and no deduction of leave time shall occur, except that the District may reduce the pay by an amount equal to any compensation, other than expenses, paid by the court for jury duty. Teachers are to notify the Principal of the amount received for such jury duty.

If a teacher, upon reporting for jury duty in the morning, is dismissed from jury duty for the remainder of the day, the teacher is to report for duty and resume duties for the balance of the day. When a teacher is entirely dismissed from jury duty, the teacher is directed to report for duty and the substitute will be dismissed.

Teachers are expected to promptly notify the Principal of any other form of legal summons which may require an absence from duty. In the event the summons involves a school-related matter, the matter shall be treated similar to a jury duty absence. In the event the summons involves a personal matter, the teacher will be required to use available leave days.

Section 5 Military Leave

Teachers who are members of the National Guard, Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air Force Reserve, or Coast Guard Reserve (hereinafter, “reserves”), are entitled to a military leave of absence from their respective duties, when employed with or without pay under the orders of authorization of competent authority in the active service of the state or of the United States. Teachers who normally work or are normally scheduled to work 120 hours or more in three consecutive weeks shall receive a military leave of absence of 120 hours each calendar year. Teachers who normally work or are normally scheduled to work less than 120 hours in three consecutive weeks shall receive a military leave of absence each calendar year equal to the number of hours they normally work or would normally be scheduled to work, whichever is greater, in three consecutive weeks. Such military leave of absence may be taken in hourly increments and shall be in addition to the teacher’s regular annual leave.

When the governor of this state declares that a state of emergency exists, and any teacher who is a member of the reserves is ordered to active service of the state, the teacher shall be granted a state of emergency leave of absence until released from active service by competent authority. The leave of absence shall not be a military leave of absence; other forms of leave may be granted. The teacher shall receive normal salary or compensation minus the state active-duty base pay the teacher receives in active service of the state.

Section 6 Family and Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides for 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave in a 12 month period to eligible employees in specified circumstances. Some specifics regarding FMLA leave at Northwest Public Schools:

- a. The planned year for FMLA is a rolling year. A rolling year is a 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee last used any FMLA leave.
- b. Employees will be required to substitute remaining applicable paid leave prior to using unpaid leave. In other words, the total job-protected paid and unpaid leave is 12 weeks.

If you need to take FMLA leave, or have any questions regarding an FMLA leave, you should contact the Superintendent.

Article 4 - DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1 Hours of Work & Meetings

Regular, dependable attendance at work is an essential function of a teacher's employment position. The Board of Education recognizes that teachers' responsibilities to their students and their profession generally involve the performance of duties and the commitment of time beyond the norm 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 school system.

Schools have differing starting and ending times for the student day. Certificated employees assigned to a building are to spend seven hours and 30 minutes on site, including lunch break (30-minute lunch), except that duty-free lunchtime can be spent off-site. The Principal will determine the length of time prior to and after the student class schedule for staff to be on-site to meet the required seven hours and 30 minutes. Staff may leave the building earlier when called to a professional meeting.

Certificated employees are required to serve on parking lot, detention hall, lunchroom and hall supervision, recess, working activities within the district and other duties as designated by the Principal. The Principal will attempt to make an equitable distribution of such assignments and professional staff shall assume such duties as part of their work and agreement of employment. Teachers shall attend meetings called by the Superintendent of Schools, principals, department heads and team leaders, except those meetings which are designated for optional attendance.

Section 2 Arrival to Duty Assignment

All teachers are to be in the building by no later than 7:45 a.m.; and to remain on duty until 3:45 p.m. Certificated employees other than teachers are expected to meet the same guidelines for entry to the building, being in their assigned duty area, and duty departure time. Teachers and other certificated employees who are part-time or work on adjusted schedules are to be in the building at least 10 minutes before their class or assigned duty begins. During the school day, teachers are to be in their assigned classroom at least five minutes before each period begins to ensure that students are not unsupervised within the classroom.

Section 3 Leaving School

Teachers are to always be on duty during the school day. Teachers are considered on duty even during designated planning periods. An uninterrupted lunch period of not less than 30-minutes each day is provided to teachers during which they are not assigned teaching, supervisory, or other duties. Teachers who leave the school during the designated lunch period must check out with the Principal's office.

Teachers may not leave school during duty hours without the approval of the Principal. If the absence has been approved, the teacher must check out with the Principal's office when leaving and check back in with the Principal's office upon return. Teachers who need to leave during the school day for reasons of illness or emergency are to check out with the Principal's office and make sure that a responsible person has been notified of their unexpected absence so student coverage may be provided.

Section 4 Lesson Plans

Teachers will prepare lesson plans which cover at least three days of advanced instruction. The lesson plans must be sufficiently clear in establishing objectives and related activities so that they are easily used by a substitute teacher or other staff member not familiar with previous classroom activities or progress. The plan book must give specific reference to other instructional resources immediately available which will enhance the instructional lesson.

Section 5 Daily Records

Every teacher is required to keep a complete record of the attendance and achievement of every student in PowerSchool. This class record must be kept current and include the following minimum information in a readily understandable fashion:

1. The names and any assigned student numbers of all students enrolled in the class at the beginning of the semester.
2. The name and date of entry for each student who enrolls after the semester opens.
3. The date of withdrawal for each student who withdraws from the class previous to the close of the semester--dropouts or early withdrawals.
4. A complete report on all recorded grades for each student. There is no minimum requirement for the frequency of recorded grades (or for the giving of written lessons or examinations). Be sure that you test frequently enough and that you record grades frequently enough to readily and realistically justify the term and final grades which are reported to parents.
5. A complete record of the attendance of each student enrolled showing:
 - a. Days on which the student was tardy.
 - b. Days on which the student was absent, with a differentiation between excused and unexcused absences.

Upon request a student's individual record in PowerSchool shall be made available for review or copying. Information relating to other students should not be allowed to be seen by other students or parents.

Because the entries in PowerSchool constitute a source of original entry for information which may be needed in the absence of the teacher, teachers are required to finalize student information in PowerSchool at the close of the school year for filing in the permanent records. **(K-2 teachers refer to building principal for instructions).**

Section 6 Classroom and School Procedures

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

1. Bulletin Boards

Each teacher shall be responsible for completing appropriate bulletin boards regarding curriculum related matters in their primary classroom.

2. Textbook and Room Inventory All school purchased materials must be inventoried using the online form. Textbooks are to be numbered and either have cards in pockets or a form for writing the name of the student to whom the book is assigned. Teachers should keep good records of who has which book. At the start of the year, note the condition of the textbook on the inventory sheet and keep this sheet. When books are turned in, again note its condition, and if the book shows abuse (other than normal wear) assess a fine that you consider are fair. Insist that students put covers on their books by the end of the first week after receiving them.

3. Use of Teacher Aides

Teacher aides provide valuable assistance in the educational process and allow teachers to carry out their responsibilities in a more efficient and effective manner. A teacher aide must not, however, assume teaching responsibilities. The teacher must maintain the role of leadership and responsibility for the students, with the teacher aide in a supportive role. Teacher aides 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, grading tests or class work, and calculating grades and record grades. Teacher aides are to work only on their assigned workdays and within their assigned workday. If the teacher desires the aide to work hours other than the assigned work hours or assigned workday, contact the administration for approval.

4. Use of Student Aides

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

5. Equipment and Supplies

All equipment must be checked out through the building principal. Books and supplies which are needed for instruction should be requested through the Principal's office. No

equipment or supplies ordered through the District may be directed at the personal use of a teacher or another District employee.

6. E-mail

Each teacher will be assigned a school email address for purposes of intra-school and inter-school email correspondence. Teachers should check emails throughout the day and should timely respond to emails which require a response but should avoid checking and responding to emails during instructional time. Use of the District's email system for personal communications should be limited and is subject to the rules governing overall computer usage found in Board policy and this handbook.

7. Teacher Mailbox

Each teacher will be assigned a mailbox located in the faculty workroom. Teachers should check for mail each morning and later in the school day, if possible. If something requires an answer, teachers are responsible for responding promptly.

8. Teachers Meeting

Teachers' meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month. ALL teachers are expected to be present for the meetings, unless they are absent from school for good cause or have made prior arrangements.

Section 7 Supervision of Students

Proper supervision of students is an important responsibility for teachers and other adults responsible for students. Teachers and other adults responsible for student supervision are expected to meet the four "P's" for student supervision and safety.

1. Proper Supervision

- Report to all duty assignments on time.
- Circulate through your duty area. Pay particular attention to areas and activities that pose an increased risk of injury.
- Be vigilant while supervising students. Never leave your classroom unattended; the need to make a copy is not greater than the need to supervise your students. If an emergency requires you leave your classroom, request that another nearby staff member cover your class, or notify the office so someone can provide assistance. If you are on recess duty, your responsibility is to supervise the students in your assigned area. When talking with other adults or students, remember that your primary duty is supervision and make sure you are aware of what all students who you are to be supervising 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 the student must increase with the known risk of injury. (Remember, though, that this type of information may be confidential--do not share confidential information about students except with other staff who need to know the information to perform their jobs.)

- Be careful with touching students. Use of corporal punishment is prohibited at Northwest Public Schools. Touching students should be limited to that necessary to protect the student from harm (e.g., falling from playground equipment) and 15 that which professional educators determine appropriate for purposes of proper student relationships.
- Be careful with your language. Profanity or abusive language should not be used by you. Be a good role model for students. If a student uses such language, you should correct the student and take such disciplinary action as is appropriate, which may include making a report to administration.

2. Proper Instructions

- Proper instructions are important to reduce the risk of injury when students undertake an activity, especially an activity that 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 they will be remembered.
- When you go over safety rules with students note it in your written records (e.g., your lesson plan book or daily reports).
- Review playground and classroom safety rules with students at least once each semester and note when you do it in your written records. Also, if any students are absent when you review the rules contact the student(s) to review the same information and note that contact in your written records.

3. 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 (if it can't be moved, tape a "Do Not use" sign) and notify the office so those repairs may be undertaken.
- Check your communication device (whether it be a school phone in your supervision area, a walkie-talkie, or a cell phone) periodically to make sure you can communicate with the office immediately in the event of an emergency.

4. 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 which could cause injury to students or others. Examples include:

- student fight
- student health problems (fainting, bleeding, high temperature, difficulty breathing, etc.); if the office cannot be immediately located, 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
- presence of an intruder (a non-student or staff member who refuses to go to the office)

Student Searches

Office administration should also be contacted before performing searches of students or their belongings. You may 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. Do not use physical force to detain the student or to make the student accompany you except as reasonably necessary to protect the student or others.

Student Rights

Students should be treated fairly and given the same treatment without consideration of race, color, religion, gender, or disability. Students who need special accommodation 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.

Section 8 Managing Student Conduct

Discipline is everyone's responsibility. It begins with the student being responsible for his/her own behavior and understanding the consequences it may cause. 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. **All staff are responsible for all students** in the hallways, in the restrooms, at assemblies, at pep rallies, and during lunch. Consequences for inappropriate behavior may include students making up time before or after school, a student or a parent conference, or a referral to an administrator.

The following guidelines will assist in maintaining appropriate student conduct and complying with the process required for student discipline.

1. On the first day of class, make students aware of classroom expectations. Students will accept them if they know in advance and if they are fair and consistent. Students often appreciate giving input on classroom rules. These expectations should be in writing. Give one copy to the students, post one copy in the room and provide one copy for the principal.
2. It is important to document student behavior in your classroom, calls to parents, referrals, and/or communications with a student.
3. If, after attempts to improve student behavior, the problems continue, talk to the student's counselor or the Principal about possible alternatives in discipline procedures. Be attentive and respond to "bullying."
4. If a student continues to cause problems, inform the administration for disciplinary action using the approved reporting forms. Be sure to state the problem clearly and expectations in terms of assistance, as at times the student's and teacher's stories are different. Be prepared to provide documentation.
5. Follow up on any referral. The student may not go to the principal or the counselor when sent. The administrator or attendance coordinator will inform the teacher of the consequences.
6. Refer students with continued and significant behavioral problems to the RTI team for a determination of whether the student needs special services. Contact the counselor if you have questions as to the procedure.
7. Talk with other teachers about the classroom management techniques they use to establish an atmosphere conducive to learning in their classroom. A large repertoire of classroom management techniques always enhances learning.

8. Read and understand the student handbook and the student conduct rules of the District.
9. Use good judgment when dealing with difficult situations involving students. Physical confrontation generally escalates tense situations. Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school district and is not to be used. Physical force may only be used to the extent that is reasonably necessary to protect the student, yourself and others, and to protect property as may be reasonable.
10. Violations of student rules which are also violations of state law are required to be reported to law enforcement. Make a report on such conduct to the Principal so this law may be followed.

Section 9 Dispensing Medication

Teachers are not permitted to give any medication to students unless trained under the Medication Aid Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §71-6718 to 71-6743. 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 aide 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 Safety and Security Management Plan and the District's Emergency Protocol (asthma/anaphylaxis protocol).

If students must take medication and/or perform medical procedures prescribed by a duly licensed physician during school hours, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to sign permission to dispense the medicine at the school and to submit a note or prescription from the physician authorizing the medicine and/or medical procedure. School district personnel will not administer medicine, including over the counter medicine, without this signed form and note or prescription. Any medication brought to school needs to be properly labeled. The label should include the following information: Student's name, name of medication, dosage needed, and time of dispensing the medication.

Section 10 Report Child Abuse (Child Abuse Hotline 800-652-1999)

Nebraska State law and school 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 State Law, abuse or neglect means knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be:

- a. Placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health;
- b. Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;
- c. Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care;
- d. Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor child is six years of age or younger;
- e. Sexually abused; or
- f. 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 or supervisor that they intend to make a report. Administrative staff may sometimes choose to make the report for a teacher. However, informing a principal or supervisor does not end the teacher's responsibility; teachers are obligated to make certain a report was made if they do not do it themselves.

It is vital that the report be made as accurately and as soon as possible. To assure accuracy, you are encouraged to document the date of the incident and specific statements or explanations made by a child regarding abuse/neglect concern. Timeliness in making a report will assist in minimizing further risk to the child by allowing the police or Child Protective Services workers to interview the child during the school day and prior to an evening or weekend. In cases of physical injury (e.g., bruising or other marks), it is essential the police observe and document the injury. A counselor, a school social worker or an administrator will help you.

Article 5 - PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Section 1 Professional Ethics Standards

Northwest 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. (Please refer to the Nebraska Department of Education Professional Ethics Standards) www.education.ne.gov/CC/standcond.pdf

Section 2 Evaluations

Evaluations of teachers will be conducted in accordance with the District’s evaluation policy. Supervisors reserve the right to observe, appraise or evaluate teachers more frequently than required by policy on an as-needed basis. Teachers are expected to participate constructively and positively in the evaluation process and to accept and implement constructive suggestions and improvement strategies developed by administration.

Section 3 Role Model

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.

Section 4 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.

Section 5 Professional Attire

It is important for teachers to project a professional image to students, parents and co-workers. Appropriate attire and grooming are one of the means of projecting a professional image. Teachers are expected to maintain conservative and professional attire and groom 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 which students would not be permitted to wear at school. The administration may establish more detailed guidelines for individual teachers should that be necessary.

Section 6 Private Tutoring

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

1. The teacher may not arrange to provide private tutoring for any child enrolled in the teacher's class.
2. The teacher is not to provide private tutoring during duty time.
3. The teacher is not to advertise or promote the teacher's private tutoring services in the school or in the school's communication systems except with the express permission of the Superintendent or designee.

Section 7 Outside Employment

Teachers shall not perform duties unrelated to District employment during duty hours. In addition, teachers should not engage in employment which conflicts with their school duties. Teachers are not required to notify the District of outside employment except 1) teachers who are also employed by another Nebraska school district to comply with Nebraska State Retirement System regulations and (2) teachers who have a work-related injury in order to comply with workers' compensation requirements.

Article 6 - ACADEMIC MATTERS

Section 1 Purpose and Goals of Academic Achievement

The Northwest Public Schools Board of Education is committed to providing quality education for all Northwest Public Schools students consistent with the school's mission statement. Effective, quality instruction by teachers is an essential means of meeting the District's mission of providing quality education.

Section 2 Teaching to Student Understanding to Assure Learning

Each teacher is responsible for teaching in a manner to meet the mission of the District and to assure students understanding and learning of the principles and concepts to be presented to students within the curriculum adopted by the District. Teachers will model classroom instruction on the educational model implemented by the District and reflected in the teacher evaluation instrument adopted by the Board of Education. Teachers are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the instructional model and the principles of instruction set forth in the evaluation instrument. The administration shall provide periodic in-services regarding the instructional model.

State and federal laws and regulations have been enacted which require that students with certain needs be provided with instruction and services consistent with those special needs. Examples include students who have been verified as in need of special education ("special education students"), students with other disabilities which impact the educational program ("504 students"), and limited English proficient students ("LEP or ELL students"). The District's policy is to comply with the state and federal laws and regulations in all respects. Teachers who are assigned special education, 504, or LEP/ELL students are required to provide instruction and services consistent with legal requirements and the requirements of Board policy and regulation.

Section 3 Instruction in the Curriculum

Teachers will instruct students in the curriculum, including the use of curriculum materials, adopted and implemented by the Board of Education and as directed by the administration. Explicit materials of any type shall not be used in the instructional process without prior approval of the administration.

Section 4 Measuring and Reporting Academic Achievement for Students

Grades and Grading: Measuring and accurately reporting the level of each student's academic achievement is of critical importance to students, parents, staff, the Board of Education and community. To this end, each teacher shall develop a variety of assessment instruments and techniques to measure student achievement in the curriculum adopted and implemented by the school district, record the results of such assessment, and report such results on Report Cards. Teachers should endeavor to measure student learning and understanding on a frequent basis during each quarter to provide an accurate evaluation of each student's academic achievement for that period. It is recommended that the teacher records at least two grades per week. It is generally preferable to give numerical grades for tests, quizzes, and daily work. GRADES MUST BE RECORDED FOR ALL CURRICULAR AREAS.

Recording Grades: Each teacher shall record grades in PowerSchool. A sufficient number of grades must be recorded in the grade book to justify all quarter and semester grades for each student. Please keep consistent and complete records. Teachers must be able to support and justify the grades that each individual student earns.

Grade Scales: Teachers are to use only the grading scales set forth below. Any deviation from the approved grade scales must be approved by the building principal.

Grades are to be expressed in numerical value for semester grades and in letter grades for unit reports and unit averages. The final grade is to be expressed by number. For grades 9-12, the final semester test will count for not more than 10% of the total grade.

Grade reports will be sent home to parents at least twice each semester. Parents will be notified through the school calendar of the dates reports will be distributed. Parents will be notified of the dates when the semester grade reports are distributed. These contain the final grade, expressed numerically, and it is the grade recorded on the student's permanent record. STUDENT EVALUATION SCALE: The grade scales to be used for reporting student progress are as follows:

A+	100	4.0	C+	85	2.0
A+	99	4.0	C+	84	2.0
A+	98	4.0	C+	83	2.0
A	97	4.0	C	82	2.0
A	96	4.0	C	81	2.0
A-	95	4.0	C-	80	2.0
A-	94	4.0	C-	79	2.0
A-	93	4.0	C-	78	2.0
B+	92	3.0	D+	77	1.0
B+	91	3.0	D+	76	1.0

B	90	3.0	D+	75	1.0
B	89	3.0	D	74	1.0
B	88	3.0	D	73	1.0
B-	87	3.0	D-	72	1.0
B-	86	3.0	D-	71	1.0
			D-	70	1.0

The preceding grade scales are expected to be used according to the following guidelines:

1. No other grade scales are to be used on official records or reports.
2. “Failing,” “unsatisfactory” or equivalent terms indicate that student performance does not meet the minimum requirements established for the course. A final mark of “failing” or “unsatisfactory” in a credit-bearing course means that credit hours will not be granted.
3. The mark given at the end of each reporting period is considered an evaluation of the pupil’s status at the time (for example, the final mark in a semester course is an evaluation of the pupil’s status as of the close of the semester; not an average of two nine-week marks).
4. Teachers may exercise professional judgment in distributing marks. Marks are not expected to be distributed on a normal curve.

Reconsideration of Grades/Marks: Questions raised concerning duly assigned grades will be resolved cooperatively in a conference which includes the teacher(s) involved and the Principal. In the event a grade is questioned by parents or students, the parents/guardians and/or student may be included in the conference.

Failure to resolve the issue will result in a second conference involving the Superintendent or designee and the participants in the initial conference described above. The grades designated by teachers will not be changed unilaterally by the Superintendent unless the Superintendent determines that the grade is not consistent with the requirements of law, Board policy, or the best interests of the District.

Reduced Credit: Some students in certain situations may qualify for less than the number of credits normally granted for a course. late entry or a serious injury at an awkward point in the semester would be a couple of examples. If a student is excessively absent from a class for any particular reason, a teacher may request reduced credit. All cases of reduced credit should be recorded on a “Reduced Credit/Error Summary” form and be approved by the Principal.

Transfer Grades: A student transferring into Northwest Public Schools at the fifteen-to eighteen-week time period will have all grades on transcript from an accredited school accepted for semester credit. Grades must be approved for credit by the Principal.

Reports to Parents: Grades and credit are assigned on a quarter (9 weeks) or semester basis (18 weeks). Reports are sent to parents at the close of each nine weeks during the school year; the reporting periods are referred to as first quarter, first semester, third quarter, and second semester.

The grade reports are produced from information supplied by teachers and distributed to students at school and posted on PowerSchool. Parents requesting a paper copy will be mailed one.

All term or mid-quarter grades are calculated on a cumulative basis, i.e., the grade given at the end of the first quarter represents an evaluation of work done during that quarter, and the grade given at the close of the semester represents an evaluation of all the work done during the entire eighteen weeks.

The end-of-quarter and end-of-semester reports are directed to parents, not to students. Students probably know quite well how they stand in such areas as citizenship, attitude, cooperation, attendance, preparation of assignments, etc. The parents do not have this knowledge. If any such factors have significant bearing on the student's grades or their relationship with teachers, notes should be sent to parents. Arrangements will be made to place these teacher-written notes with the grade report forms. The notes may call attention to deficiencies, faults, or failures; or they may be commentary in nature. If carefully prepared, they can be most valuable. Parents need to have information about areas of strengths and areas needing improvement and progress being made by their child. For their instruction, and for our ultimate well-being, if problems arise, it is essential that the reports be as informative as possible. Teachers should, in all cases, plan to keep on file duplicate copies of the notes which are sent to parents.

Please accept, cooperatively and professionally, the responses that parents may make subsequent to the distribution of term or mid-quarter reports. Parents are not always helpful or reasonable under these circumstances, but they do need information and direction. Please encourage parents to discuss their student-centered problems with you and give them all possible assistance.

Mid-Quarter Progress Reports to Parents: Mid-quarter progress reports are prepared at or near the middle of the fourth and the thirteenth weeks of each semester. These reports will be mailed to all parents.

Section 5 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are a critical opportunity for teachers to dialogue with parents (or guardians) of students regarding student achievement and learning. To this end, quarterly Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled and held during the school year. Teacher attendance at Parent-Teacher conferences is mandatory. A teacher may only be excused from attendance at Parent-Teacher conferences in writing by the Superintendent. The schedule setting forth the dates and times for the Parent-Teacher conferences for the school year are established on the District calendar.

Teachers are expected to be prepared for such conferences. Being prepared includes having completed grade books which include all student assignments, work or tests completed within five (5) days of the date of the Parent-Teacher conferences.

Article 7 - USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Section 1 Drug-Free Workplace

The District has established the school as a drug-free workplace. The drug-free workplace for this purpose includes school grounds, school utilized vehicles, and places in which school activities are held.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace. The possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol, the use of glue or aerosol paint for any other chemical substance for inhalation, and being under the influence of illicit drugs, alcohol, or inhalants, is prohibited in any place while teachers are on duty time. Any level of impairment from illicit drugs, alcohol, or inhalants, and the presence of any odor of illicit drugs (such as marijuana) or alcohol on a teacher in the workplace or on duty time shall be a violation of the drug-free workplace. The possession or distribution of a look-alike drug or look-alike-controlled substance is prohibited. In addition, teachers are expected to serve as role models for students and will be considered to have violated the District's expectations in the event the teacher commits a criminal drug or alcohol offense off the workplace or off duty time.

Disciplinary sanctions up to and including termination of employment and referral for prosecution will be imposed upon teachers who violate the standards of conduct. Sanctions may include the requirement that the teacher complete an appropriate rehabilitation program, a reprimand, and termination of employment. Drug and alcohol counseling and rehabilitation and reentry programs are available through local health agencies.

Section 2 Smoke and Tobacco-Free Workplace

The use of tobacco products, vapor products, or alternative nicotine products in the District's buildings and on school grounds, all owned or leased facilities and vehicles are prohibited.

Section 3 Weapon-Free Workplace

The District prohibits any person from being in possession of a weapon at a school attendance facility, on school property, at a school-supervised activity, or at a school-sponsored function. Any teacher found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The term "weapon" means an instrument or object used, or which may be used, as a means of attack, defense, or destruction, including, without limitation:

- a. Any object which will, or is designed to, or may readily be converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other means.
- b. The frame or receiver of any object described in the preceding example.
- c. Any firearm muffler or silencer.
- d. Any explosive, incendiary or gas (a) bomb, (b) grenade, (c) rocket, (d) missile, (e) mine, or similar device.
- e. Any bludgeon, sand club, metal knuckles, or throwing stars.
- f. Any knife other than as used for strict instructional or personal care or eating purposes. A pocketknife with a blade of 2 ½ inches or more is a prohibited weapon. A switch-blade knife is prohibited regardless of size of the blade. A switch-blade knife is defined as a knife with a blade that opens automatically to hand pressure applied to a button, spring, or other device in the handle of a knife, or any knife having a blade that opens or falls or is ejected into position by the force of gravity or by an outward, downward or centrifugal thrust or movement.
- g. Any electronic device designed to discharge immobilizing levels of electricity, commonly known as a stun gun.
- h. A teacher may possess mace or similar chemical agents in quantity and/or concentration typically designed for individual personal defensive purposes shall not be considered as possession of a weapon. Possession of larger quantities and/or concentrations of mace or other similar chemical agents that is typically designed for individual personal defensive purposes will be considered as possession of a

weapon. usage of mace or other similar chemical agents will be considered as usage of a weapon if the usage is found to be for non-defensive purposes. A teacher who is negligent in their possession of mace or other similar chemical agents will be subject to disciplinary action.

i. A teacher may possess an item which 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 the manner approved and is maintained in such manner as the administration has directed.

j. Any other object that is designed for or intended for use as a destructive or injurious device.

The phrase “possession of a weapon” includes, without limitation, a weapon in a teacher’s personal possession, as well as in a teacher’s motor vehicle, desk, locker, briefcase, backpack, or purse.

Section 4 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. It is important to remember that the equipment and the software are the property of the school district.

In using 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 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.
8. Teachers understand that the intended use of all computer equipment is to meet instructional objectives.
9. Teachers will not waste or take supplies, such as paper, printer ribbons, toner, and diskettes that are provided by the District.
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 online 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 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 regarding use of the District's computer 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 by the 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.

Section 5 Use of School Facilities

Teachers will be issued keys to the school. Teachers are expected to not lose their keys and to not allow others to have access to or to use their keys. Teachers are permitted to have access to school facilities during non-school time provided such access is 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 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 is to be used for approved school-related purposes only. Excess or surplus supplies or equipment, including items which have been placed in the trash, should not be removed for non-school use without approval from the administration.

Section 6 Care of School Property

Teachers are responsible for the proper care of all books, equipment, supplies and furniture supplied by the school. If an item needs maintenance or repair, report it to the Principal. If you learn that a student has damaged school property or equipment, or if you are responsible for damage to school property, promptly report it to the Principal so the item may be replaced or repaired if possible and appropriate responsibility for the cost of replacement or repair may be determined.

Section 7 Visitors

Teachers are not to have visitors on school property except on a short-term basis and only with permission of the principal. 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.

Section 8 Salespersons

Teachers need not allow, and should not permit, any salesperson or representative or agent of any commercial enterprise or theatrical presentation to contact the teacher while engaged in the teacher's duties except for such times as may be designated by the Superintendent or designee. By law, the hours of no solicitation are between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on all days school is in session. If you are required to be at work earlier than 8:30 a.m., the hours are extended to that earlier time as well.

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 will be held to be willful insubordination.

Section 9 Security of Desks and Lockers

Offices, teacher desks, lockers, file cabinets and other such storage devices ("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 briefcase, purse or backpack.

The District is not responsible for any personal property teachers may bring to school. Teachers are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or items of significant value to school.

Section 10 Video Surveillance

The Board of Education has authorized the use of video cameras on School 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 users and may also be provided to law enforcement agencies.

Section 11 Bulletins and Announcements

Bulletin boards and display cases are available for school-related and approved materials to be posted and displayed. Posters to be used in the halls or materials for distribution will need to be approved by the Principal's office. The person or organization responsible for distributing the posters is responsible for seeing that all posters are removed within 48 hours after the event.

Section 12 Copyright and Fair Use Policy

It is the school's policy to follow the federal copyright law. Students are reminded that, when using school equipment and when completing course work, they also must follow the federal copyright laws. The federal copyright law governs the reproduction of works of authorship. Copyright works are protected regardless of the medium in which they are created or reproduced; thus, copyright extends to digital works and works are transformed into a digital format. Copyrighted works are not limited to those that bear 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 copyrighted work is 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, and
- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. Although all these factors will be considered, the last factor is the most important in determining whether a particular use is "fair". Students should seek assistance from a faculty member if there are any questions regarding what may be copied.

Section 13 Lost and Found

Teachers who find lost articles are asked to take them to the office, where the articles can be claimed by the owner.

Section 14 Safety

The District has established a Safety and Security Management Plan which includes safety and security plans and procedures, including plans and procedures to address emergency and crisis situations. Teachers are expected to be familiar with and to comply with the Safety and Security Management Plan. The Plan may be obtained for review or copy from the Principal or the Superintendent.

The District also has a safety committee to address employee accidents, injuries and workplace conditions. A representative from each bargaining group plus representatives appointed by administration serve on the committee. If you have a desire to serve on the committee, you should contact the President of the teacher's association. Teachers can make suggestions and/or report concerns to the safety committee in the following ways: (1) contact the teachers association representative of the safety committee; (2) contact the President of the teacher's association, or (3) contact the Safety Committee in care of the Superintendent.

Safety Practices

Guidelines for safe work practices which teachers should follow include the following:

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 seat belts when in vehicles where provided.
10. Every accident in the school building, on the school grounds, at practice sessions, or at any athletic event sponsored by the school must be reported immediately to the Principal.

As required by law, approved safety glasses will be required of every student and teacher while participating in or observing vocational, technical, industrial technology, science, and art classes. All visitors to these areas must check out a pair of safety glasses when entering any of these areas.

Use of Personal Vehicles

Teachers who drive school vehicles or volunteer to use their personal automobile to transport students must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance. Teachers who drive school vehicles or transport students in their personal vehicles are responsible for following safe driving practices, including use of seat belts by all

occupants, and are responsible for any injury or accident. Teachers are not to use cell phones while transporting children.

Accidents

Every accident which results in a personal injury must be reported to the Principal immediately. In the event the injury involves a student, the teacher responsible for the student either as teacher, coach or sponsor is responsible for making the report. If the injury occurs in the presence of the teacher, the teacher is also responsible for making a report.

Workers Compensation

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

Article 8 - STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Section 1 Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Northwest Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, religion or age in admission or access to, or treatment of employment, in its programs and activities. The Coordinators listed in Section 2 have been designated to handle inquiries regarding complaints, grievance procedures or the application of these policies of nondiscrimination.

Local complaint or grievance procedures are provided for by the District and set forth in this handbook. If an employee does not feel that a complaint of nondiscrimination has been satisfactorily resolved at the school level, the employee may file a complaint with the appropriate federal or state agency. Complaints are to be filed with the regional Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights where the complaint relates to Title IX (discrimination, harassment or lack of equity based on gender), Title VI (discrimination or harassment based on race, color, or national origin) or Section 504 (discrimination, harassment or failure to accommodate a disability). Complaints are to be filed with the regional U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) if the complaint relates to Title VII (discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, or religion), the Americans with Disabilities Act (discrimination, harassment or failure to accommodate a disability), or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (discrimination based on age). The contact information for the OCR and the EEOC in this regard is:

Office for Civil Rights
8930 Ward Parkway
Suite 2037
Kansas City, MO 64114
816-268-0550
Fax # 816-823-1404; TDD (800) 437-0833

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
1801 L Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20507
800-669-4000; TDD (800) 669-6820

Section 2 Designation of Coordinators

Any person having inquiries concerning the District's compliance with anti-discrimination laws or policies or other programs should contact or notify the following person(s) who are designated as the coordinator for such laws, policies or programs. The contact address for the coordinator is: Northwest Public Schools, 2710 N North Road, Grand Island, Nebraska 68803-1199, 308-385-6398.

Law, Policy or Program	Issue or Concern	Coordinator
Title VI	Discrimination or harassment Based on race, color, or national origin.	Superintendent
Title IX	Discrimination or harassment based on sex; gender equity	Superintendent
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Discrimination, harassment or reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities	Superintendent
Homeless Students Law	Children who are homeless	Superintendent
Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities	Safe and drug free schools	Superintendent

Section 3 Anti-discrimination & Harassment Policy

Elimination of Discrimination

The Northwest Public Schools hereby gives this statement of compliance and intent to comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination or harassment and requiring accommodation. This school district intends to take necessary measures to assure compliance with such laws against any prohibited form of discrimination or harassment or which require accommodation.

Preventing Harassment and Discrimination

Purpose: Northwest Public Schools are committed to offering employment and educational opportunity to its employees and students in a climate free of discrimination. Accordingly, unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind by administrators, teachers, co-workers, students or other people are prohibited. In addition, the Northwest Public Schools will try to protect employees and students from reported discrimination or harassment by non-employees or others in the workplace and educational environment.

For purposes of this policy, discrimination or harassment based on a person's race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, religion or age is prohibited. The following are general definitions of what might constitute prohibited harassment.

In general, ethnic or racial slurs or other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's race, color, religion, disability or national origin constitute harassment when they unreasonably interfere with the person's work performance or create an intimidating work, instructional or educational environment.

Age harassment (40 years of age and higher) has been defined by federal regulations as a form of age discrimination. It can consist of demeaning jokes, insults or intimidation based on a person's age.

Sexual harassment is defined by federal and state regulations as a form of sex discrimination. It can consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors or others in the workplace, classroom or educational environment. Sexual harassment may exist when:

- Submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term and condition of employment or of participation and enjoyment of the school's programs and activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened as a basis for employment-related decisions, such as promotion, performance, evaluation, pay adjustment, discipline, work assignment, etc., or school program or activity decisions, such as admission, credits, grades, school assignments or playing time;
- The 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, classroom or educational environment.
- Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing", "practical jokes", jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays of foul or obscene printed or visual material, and physical contact, such as patting, pinching or brushing against another's body.

Complaint and Grievance Procedures

Employees or students should initially report all instances of discrimination or harassment to their immediate supervisor or classroom teacher. However, if the employee or student is uncomfortable in presenting the problem to the supervisor or teacher, or if the supervisor or teacher is the problem, the employee or student is encouraged to go to the next level of supervision. In the case of a student, the Principal would be the next or alternative person to contact.

If the employee or student's complaint is not resolved to his or her satisfaction within five (5) to ten (10) calendar days, or if the discrimination or harassment continues, or if as a student you feel you need immediate help for any reason, please report your complaint to the Superintendent of Northwest Public Schools. If a satisfactory arrangement cannot be obtained through the Superintendent, the complaint may be processed to the Board of Education.

The supervisor, teacher or the Superintendent will thoroughly investigate all complaints. These situations will be treated with the utmost confidence, consistent with resolution of the problem. Based on the results of the investigation, appropriate corrective action, up to and including discharge of offending employees, and disciplinary action up to expulsion against a harassing student, may be taken. Under no circumstances will any threats or retaliation be permitted to be made against an employee or student for alleging in good faith a violation of this policy.

Section 4 Grievance Procedure for Persons with a Disability

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act address discrimination, harassment or failure to provide reasonable accommodations to persons with a disability. The following grievance procedure shall be used for resolution of complaints of alleged violations of the ADA or Section 504:

1. Complaints shall be filed with the ADA and Section 504 Coordinator. Complaints shall be made in writing, unless the Complainant's disability prevents such, in which event the Complaint can be made verbally.
2. Complaints shall set forth: (a) the name of the Complainant, (b) the address and telephone number or other such information sufficient to enable the Coordinator to contact the Complainant, (c) a brief description of the alleged violation, and (d) the relief requested by the Complainant.
3. Complaints shall be investigated by the Coordinator or the Coordinator's designee. Investigations shall be thorough, but informal, and the Complainant shall be given a full opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the complaint.
4. The Coordinator shall make a decision on the Complaint within thirty (30) days of the filing of the Complaint, unless such time period is extended by agreement of the Complainant. The decision shall be made in writing, shall set forth the Coordinator's proposed resolution of the Complaint, and shall be forwarded to the Complainant.
5. The Complainant shall have ten (10) days from the date the Coordinator's decision is sent to the Complainant to accept or reject the Coordinator's proposed resolution and shall be deemed to have accepted the proposed resolution unless the Complainant rejects the proposed resolution within such time period. In the event the Complainant rejects the proposed resolution, the Complainant shall be given the opportunity to file a request for reconsideration within ten (10) days from the date the Coordinator's decision is sent to the Complainant. The request for reconsideration shall be filed with the Coordinator. The Coordinator shall consider any additional information provided in the request for reconsideration and decide on the request for reconsideration within ten (10) days after the request for reconsideration was filed.

Section 5 Confidentiality of Student Records (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy ACT (FERPA) gives parents and students over 18 years of age rights to 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. Further information about FERPA and the District's policies under FERPA are found in Board policy and in the student handbook.

Section 6 Disclosure of Student Information to Military Recruiters & Colleges

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires the District to provide military recruiters and institutions of higher education access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings. Parents and secondary students have the right to request that the school not provide this information (i.e., not provide the student's name, address, and telephone listing) to military recruiters or institutions of higher education, without their prior written consent. Employees are expected to meet these requirements.

Section 7 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. The District designates the following information as "directory information" and will give parents/guardians such information upon request:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or provisional teaching certificate.
3. 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.
4. Whether the parent/guardian's child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks, by a teacher who does not meet the requirements of the NCLB.

Section 8 Student Privacy Protection

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires the District to protect the privacy of students. Further information about student privacy and the District's policies regarding student privacy are found in Board policy and in the Student handbook. In general, employees are expected to comply with these provisions of the NCLB and related Board policy as follows:

1. Student surveys created by and administered by either the United States Department of Education or a third party (a group or person other than the District) --- give parent/guardian the opportunity to inspect the survey upon request before the survey is administered or distributed to the students;
2. Student surveys which involve "sensitive" matters --- make suitable arrangements to protect student privacy (that is, do not include the name or other identifying information about a particular student) and give parents the opportunity, in advance to "opt-out" their child from the survey. Sensitive matters include:
 - a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.
 - b. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's parent.
 - c. Sex behavior or attitudes.
 - d. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior.
 - e. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships.
 - f. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
 - g. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
 - h. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).
3. Instructional materials --- permit parents upon reasonable request to inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for their child. The term "instructional materials" does not include academic tests or academic assessments for purposes of this parent inspection requirement. If you receive such a request, direct the parent to contact your building principal and also inform the building principal yourself about the request to get instructions.
4. Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information -- the District policy is to not gather such information for such purposes.

Section 9 Parental Involvement

General - Parental/Community Involvement in Schools

The District's policy is to welcome parental involvement in the education of their children. As a part of this policy, employees are expected to:

1. Provide parents with timely information about their child's progress, including use of quarterly report cards, active and constructive attendance at parent-teacher conferences, and more frequent parent contacts where warranted by the student's academic and behavioral needs;
2. Make textbooks, completed tests and other curriculum materials available for review by parents upon request.
3. Permit parents' access to their child's records according to law and school policy;
4. Encourage parents to attend courses, assemblies, counseling sessions and other instructional activities with prior approval of the proper teacher, counselor or administrator, provided that such parent attendance be educationally appropriate and not disruptive to the educational program.
5. Assure that testing occurs to assure proper measurement of each child's educational progress and achievement.
6. Permit parents to excuse their child from testing, classroom instruction and other school experiences when possible and educationally appropriate.
7. Notify parents of student surveys in accordance with district policy, obtain parent permission for surveys where required by District policy or law, and allow parents to opt-out of such surveys in accordance with District policy and law; and
8. Encourage parents to express their concerns, share their ideas and advocate for their child's education.

Title I Parental Involvement

The District has a separate policy established pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 relating to parental involvement applicable to parents of children enrolled in Title I programs. The policy required that parents of Title I children be given the opportunity to participate in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring--(A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; (B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education 39 at school; (C) that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in the parental involvement policy. Employees are expected to comply with the Title I parental involvement policy.

Section 10 Homeless Students

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that homeless students not be stigmatized or segregated based on their status as homeless. Homeless children generally include children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence. The Superintendent serves as the District's designated Homeless Coordinator and should be contacted for questions relating to a homeless student.

Section 11 Breakfast and Lunch Programs

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

Section 12 Confidentiality of Protected Health Information

It is the policy of the District to develop and implement all necessary practices, policies, and procedures to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) where and to the extent applicable and to maintain the privacy of protected health information (PHI), as that term is defined by HIPAA, that it receives, obtains, or transmits for employees and students. The District designates the Superintendent as its HIPAA privacy officer. Student and employee records containing PHI shall be accessible only to those who require such information to carry out their duties.

Section 13 Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Northwest Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race, color, religion, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, or other protected status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Students: Jeff Edwards, Superintendent, 2710 N North Rd, Grand Island NE 68803, 308-385-6398, jedwards@ginorthwest.org Employees and Others: Natalie Nielsen, Human Resources, 2710 N North Rd, Grand Island, NE 68803, 308-385-6398, jedwards@ginorthwest.org Complaints or concerns involving discrimination or needs for accommodation or access should be addressed to the appropriate Coordinator. For further information about anti-discrimination laws and regulations, or to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR), please contact the OCR at 601 East 12th Street, Room 353, Kansas City, MO 64106, (800) 368-1019 (voice), Fax (816) 426-3686, (800) 537-7697 (telecommunications device for the deaf), or ocr.kansascity@ed.gov. 40

APPENDIX A

Notice of COBRA Continuation Coverage Rights ****Continuation Coverage Rights Under COBRA****

Introduction

You are receiving this notice because you have recently become covered under Northwest Public Schools health plan (the “Plan”). This notice contains important information about your right to COBRA continuation coverage, which is a temporary extension of coverage under the Plan. The right to COBRA continuation coverage was created by a federal law, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 195 (COBRA). COBRA continuation coverage can become available to you and to other members of your family who are covered under the Plan when you would otherwise lose your group health coverage. **This notice generally explains COBRA continuation coverage, when it may become available to you and your family, and what you need to do to protect the right to receive it.** This notice gives only a summary of your COBRA continuation coverage rights. For more information about your rights and obligations under the Plan and under federal law, you should either review the Plan’s Summary Plan Description or get a copy of the Plan Document from the Plan Administrator.

The Plan Administrator is Northwest Public Schools, 2710 N North Road, Grand Island, Nebraska 68803-1199, (308-385-6398). The Plan Administrator is responsible for administering COBRA continuation coverage.

COBRA Continuation Coverage

COBRA continuation coverage is a continuation of Plan coverage when coverage would otherwise end because of a life event known as a “qualifying event.” Specific qualifying events are listed later in this notice. COBRA continuation coverage must be offered to each person who is a “qualified beneficiary.” A qualified beneficiary is someone who will lose coverage under the Plan because of a qualifying event. Depending on the type of qualifying event, employees, spouses of employees, and dependent children of employees may be qualified beneficiaries. Under the Plan, qualified beneficiaries who elect COBRA continuation must pay for COBRA continuation coverage.

If you are an employee, you will become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because either one of the following qualifying events happen:

1. Your hours of employment are reduced, or
2. Your employment ends for any reason other than gross misconduct

If you are the spouse of an employee, you will become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because any of the following qualifying events happen:

1. Your spouse dies.
2. Your spouse’s hours of employment are reduced.
3. Your spouse’s employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct.
4. Your spouse becomes enrolled in Medicare (Part A, Part B, or both); or

5. You become divorced or legally separated from your spouse.

Your dependent children will become qualified beneficiaries if they lose coverage under the Plan because any of the following qualifying events happen:

1. The parent-employee dies.
2. The parent-employee's hours of employment are reduced.
 3. The parent-employee's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct.
 4. The parent-employee becomes enrolled in Medicare (Part A, Part B, or both).
 5. The parents become divorced or legally separated; or
 6. The child stops being eligible for coverage under the plan as a "dependent child."

Sometimes, filing a proceeding in bankruptcy under Title 11 of the United State Code can be a qualifying event. If a proceeding in bankruptcy is filed with respect to the employer and that bankruptcy results in the loss of coverage of any retired employee covered under the Plan, the retired employee is a qualified beneficiary with respect to bankruptcy. The retired employee's spouse, surviving spouse, and dependent children will also be qualified beneficiaries if bankruptcy results in the loss of their coverage under the Plan.

The Plan will offer COBRA continuation coverage to qualified beneficiaries only after the Plan Administrator has been notified that a qualifying event has occurred. When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of hours of employment, death of the employee, commencement of a proceeding in bankruptcy with respect to the employer to the extent retiree health coverage is provided, or enrollment of the employee in Medicare (Part A, Part B, or both), the employer must notify the Plan Administrator of the qualifying event within 30 days of any of these events.

For the other qualifying events (divorce or legal separation of the employee and spouse or a dependent child's losing eligibility for coverage as a dependent child), you must notify the Plan Administrator. The Plan requires you to notify the Plan Administrator within 60 days after the qualifying event occurs. You must send this notice to the Plan Administrator. Any additional Plan Procedures for this notice must also be provided.

Once the Plan Administrator receives notice that a qualifying event has occurred, COBRA continuation coverage will be offered to each of the qualified beneficiaries. For each qualified beneficiary who elects COBRA continuation coverage, COBRA continuation coverage will begin on the date of the qualifying event.

COBRA continuation coverage is temporary continuation coverage. When the qualifying event is the death of the employee, enrollment of the employee in Medicare (Part A, Part B, or both), your divorce or legal separation, or a dependent child losing eligibility as a dependent child, COBRA continuation coverage lasts for up to 36 months.

When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employees' hours of employment, COBRA continuation coverage lasts for up to 18 months. There are two ways in which this 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage can be extended:

Disability extension of 18-month period of continuation coverage - If you or anyone in your family covered under the Plan is determined by the Social Security Administration to be disable at any time during the

first 60 days of COBRA continuation coverage and you notify the Plan Administrator in a timely fashion, you and your entire family can receive up to an additional 11 months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a total maximum of 29 months. You must make sure that the Plan Administrator is notified of the Social Security Administration's determination within 60 days of the date of the determination and before the end of the 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage. This notice should be sent to the Plan Administrator. Any additional Plan procedures for this notice must also be provided.

Second qualifying event extension of 18-month period of continuation coverage - If your family experiences another qualifying event while receiving COBRA continuation coverage, the spouse and dependent children in your family can get additional months of COBRA continuation coverage, up to a maximum of 36 months. This extension is available to the spouse and dependent children if the former employee dies, enrolls in Medicare (Part A, Part B, or both), or gets divorced or legally separated. The extension is also available to a dependent child when that child stops being eligible under the Plan as a dependent child. In all of these cases, you must make sure that the Plan Administrator is notified of the second qualifying event within 60 days of the second qualifying event. This notice must be sent to the Plan Administrator. Any additional Plan procedures for this notice must also be provided.

If You Have Questions

If you have questions about your COBRA continuation coverage, you should contact the Superintendent or Plan Administrator, or you may contact the nearest Regional or District Office of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA). Addresses and phone numbers of Regional And District EBSA Offices are available through EBSA's web site at www.dol.gov/ebsa.

Keep Your Plan Administrator Informed of Address Changes

In order to protect your family's rights, you should keep the Plan Administrator informed of any changes in the addresses of family members. You should also keep a copy, for your records, of any notices you send to the Plan Administrator.

**RECEIPT OF 2025-26TEACHER HANDBOOK
OF NORTHWEST PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

This signed receipt acknowledges receipt of the 2025-26 Teacher Handbook of Northwest Public Schools. This receipt acknowledges that I understand that I am to read and be familiar with the handbook, that I understand the handbook contains a disclaimer of contract and that I understand that the handbook includes the District's policies on nondiscrimination and equity, and that specific complaint and grievance procedures exist in the handbook which should be used for responding to harassment or discrimination.

Date: _____

Teacher's Signature

Return to Traci Pedersen.