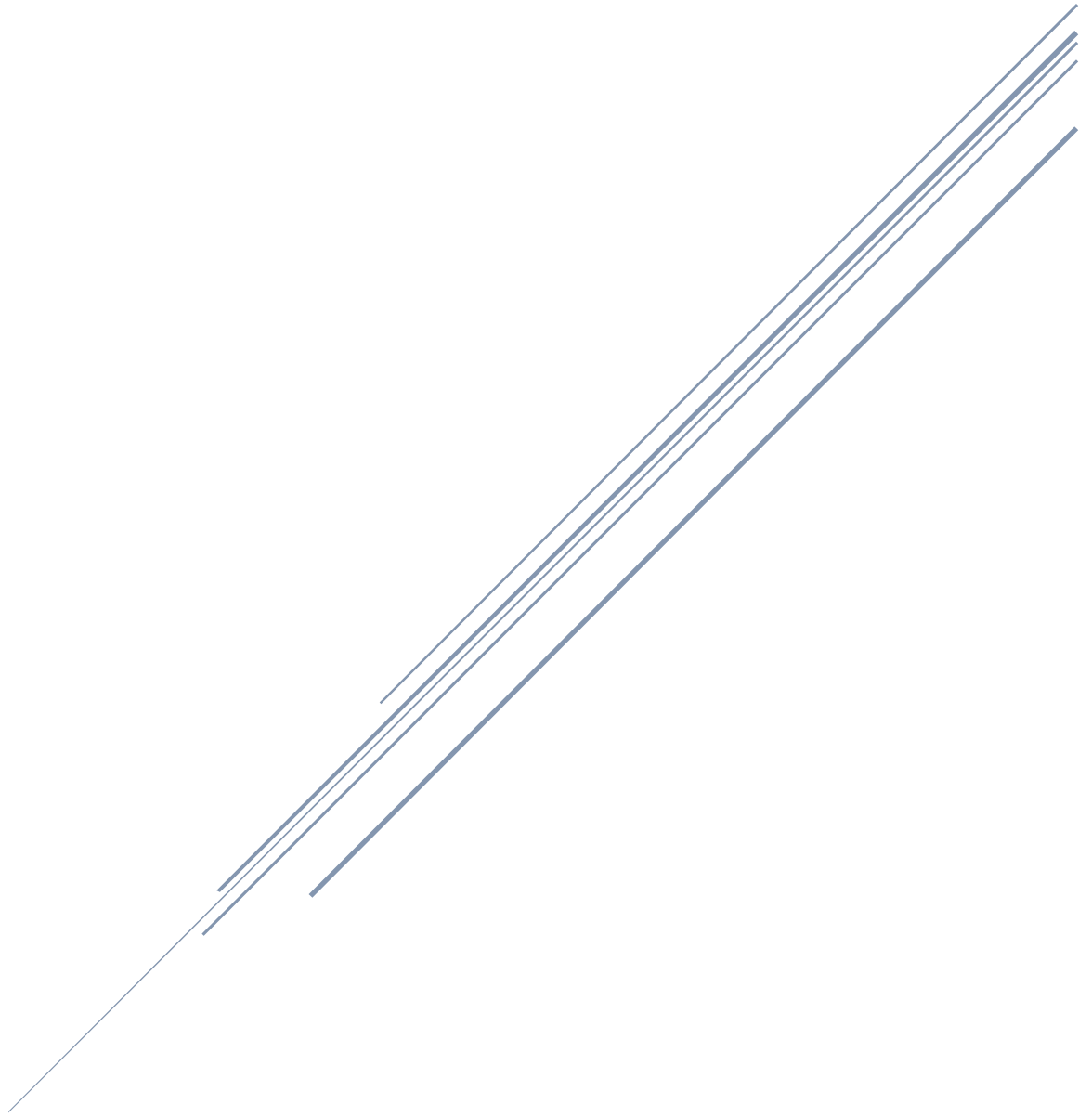


READING SCHOOL DISTRICT

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT:

On behalf of your colleagues, I welcome you to the Reading School District and wish you every success as you begin your career with one of the largest school districts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Our most important assets are our students and our staff. We believe that each employee contributes directly to the District's growth and success, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our team. Our staff members are selected for specific positions in the belief that they have a favorable combination of aptitudes, skills, education, and personality to contribute to the success of every child we serve. We hope that you enjoy your work and realize a sense of satisfaction in a job well done.

This handbook was prepared to explain to you our personnel policies and procedures and to acquaint you with the benefits and policies affecting you during your employment here. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth. Accordingly, you should familiarize yourself with the contents of this document as soon as possible, as it will answer many questions you may have related to your employment with us.

We truly hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding. Again, welcome to the team!

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Sincerely,

Khalid N. Mumin, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

About This Handbook

The Reading School District Employee Handbook is a compilation of personnel policies, practices, and procedures currently in effect at Reading School District (RSD or District). It provides general information on current human resources policies, procedures, and benefits furnished by the District but does not represent a complete statement or final authority on human resources matters. Where appropriate, this handbook will refer you to Board policy, which can be found on the District's Website at www.readingsd.org under the tab entitled "School Board." It is critical that employees review these policies and any administrative guidelines that may be promulgated thereunder.

This handbook is designed to introduce you to the organization, familiarize you with District policies as they pertain to you as an employee, provide general guidelines on work rules, disciplinary procedures, and other issues related to your employment, and to help answer many of the questions that may arise in connection with your employment. This handbook also provides you with information on specific individuals to contact in the Department of Human Resources, Benefits Office, and Instructional Services (often referred to as the Curriculum Department or Teaching & Learning) for additional information on matters addressed herein.

The handbook is not a contract, as most of the District's employees are covered by either a collective bargaining agreement, compensation and benefits plan, or individual employment agreement. Rather, this handbook is intended solely to describe the present policies, procedures, and working conditions at the District. It does not intend to include every conceivable situation; it is merely meant as a guideline. Questions not addressed in this document should be addressed with your direct supervisor or the Department of Human Resources.

Subject to law, the District retains the right to change these policies, practices, and procedures as it deems advisable; and you will be notified of such changes electronically. In cases where information in this handbook conflicts with the terms of any applicable collective bargaining agreement, compensation and benefits plan, or individual employment agreement, the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, compensation and benefits plan, or individual employment agreement will prevail.

By accessing the Safe Schools Online Training site, I acknowledge that I have been given access to the Reading School District Employee Handbook and that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained therein and any revisions made to same.

About Reading School District

Reading School District serves the residents of the City of Reading, the fifth largest city in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Located in the southeastern part of the state, Reading encompasses approximately 10 square miles and is the county seat of Berks County. The city's population totals more than 85,000.

Employee Groups

Approximately 2,000 staff members represented by six (6) bargaining units and two (2) professional associations provide a variety of services to approximately 17,600 students in Grades Pre-K to 12. Specifically, the six (6) bargaining units representing our employees are as follows:

- Reading Education Association (REA)
- American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (AFSCME)
- Local #155, Pennsylvania Joint Board Workers United, SEIU
- Reading Education Support Professionals ESP/PSEA/NEA (RESPA)
- International Union, Security, Police and Fire Professionals of America (SPFPA)
- Teamsters Local Union No. 429

The two (2) professional associations representing administrators and administrative support personnel are as follows:

- Reading School Administrators' Association (RSAA)
- Reading School Supervisory/Support Association (RSSSA)

Schools

The approximately 17,600 students served by the District attend one (1) of the following schools:

Secondary Schools

- Reading Senior High School (Grades 10 – 12)
- Reading Intermediate High School (Grades 8 – 9)

Middle Schools (Grades 6 and 7)

- Northeast Middle School
- Northwest Middle School
- Southern Middle School
- Southwest Middle School

Elementary Schools (Grades Pre-K to 5)

- 10th & Green Elementary School
- 10th & Penn Elementary School
- 12th & Marion Elementary School
- 13th & Green Elementary School
- 13th & Union Elementary School
- 16th & Haak Elementary School
- Amanda Stout Elementary School
- Glenside Elementary School

- Lauer's Park Elementary School
- Millmont Elementary School
- Northwest Elementary School
- Riverside Elementary School
- Tyson Schoener Elementary School

Social Media Presence

More information on the Reading School District can be found on the District's Website at www.readingsd.org. We encourage all employees to regularly access the District's Website for up-to-date information on the District and current events.

Please note that the District also has a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest. Information on how to connect with us via these networks as well as other social media outlets can be found on the District's Home Page.

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Anti-Discrimination & Harassment

Americans with Disabilities Act

RSD will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship to the District. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, promotion, compensation, discipline, termination, access to benefits and training, or other terms and conditions of employment.

If you are currently disabled or become disabled during your employment, you should contact the Director of Employee Relations & Internal Affairs to discuss reasonable accommodations that may enable you to perform the essential functions of your job.

Equal Opportunity Policy

Reading School District (RSD or District) has pledged itself to pursue a program of equal opportunity to ensure that all personnel-related decisions are based on merit, qualifications, and ability and without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, veteran status, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by law.

RSD reaffirms its Equal Employment Opportunity Policy as follows:

1. RSD shall adhere to the principle of Equal Employment Opportunity in all employment decisions, including, but not limited to: recruitment, hiring, training, promotions, and classification of jobs.
2. RSD shall administer all other personnel actions, such as, but not limited to, compensation, benefits, transfers, layoffs, and return from layoff, company-sponsored training, etc., without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristics protected by law.

Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination

RSD strives to maintain an environment free from discrimination and harassment where employees treat each other with respect, dignity, and courtesy.

This policy applies to all phases of employment, including, but not limited to, recruiting, testing, hiring, promoting, demoting, transferring, furlough, terminating, paying, granting benefits, and training.

Prohibited Behavior

RSD does not, and will not, tolerate any type of harassment of our employees, applicants for employment, or our clients. Discriminatory conduct or conduct characterized as harassment, as defined below, is prohibited.

The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's gender (including pregnancy), race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, military status, creed, ancestry, or any other protected category under federal, state, or local law that unreasonably interferes with a person's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile work environment.

Sexually harassing behavior, in particular, includes unwelcome conduct such as: sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, offensive touching, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct may constitute sexual harassment when it:

- is made as an explicit or implicit condition of employment;
- is used as the basis for employment decisions;
- unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance; or
- creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

The types of conduct covered by this policy include demands or subtle pressure for sexual favors accompanied by a promise of favorable job treatment or a threat concerning employment.

It also includes sexual behavior such as:

- repeated sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- continued and repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, sexually-related comments and joking, graphic or degrading comments about an employee's appearance or displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, including cartoons and vulgar e-mail messages; and
- any uninvited physical contact or touching, such as patting, pinching, or repeated brushing against another's body.

Such conduct may constitute sexual harassment regardless of whether the conduct is between members of management, between management and staff, between employees, between staff and students, or directed at employees by non-employees conducting business with the organization, regardless of gender.

Complaint Procedure and Investigation

Any employee with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination, including unlawful harassment, including, but not limited to sexual harassment, in the workplace is encouraged to immediately bring these issues to the attention of his/her supervisor or the Director of Employee Relations & Internal Affairs. If, for some reason, none of those individuals are available, please contact the Chief Human Resources Officer.

The complaint should be specific and should include the names of individuals involved, as well as the names of any witnesses. The District will immediately undertake an effective, thorough, and objective investigation and attempt to resolve the situation. If RSD determines that unlawful discrimination/harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be taken commensurate with the severity of the offense. Appropriate action also will be taken to deter any further discrimination. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Any employee who becomes aware of possible sexual harassment or other illegal harassment/discrimination against others should promptly inform the Director of Employee Relations & Internal Affairs or the Chief Human Resources Officer, as we are

all charged with the responsibility of ensuring that no unlawful discrimination or harassment occurs in the workplace.

Retaliation

Any employee who files a complaint of sexual harassment or other unlawful discrimination/harassment in good faith will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment and will not be retaliated against or discharged because of the complaint.

In addition, we will not tolerate retaliation against any employee who, in good faith, cooperates in the investigation of a complaint. Anyone who engages in such retaliatory behavior will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including termination.

More information on the District's policy regarding unlawful harassment can be found in Board Policy Nos. 348, 448, and 548, including the form that can be used to make an official complaint.

Compensation & Work Schedule

General Information

Although most employees of the Reading School District are covered by a collective bargaining agreement or compensation and benefits plan that outlines information regarding one's compensation and work schedule, this section of the Employee Handbook will provide some background and/or clarifying information important to most, if not all, employees.

Employment Categories

Employees should first recognize that all RSD employees are covered under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which, in part, establishes parameters for minimum wage and overtime eligibility. To that end, each employee is designated as either NON-EXEMPT or EXEMPT from federal and state wage and hour laws. NON-EXEMPT, commonly referred to as "hourly," employees are entitled to overtime pay under specific provisions of federal and state law. EXEMPT, commonly referred to as "salaried," employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws.

Administrators, supervisors, and teachers are all EXEMPT employees not entitled to coverage under the FLSA. Staff covered by the AFSCME, Teamsters, RESPA, Security, and Cafeteria collective bargaining agreements are all NON-EXEMPT employees under the FLSA. While the various collective bargaining agreements may provide greater benefits to employees than that required by the FLSA and/or state law, employees classified as non-exempt are, at the very least, assured of being paid minimum wage and compensated, in terms of wages or compensatory time, at time and one-half for any hours actually *worked* in excess of 40 in any one work week.

If you are unsure of your exemption status, please seek clarification from the Department of Human Resources.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employee category, as follows:

Probationary employees are those whose performance is being evaluated to determine whether further employment in a specific position or with RSD is appropriate. Employees who satisfactorily complete the probationary period established by collective bargaining agreement or compensation and benefits plan will be notified of their new employment classification.

Regular Full-Time employees are those who are not classified as "part-time," "temporary," "substitute," or "probationary" and are regularly available and consistently work an average of at least 30 hours per week during their scheduled work year, be it 12 months, 11 months, or 10 months. Individual collective bargaining agreements may provide an average of less than 30 hours per week for purposes of defining "full-time" status. In the absence of such language, the District will adhere to what is otherwise established by law, such as the Affordable Care Act.

Regular Part-Time and Temporary employees are those who are not classified as “probationary” and who do not consistently work an average of 30 hours or more per week unless otherwise set forth in an applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Temporary Professional Employees (TPE) are those employees certificated through the Pennsylvania Department of Education who have not yet attained tenure in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pursuant to the requirements for same as set forth in the Public School Code of 1949, as amended.

Professional Employees are those employees certificated through the Pennsylvania Department of Education who have attained tenure in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pursuant to the requirements for same as set forth in the Public School Code of 1949, as amended.

Attendance, Punctuality, and Work Schedule

The length of an employee’s work day and his/her actual work hours are generally established by employee group and position. In many cases, a collective bargaining agreement will specify the length of one’s work day, but the actual hours one works are determined generally by RSD Administration based on the needs of the District.

Every employee is expected to attend work regularly and to report to work on time. If you are unable to report to work on time for any reason, follow the appropriate call-off procedures for your position and department or school. Failure to follow such procedures will result in your absence being considered unexcused and subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including severance of the employment relationship. Although **Employee Request for Absence** forms are not currently required for any employee utilizing *paid* sick leave, this form is required, as outlined below, for vacation leave, personal days, emergency/compelling reason days, bereavement leave, contractual at-will time, jury duty, flex holidays, and when an employee is absent without any paid leave available to him/her.

As regular and consistent attendance is an essential function of all positions in the Reading School District, unsatisfactory attendance, including reporting late or quitting early, may be cause for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

2016-2017 District Office/ROCC Hours

The District’s Administrative Offices, including the Reading Opportunity Center for Children (ROCC), are open for business from **7:45 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.**; and, with few exceptions pertinent to the operational needs of the District, the employees who work in these buildings are required to work those hours.

NOTE: Employees under the REA collective bargaining agreement who are assigned to work out of the ROCC to support, in particular, the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program will generally work from **8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.** with the exception of in-service days when they will be required to adhere to the stated schedule for such days.

2016-2017 Teacher Work Day and Student Day

The following chart represents the work day for teachers based on the District's bell schedule for students:

Schools	Normal Teacher Work Day	Normal Student Time	Early Dismissal	Teacher Dismissal -- First Three Mondays
Elementary	8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	8:05 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.	12:40 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Kindergarten	8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	8:05 a.m. – 2:10 p.m.	12:40 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Pre-K (AM)	8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	8:05 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	9:55 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Pre-K (PM)	8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 2:40 p.m.	12:40 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Middle Schools	8:10 a.m. – 3:40 p.m.	8:25 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.	1:15 p.m.	4:15 p.m.
RIHS	8:10 a.m. – 3:40 p.m.*	8:25 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.	1:15 p.m.	4:10 p.m.
RSHS	7:25 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.**	7:30 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.**	12:30 p.m.**	3:20 p.m.**

*On Mondays, RIHS teaching (REA) staff work hours are 8:15 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.

**These times *do not* represent the hours to be worked or the student day for those assigned to the Red Knight Learning Academy. Information for those staff members and students will be provided by the High School Administration.

Teacher In-Service, Act 80, and Clerical Days

Subject to the number of hours required to be worked under the current REA collective bargaining agreement, the actual reporting and ending times for REA employees on in-service, Act 80, and clerical days are generally at the discretion of the building-level administrator unless it is a District-wide event, such as the Opening Day ceremonies to kick off the start of a school year. The options that are available are as follows:

Traditional: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. with a 60-minute lunch period

Late Arrival: 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. with a 30-minute lunch period

Early Release: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. with a 30-minute lunch period

Should the in-service or Act 80 day fall on one (1) of the first three (3) Mondays of the month, which are extended days under the REA collective bargaining agreement for faculty meetings, the end times would be extended by 30 minutes. Information on the hours to be worked for Act 80 and in-service days will be communicated to staff at least 24 hours in advance of said day based on the activities scheduled.

Breaks/Meal Periods

RSD full-time non-exempt employees may be entitled to **paid rest breaks** during the workday under their respective collective bargaining agreements or compensation and benefits plans. These break periods may be scheduled by supervisory personnel to ensure orderly operation of a department or building.

It is not appropriate for these paid break periods to be combined for purposes of allowing an employee to arrive late, leave early, or to take an extended lunch. In addition, even if an employee is accustomed to taking his/her break at a certain time every day, the needs of the District and our clientele should never be put aside to accommodate a break period. Rather, staff and supervisory personnel are expected to be flexible in meeting the needs of our clientele while also accommodating the breaks to which employees are entitled.

In addition, many RSD employees also are entitled to an **unpaid, duty-free break for meals** during each workday as described in the employee's respective collective bargaining agreement or compensation and benefits plan. In some cases, the employee's respective employment agreement or the needs of the educational program, such as may be the case with some paraprofessionals, may provide for a paid meal period as the time is not duty free.

As with paid rest breaks, meal periods must be scheduled at staggered times to allow for appropriate departmental/school coverage. Such decision is within the discretion of the supervisor and may require some flexibility on the part of employees to meet the needs of the educational program and our clientele. As a general rule, meal periods for employees working other than 2nd or 3rd shift should be scheduled to occur between the hours of **11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.**

Finally, employees are prohibited from taking their rest or meal breaks at their desks or in areas where business is being conducted with the exception of those with private offices. Even though employees taking such breaks are legitimately not working, the perception of loitering employees is a negative perception that RSD wishes to avoid. Even if the work area in question is not readily accessible to the public, not all employees may be on break at the same time; and it is important that employees on break not be a distraction to those who are not. All District buildings have areas where employees are free to take their breaks. If you are unsure as to where it is appropriate for you to take your breaks, please see your supervisor.

Flex Time

At the discretion of the supervisor and based on the needs of the organization and department, an employee may be granted an occasional opportunity to flex his/her time during a work week to accommodate personal needs, such as doctor's appointments. Employees *are not* permitted to regularly skip meal periods or flex their hours for such purposes, and *prior* supervisory approval is necessary before an employee takes advantage of such an opportunity. Please note, however, that working at the Reading School District requires all employees to be in regular attendance during the normal workday; and, while every effort will be made to accommodate these occasional requests, we cannot guarantee that such requests can or will be honored.

Involvement in Extracurricular Activities

While the District applauds those employees who wish to participate in extracurricular activities, such as coaching, involving our students, these positions are secondary to an employee's primary position with RSD. Therefore, an employee's work day will not be rearranged to accommodate an extracurricular position or responsibility.

Overtime/Compensatory Time

When operating needs cannot be met during regularly scheduled work hours, employees may be scheduled to work overtime hours. When possible, advance notification of these mandatory assignments will be provided. Overtime assignments will be distributed in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement. If no language exists in said collective bargaining agreement, overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees *qualified* and appropriate to perform the required work.

Overtime compensation is paid to all non-exempt employees in accordance with the respective collective bargaining agreement. In the absence of greater benefits set forth in a

collective bargaining agreement, overtime compensation is paid at one and one-half (1½) times the employee's regular rate of pay for all hours *worked* in excess of 40 per week.

Unless otherwise specified in a collective bargaining agreement, time taken for a duty-free break of at least 30 minutes is not included as "time worked" for purposes of computing overtime. Also, unless otherwise specified in a collective bargaining agreement, time off for holidays, sick leave, vacation leave, personal leave, or any paid leave of absence will not be factored in as hours worked when calculating one's entitlement to overtime.

Since RSD is a public school district, employees may, in lieu of wages, be compensated for additional hours worked in terms of "time off." This time, known as "compensatory time," is calculated in the same manner as wages – one and one-half (1½) hours for every hour worked in excess of 40 per week. If a collective bargaining agreement provides for a greater calculation, that greater calculation is also afforded compensatory time. Please contact your supervisor and/or the Department of Human Resources for additional information and administrative guidelines concerning "compensatory time."

If you are a non-exempt employee, you must receive authorization from your supervisor before working any additional hours. After you have worked this additional time, you must enter it on a timesheet provided by your supervisor or the Payroll Department no later than the day after it is worked. Payment for such additional hours or credit for compensatory time cannot be made without the completion, submission, receipt, and approval of this required form. The overtime form can be found on the District's "Shared Drive" – S:\FORMS\HR.

Failure to work scheduled overtime and to obtain supervisory authorization for non-mandatory overtime will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Summer Hours

From approximately mid-June to mid-August, RSD Administration will consider implementing "Summer Hours," a program which not only benefits employees but is intended to reduce energy consumption at peak hours during the hottest time of the day. (Custodial and maintenance employees who work second and third shift will be required to work day shift during the summer in order to clean and prepare the buildings for the start of a new school year.)

When "Summer Hours" are implemented, official operating hours will be announced, and employees are provided a number of options that will allow them to work their required number of hours per week while taking advantage of some flexibility. Please contact your supervisor regarding what options, if any, may be available to you.

Salary/Wage Information

RSD takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday.

In the event that there is a question/concern related to an employee's paycheck, it is the employee's responsibility to immediately bring it to the attention of RSD. The

question/concern must be posed/reported by the actual employee. If said employee wishes for someone else (i.e., a spouse) to speak on the employee's behalf, the District requires written permission (which can be via e-mail) for such communication to take place. If said employee is an hourly employee, questions related to the actual hours included in the employee's paycheck should be directed to their supervisor and/or secretaries in the appropriate department (i.e., Facilities Department) who compile and submit the hours. Questions related to benefits deductions should be directed to the Benefits Department. Other questions/concerns should be directed to the Payroll Department.

Access to Prior W-2s

Employees can access copies of their W-2 forms for calendar years 2009 and beyond through the Employee Access Center (EAC) through the RSD Website.

Balance of Contract

Balance of Contract (BOC) can be applicable to those employees covered under the REA, RESPA, RSAA, and RSSSA employment agreements. These employees, regardless of the length of their work year, have their salary/wages allocated evenly over a specific number of pays. A BOC payment is a lump sum payment calculated using an employee's daily rate, number of days actually worked, and compensation already received as of the date of separation. Balance of contracts are calculated by the Payroll Department and are instituted when:

- An employee resigns, retires, or otherwise terminates employment;
- An employee goes on an unpaid leave of absence, such as a general leave, childrearing leave or other leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA);
or
- An employee is placed on an unpaid suspension of indefinite duration.

Example of BOC:

Employee earns an annual salary of \$40,000 for a contract year of 188 days. (Daily rate \$212.77)
Employee separates employment on 12/31/15. (Has actually worked 83 days to that point)

Daily rate \$212.77 times 83 days	= \$17,659.91 earned for time worked
Bi-weekly pay \$1,481.48 times 10 pays	= \$14,814.80 amount received as of separation on 12/31/15
Difference	\$ 2,845.11 Balance of Contract payment

The Payroll Department can provide impacted employees with a copy of their BOC calculation should further explanation be needed.

Should the employee return to work, such as after an unpaid leave of absence, his/her salary/wages will be computed based on the remaining work days in the year and spread out over the remaining pay periods in the fiscal year. Please see the section on "Pro-Rate Salary/Wages" below.

Child Support Reporting Requirements

In accordance with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, RSD will report basic information about new employees, including name, address, and Social Security number, to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which collects this information in an effort to enforce child support orders.

Direct Deposit

We offer direct deposit as a convenience to all our employees. Direct deposit prevents delays in receipt of an employee's earned wages/salary. All employees are *strongly* encouraged to use direct deposit and to receive their "paystub" via an email voucher. To sign up for direct deposit and electronic notification of your paystub, please contact the Department of Human Resources. The required form can be found on the District's "Shared Drive" – S:\FORMS\HR.

Garnishments

Garnishments are pay deductions taken by RSD – usually to help pay for child support or a debt or obligation to RSD or others. In many cases, such as exists with court-mandated child support, RSD must comply with the applicable court order. Otherwise, employee authorization is sought for such pay setoffs.

Lost or Stolen Check

If your paycheck is lost or stolen, you must notify the Payroll Department immediately.

Pay Advances

While RSD can certainly appreciate that employees may face circumstances which would necessitate their seeking to be paid in advance, the District does not provide pay advances to employees.

Pay Deductions

The law requires RSD to make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes, along with the retirement contribution required by an employee for participation in the Pennsylvania School Employees Retirement System (PSERS).

In addition, if an employee elects coverage under one of the District's benefits plans which requires employee contributions, the employee's share of the cost will be deducted from his/her check each pay period. If the employee is not receiving a payroll check due to illness, injury, leave of absence, unpaid suspension, etc., he/she will be required to pay the monthly cost directly to the District. Failure to pay this contribution in accordance with the expectations set forth by the District will result in the immediate termination of such benefits.

RSD does offer programs and benefits beyond those required by law. One (1) of those benefits is short-term disability and various supplemental insurance plans and a flexible spending account plan through AFLAC. Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their paychecks to cover the costs of participation in these programs. Information on AFLAC voluntary benefits can be obtained through the Benefits Department.

Pay Schedule

RSD employs 10-month, 11-month, and 12-month employees, and the manner in which most of these employees are paid is set forth in the respective collective bargaining agreement or compensation and benefits plan.

With a payroll calendar that establishes a payday every two (2) weeks based on a July through June fiscal year, employees, depending on their work year and the respective employment agreement, may be paid over 22 or 26 pay periods.

Twelve (12)-month and 11-month employees are paid over 26 pay periods beginning in July and ending in June.

Ten (10)-month employees, with the exception of those employees covered under the REA and RESPA collective bargaining agreements, are paid over 22 pay periods beginning with the first pay period in September through the second pay period in June.

- The salaries for **REA employees** are calculated over 26 pays; however, all REA employees have the option of having the balance of their contract paid in a lump sum payment in the second pay of June. The REA office annually identifies those employees who wish to receive their “summer pays” in a lump sum and notifies the Payroll Office accordingly. Employees interested in receiving their “summer pays” in a lump sum must submit the REA-provided form to the REA office before the set deadline. REA will then provide a list of names for lump-sum payout to the Payroll Office. Employees should not be contacting the Payroll Department directly for this purpose.
- **RESPA employees** have the option of having their wages calculated over 22 or 26 pay periods with the default being 22 pays unless adequate written notice as set forth in the collective bargaining agreement is provided to the District. Election forms for 26 pays must be turned into the RESPA President by the stated deadline. A list of those RESPA employees electing 26 pays is then provided to the Payroll Office.

In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a day when District offices are closed, employees who continue to receive “paper checks” will be notified as to how their pay will be distributed. In many cases, the District will either open the administrative offices for a defined period of time to allow employees to pick up their paychecks or will utilize the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to mail same. In order to avoid this inconvenience, employees are *strongly* encouraged to consider direct deposit and electronic paystub notification.

Special Note: Periodically, because of the impact of “Leap Year,” it becomes necessary to pay employees over 27 pays instead of the “normal” 26. When such a situation arises, appropriate communication and notification will be made to the individual bargaining units.

Pay Setoffs are pay deductions taken by RSD – usually to help pay for child support or a debt or obligation to RSD or others. In many cases, such as exists with court-mandated child support, RSD must comply with the applicable court order. Otherwise, employee authorization is sought for such pay setoffs.

If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, the Payroll Department should be able to assist you.

Pro-Rate Salary/Wages

A Pro-Rate can be applicable to those employees covered under the REA, RESPA, RSAA, and RSSA employment agreements when there is a break in paid service, such as an unpaid leave of absence or an unpaid suspension of indefinite duration. These employees, regardless of the length of their work year, have their salary/wages allocated evenly over a specific number of pays. Pro-Rate is a proration of an employee’s annual salary/wages based upon the number of days remaining in the employee’s work day calendar in the fiscal year and

spread over the remaining number of pays in the same fiscal year. In most cases, the pro-rate will result in the employee receiving a bi-weekly pay that is less than what he/she received before the break in paid service. This does not mean that the employee's pay rate has been reduced. Rather, the same pay rate is simply being applied to the number of days left to work in the fiscal year and then spread over the remaining pays in said fiscal year.

Example of Pro-Rate:

Employee earns an annual salary of \$40,000 for a contract year of 188 days. (Daily rate \$212.77)
Employee returns to work 1/4/16. (105 work days remain in the fiscal year with 17 remaining pays)

Daily rate \$212.77 times 105 days = \$22,340.85 pro-rated salary
Pro-rated salary \$22,340.85 divided by 17 pays remaining = \$ 1,314.17 pro-rated bi-weekly pay

Please Note: The pro-rated bi-weekly pay of \$1,314.17 is less than the original bi-weekly pay of \$1,481.48 in the Balance of Contract (BOC) example above. Pay rate, however, has not changed.

The Payroll Department can provide impacted employees with a copy of their pro-rate calculation should further explanation be needed.

Replacement Checks

In the event an employee requests a replacement check due to “not receiving their paycheck via regular mail,” an \$18.00 stop payment fee will be deducted from the replacement check. To avoid being assessed this fee, an employee must wait at least 10 business days from pay date for a reissue. In order to avoid this inconvenience, please see the section on “Direct Deposit” above.

Section 30 Time

Under the REA collective bargaining agreement, employees who are required to give up their contractual prep period to cover for an absent co-worker are compensated at an hourly rate established under said collective bargaining agreement. This hourly compensation is *only* available when a prep period is lost. The reporting of this time is done through the building principal's office directly to the Payroll Department. Therefore, should you have any questions regarding whether or not you were appropriately paid “Section 30” time, you should contact your *building principal* first before contacting the Payroll Department.

Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA)

As an employee of RSD, you have the opportunity to request payroll deductions for the purpose of a 403(b) tax-sheltered annuity plan. TSA Consulting Group, Inc., administers the District's tax-sheltered annuity program. Employees who wish to make transfers, rollovers, loans, or begin/change contributions to a TSA must obtain the proper forms from TSA Consulting Group, Inc., through their Website at www.tsacg.com. This Website also contains the District's “Approved Provider” list. If you have additional questions, please contact the Payroll Department.

Timekeeping

Federal and state laws require RSD to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. The Affordable Care Act also requires that the District maintain records of time actually worked by employees for purposes of ensuring that individuals entitled to health care coverage are receiving same. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every non-exempt employee, and all non-exempt employees are required to adhere to the protocols established by the District for purposes of accurate recordkeeping.

As a matter of policy, non-exempt employees *should not* be at their desks and working prior to their scheduled start time, nor should they be working during their unpaid lunch period or after their scheduled end time. Employees who arrive at the work site more than five (5) minutes prior to their start time *must* spend that time in break areas. They should not be at their work station, nor should they be disrupting someone who has already started his/her workday. Employees who violate this policy will have their access cards more severely restricted and/or withdrawn. Such employees also are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including severance of the employment relationship.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records or timekeeping equipment; recording time on another employee's time record; or, if applicable, "punching/signing in" for another employee will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. It is the employee's responsibility to authenticate per District protocol his/her time record to certify the accuracy of all time. If corrections or modifications are made to the time record, both the employee and the supervisor must verify the accuracy of the changes by initialing the time record.

Updating Employee Information

As outlined elsewhere in this handbook, it is important that employees ensure that personal information, such as addresses, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, etc., provided to the District is accurate and updated. With regard to an employee's salary/wages, critical information includes one's current address as well as withholding information captured by a W-4 form.

Address Change

When an employee changes his/her home address, he/she must notify the Department of Human Resources in writing as soon as possible. Forms for changing personal information, such as your address, name, etc., and for updating your emergency contact information can be found on the District's "Shared Drive – S:\FORMS\HR.

Withholding Amounts

Should you wish to update or change information pertaining to the federal tax to be withheld from your pay, a new W-4 form must be completed and submitted to the Payroll Department. You can obtain a W-4 form from the Payroll Department. Payroll forms also can be found on the District's "Shared Drive" – S:\FORMS\PAYROLL.

Benefits

Benefits in General

RSD employees are entitled to a wide range of benefits. A number of the benefits programs - such as Social Security, workers' compensation, unemployment compensation insurance, and the Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) - cover all employees as required by law.

Eligibility for most other benefits depends upon a variety of factors, including employee classification and bargaining unit. The Benefits Office will identify the programs for which you are eligible. You can find the details of many of these programs in separate written summaries. For more information, contact the Benefits Office.

Some benefits require contributions from employees, but many are fully paid by the District. We reserve the right to add, amend, modify, or terminate any employee benefit plan or program, subject only to any limitations imposed by various collective bargaining agreements. Some of the benefits programs provided employees are as follows:

AFLAC

In addition to short-term disability coverage outlined below, AFLAC offers a variety of other policies which are not subsidized by Reading School District. Employees who elect such coverage pay the premiums through payroll deductions. Insurance offerings include Accident and Hospital, Illness and Hospital, Cancer and Hospital, and Term Life Insurance. If you are interested in any AFLAC policies, please contact the Benefits Office.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

RSD provides access to an Employee Assistance Program ("EAP"), which is offered to all employees and their dependents through *Inroads at Family Guidance Center*. You may seek help confidentially for such matters as adaptation to illness or physical limitations, alcohol or substance abuse, anxiety/depression, child or adolescent behavioral problems, elder care and/or child care problems, financial distress, gambling/other lifestyle addictions, grief and loss, legal concerns, management of anger and other emotions, marital distress/family difficulties, spousal abuse/family violence, workplace stresses/conflicts on the job.

The EAP may be accessed by calling **610.374.4963** or **1.800.255.5998**. Simply tell the receptionist that you are employed by Reading School District, and he/she will tell you the number of sessions you have available and who in your family is covered by your program.

Health Care Benefits

Health care benefits are offered to all full-time employees either upon date of hire or the eligibility date established in the applicable collective bargaining agreement. The District's health care benefits include medical, dental, prescription, and vision; and the District bears a substantial cost of this plan for the employee. Information regarding eligibility and scope of coverage can be obtained by contacting the Benefits Office. Individuals in the Benefits Office also will be able to provide you information as to the amount of any premium contribution that must be made by the employee.

Benefits Exit Interview: Employees are encouraged to contact the Benefits Office to determine what benefits are available to them, if any, upon separation from our employ. The Benefits Office will schedule a meeting with retirees for this purpose.

Benefits Continuation (COBRA)

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under RSD's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at RSD group rates plus an administration fee. On behalf of RSD, The Loomis Company provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing the rights granted under COBRA upon hire and upon notification of a "qualifying event." The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations. Information regarding COBRA can be obtained by contacting the Benefits Office or The Loomis Company.

Domestic Partners

RSD does not cover domestic partners under its benefits plans.

Eligible Spouse Rule

Reading School District utilizes a "spousal rule" with regard to its medical plan of benefits. Specifically, this rule provides that an employee's spouse is required to obtain benefits through his/her own employer if offered for his/her primary plan of benefits. Importantly, the cost for your spouse to obtain benefits through his/her employer is not a factor regarding the enforcement of this policy, and he/she must elect his/her own employer-sponsored plan to provide primary coverage.

Should your spouse decline coverage through his/her employer, benefits under Reading School District's plan will be greatly reduced, as this plan will coordinate benefits against those of the best benefit option available to your spouse through his/her employer. For example, if your spouse declines his/her benefits through his/her employer and the best benefit plan available to him/her is a plan that pays ninety (90) percent, Reading School District's medical plan will only consider 10% of the medical claim for payment even though your spouse declined his/her own benefits and, thus, has no other coverage available.

This provision is strictly enforced, and both The Loomis Company and Reading School District routinely verify a spouse's eligibility status.

On-Site Loomis Representative

The District is self-insured for its medical benefits, and The Loomis Company is our current third-party administrator for same. While The Loomis Company is located in Wyomissing, we are fortunate to have a representative on site in our Administration Building at 800 Washington Street. Although it is not necessary to have an appointment to speak with our Loomis representative, it is advisable to contact him/her via telephone prior to your visit. The number to call is located at the back of this handbook.

Open Enrollment

Should you choose to decline benefits, unless a life status change occurs that would provide the opportunity for you to enroll after the initial offering, you will be unable to make any changes to your plan of benefits until “Open Enrollment.” Open enrollment occurs in the spring of each year, however, the elected changes will not go into effect until July 1st of that year.

Life Status Change

When a Life Status change occurs, it is your responsibility to notify the Benefits Office within 31 calendar days of such event. “Life Status” changes for purposes of medical benefits are as follows:

- marriage,
- divorce,
- birth of child,
- adoption, and
- change of employment for spouse.

Important Note: If you fail to notify the Benefits Office of a life status change in a timely manner, you will be unable to make any changes to your medical plan of benefits until open enrollment. This would result in the absence of coverage for a family member whom you intended to cover under your health care plan of benefits. Unfortunately, this often happens with the birth of a child. Although coverage is provided by law for 30 calendar days, an employee *must* enroll the child, with all required documentation, in the program within 31 calendar days for continued coverage.

Important Note: If you fail to notify the Benefits Office of a life status change that would negate an individual’s right to continued coverage, such as divorce or a spouse becoming eligible for benefits through his/her own employer, you will be responsible for any and all costs paid by RSD’s plan on behalf of that non-eligible dependent.

Utilization of Medical Plan

Reading School District currently offers three (3) different medical plans of benefits. With each plan, you are required to utilize providers that are participating with our Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) in order to achieve the highest level of benefits. If you have elected the Managed Care Option, you must utilize our PPO in order to receive **any** benefits.

Our PPO is Berkshire Health Partners (BHP). BHP providers are located in the following counties: Berks, Lancaster, Bucks, Montgomery, Lehigh, Northampton, Schuylkill, and Carbon. If you do not reside in any of the listed counties, there are additional networks that may be utilized. Please contact the The Loomis Company (via the information on the back of your card) or our on-site Loomis representative in order to review your specific needs and location. You will be directed to the appropriate network.

If you are traveling out of the area and become ill or injured, please contact Healthy Directions as directed on the back of your medical benefits identification card and you will be directed to a participating provider.

Important Note: Should you ever receive a bill from a provider indicating that charges, especially for an out-of-town college student or visit, are not covered, please contact either The

Loomis Company or our on-site Loomis representative directly, as we have found that providers often do not invoice the available network for such charges.

Holidays

In accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement, RSD provides many of its employees with paid holiday time off. Employees may need to be in compensable status on the work day before and the work day after an identified paid holiday in order to be compensated for same. Therefore, it is important for all employees to carefully read their respective collective bargaining agreement to understand their obligations in this regard. Questions should be directed to your supervisor or union representative(s).

Life Insurance

If eligible, you will receive documents under separate cover that explain the life insurance program that RSD provides. This coverage becomes effective according to the terms of your collective bargaining or employment agreement and is provided during your employ with the RSD at no expense to you. Please refer to your respective collective bargaining or employment agreement for specifics.

If a covered employee dies, the insured amount will be paid to his or her named beneficiary. You are responsible for naming your beneficiary and may change that selection by submitting a written request to the Benefits Office. It is important that employees who have a change in family circumstances, such as marriage or divorce, ensure that this beneficiary information is current.

Long-Term Disability Insurance

Long-term disability (LTD) insurance is offered to all full-time employees. This coverage pays you a benefit of sixty percent (60%) of your earnings to a maximum monthly benefit of \$5,000.00 if you cannot work due to a disabling illness or injury. The premium for this benefit is subsidized by the Reading School District; however, all employees who elect this benefit must pay a portion based on their salary. This premium contribution is made through a payroll deduction.

You must elect this coverage within 31 calendar days of your hire date. If you do not enroll within that time period, you will be considered a "late entrant." Late entrants must show evidence of insurability and may be responsible for the cost of physical examinations or other associated costs if required at the sole discretion of the insurance carrier.

In order to access benefits under your long-term disability policy, you must be disabled for at least 90 calendar days before you are eligible to begin receiving disability payments. If you would like more detailed information regarding long-term disability, please contact the Benefits Office.

Membership in Professional and Civic Organizations

Membership in a professional organization is valuable to our employees as well as to our organization. In its sole discretion or as set forth in an applicable employment agreement, RSD may pay 100% of the annual membership fee required for an employee to belong to a job-related professional organization(s). RSD also may pay 100% of the fees required for employees to maintain professional designations that are directly related to their jobs.

An employee may request that his/her dues be paid for by RSD where membership in a professional or civic organization or a professional designation is not job related but is beneficial to an employee and our organization.

Employees seeking reimbursement for memberships and expenses must complete an Expense Report and receive approval signatures to process the reimbursement.

Retirement Plan (PSERS)

As a public school district, RSD participates in the Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS). RSD has no discretion regarding the implementation of this plan or the policies and procedures associated therewith. Rather, our role is limited to processing the required paperwork, making the required employee deductions and employer contributions, and reporting time worked and wages earned. Please contact the Benefits Office for more information regarding this retirement program.

Planning to Retire?

It is critical for employees who are contemplating retirement that they contact the local PSERS office in Fleetwood at **610.944.9113** at least 12 months in advance so as to ensure that they have all the information necessary to make this life-changing decision. There is often a delay before you receive your first retirement check, so you want to make sure you begin the process early so that you have all relevant information as to when your retirement benefits may/will begin. Please check out the PSERS Website for pertinent information related to retirement at www.psers.state.pa.us.

Important Note: In order to be eligible for any retirement benefits provided under your collective bargaining agreement (such as payment for unused sick leave), you must provide evidence to the Department of Human Resources that you have retired from the PSERS system, as this is the retirement system for all District employees. If it is discovered that you did not indeed retire from PSERS or that you have re-entered this retirement system, you must reimburse RSD for any and all benefits paid you as a retiree.

Seminar/Meeting/Workshop/Conference Attendance

In its sole discretion and subject to benefits that may be provided under an employment agreement, RSD may pay 100% of the expenses associated with attending periodic job-related seminars, meetings, workshops, and conferences sponsored by professional organizations.

The employee must make a written request to his/her supervisor to request approval for such attendance on a Request for Conference – Professional Visitation. The request must include the employee's name, seminar title, date/location of the seminar, and expenses related to the seminar. The employee's supervisor and others following the appropriate chain of command will approve/disapprove of the request in writing. It is critical that such requests are made in a timely manner, particularly if an overnight stay is involved, as the request may require prior Board approval.

It is required of all employees that they dress professionally and in accordance with the expectations of the event organizers. Under no circumstances, however, should one's attire be anything but business casual and professional.

Short-Term Disability Insurance

Short-term disability insurance is offered to RSD employees through AFLAC. Unlike long-term disability insurance, short-term coverage is not subsidized by the District. Your premiums, however, are paid through a payroll deduction. There are several options available for short-term disability coverage. Please contact the Benefits Office for additional information.

Tuition Reimbursement

In accordance with the applicable employment agreement, an employee may be eligible for tuition reimbursement for continued education and related professional development. The applicable collective bargaining agreement or compensation and benefits plan will specify the amount of tuition reimbursement for which you may be eligible. It is critical that employees seek prior approval for any courses for which they are seeking tuition reimbursement and that they adhere to the deadlines for submitting documentation to secure such reimbursement.

In general, employees will be required to:

- Complete a Tuition Reimbursement Request form (**See:** S:\FORMS\HR) and submit same to the Department of Human Resources, along with a copy of the front page of the course catalog and a course description, at least two (2) weeks prior to the first day of the course to ensure that it can be processed and returned to you prior to that first day.
- Submit an official transcript or grade report and receipt for tuition payment to the Department of Human Resources once the course has been completed and an acceptable grade (as established by the applicable collective bargaining or employment agreement) has been attained in order for appropriate payment to be processed in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining or employment agreement.
- Ensure that all paperwork, especially grade reports or transcripts and receipt for tuition payment, are made in accordance with the deadlines established by the collective bargaining agreement and/or as outlined in the Tuition Reimbursement form, as late paperwork will not be accepted, thereby negating your eligibility for any reimbursement.

Other Important Notes:

- The District reserves the discretion, subject to any clarifying language in an applicable collective bargaining agreement or compensation and benefits plan, to deny a course for tuition reimbursement purposes. As a matter of practice, factors taken into consideration include, but are not limited to: (1) the relationship between the course and the employee's current assignment; (2) whether or not the course is part of a program leading to a degree or certification related to the employee's assignment; (3) the rigor of the course; (4) the length of the course, and (5) the provider of the course.
- On-line courses are reviewed carefully, particularly when offered through third-party providers who make arrangements with out-of-state universities and colleges to provide college credit, as such arrangements do not adhere to the intent and spirit of the District's desire to assist its employees with professional development and career opportunities.
- Absent any contractual language to the contrary, employees who leave the employ of RSD within one (1) year after the issuance of a tuition reimbursement check must reimburse the District for such reimbursement received within ninety (90) days of resignation.

Travel and Expenses

Employees will be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses they incur while traveling on RSD business in accordance with Board policy. Examples of such expenses include car rental, mileage, lodging, food and beverages, taxis, parking, tolls, etc. Under no circumstances will employees be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages. Reimbursement rates are subject to RSD guidelines and reviewed and approved by Business Office personnel.

You must record all travel and business activities on the District's "Expense Report" and submit it to your supervisor for approval. If business travel requires you to be out of the office for an extended period, your report must cover no less than one (1) week and no more than one (1) month of expenses.

All "Expense Reports" should be submitted to your supervisor for approval signatures no later than five (5) business days after the last day of the month. Failure to submit such reports within the requested timeframe may result in a denial of expenses.

Unemployment Compensation

The law provides unemployment compensation benefits to protect workers from economic hardship due to a loss of employment. A terminated employee who is unable to secure new employment may file a claim for unemployment compensation benefits. An employee may be eligible for such benefits if he/she was terminated for reasons other than misconduct, as defined by state law. Generally, employees who voluntarily resign without "good cause" are not eligible for benefits.

When an employee files a claim for unemployment compensation benefits, the employer is required to provide a written statement detailing the circumstances or reasons for the employee's termination. The employer also may be asked whether payment of unemployment compensation benefits is opposed. The answer provided by the employer may determine the employee's eligibility for benefits. If either party disagrees with the initial determination with respect to coverage, an appeal can be made. A formal hearing is held in the event that there is an appeal.

Ten (10)-month employees of the District are **reasonably** assured employment after all holiday and program breaks. Unemployment compensation benefits are, thus, not available for these non-working periods. Please contact the Department of Human Resources with any questions regarding this provision of the unemployment compensation laws.

Workers' Compensation

Workers' Compensation is designed to provide wage loss benefits and payment of reasonable medical care for one who is injured on the job. Each work-related incident is to be reported to your building principal, assistant principal, or supervisor ***immediately or as soon as reasonably possible but no later than the start of your next work shift.*** Failure to make a timely report may result in the denial of your claim, as a time lapse between the alleged work-related injury and your report may hinder the ability of the District to effectively investigate same.

When an incident is reported to your supervisor, a workers' compensation packet must be completed. These packets can be found with the secretary in each school/department. If your injury requires **urgent** care, seek medical treatment from the closest hospital, physician, or other

health care provider. The workers' compensation packet can be filled out after treatment is received.

If you require treatment that is not of an urgent nature and after notification is given as stated above, including the completion of the workers' compensation packet, you will need to contact **Worknet Occupational Medicine** at **610.939.2391** in order to schedule an appointment. Worknet is located at 3225 N. 5th Street Highway, Reading, PA. If you require initial treatment outside of Worknet's hours of treatment and treatment cannot wait until Worknet's hours resume, please seek treatment at a hospital emergency room.

All medical care within the first ninety (90) days of the work-related injury must be with the Reading School District's Panel of Providers, beginning with your first visit to Worknet. You will find the list of panel providers along with other important information within the workers' compensation packet you will be given by your school/department secretary.

Should you have any additional questions regarding workers' compensation, please contact either Denise Templin at 484.258.7025 or Lisa Hoffman at 484.258.7023 in the Benefits Office.

Transitional Duty: In order to assist employees who may not be released to return to full duty after a work-related injury to transition back to work, the District has adopted a "transitional duty" program, whereby the Administration may *temporarily* accommodate an employee's restrictions. Employees in a transitional duty assignment are expected to perform these responsibilities responsibly and in accordance with the standards of conduct expected of all employees.

Fraudulent Reports: All employees should be aware that making a false report of an injury or that an injury is work related is insurance fraud, which could result in a criminal investigation and charges. The District will fully cooperate with any and all such investigations.

Conduct Standards

Acceptable Use of Technology

The Board of School Directors has adopted a number of policies relative to the acceptable use of technology, including District-owned computers, internet access, District email, and network and electronic communications in general. All employees are expected to review these policies [Board Policy Nos. 815, 815.1, and 816] and adhere completely to the expectations set forth in same.

Accounting and Financial Reports

RSD's financial statements and all books and records on which they are based must accurately reflect the organization's transactions. All disbursements and receipts must be properly authorized and recorded.

You must record and report financial information accurately. Reimbursable business expenses must be reasonable, accurately reported, and supported by original receipts.

Those responsible for handling or disbursing funds must ensure that all transactions are executed as authorized and recorded to permit financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Compliance

Employees who fail to comply with this policy will be disciplined, which may include a demand for reimbursement of any losses or damages, termination of employment, and referral for criminal prosecution. Action appropriate to the circumstances also will be taken against supervisors or others who fail to report a violation or withhold relevant information concerning a violation of this policy.

Antifraud

Board Policy No. 828 specifically prohibits employees from knowingly misrepresenting the truth or the concealment of a material fact in order to secure a personal benefit or to induce another to act to his/her detriment. Actions constituting fraud include, but are not limited to, falsifying or the unauthorized altering of any District documents; accepting or offering a bribe, gifts, promises, or other favors intended to influence an employee's decision making; disclosing to other persons bidding/purchasing activities in order to give any entity, person, or business an unfair advantage in the bid process; causing the District to pay excessive prices or fees where justification is not documented; unauthorized destruction, theft, tampering, or removal of records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment; and using District equipment or work time for any outside private business activity.

Bullying/Cyberbullying and Harassment

All employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with appropriate and orderly behavior. Bullying, cyberbullying, and general harassment creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for employees to work, and may lead to serious violence. Consequently, employees are prohibited from engaging in any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts at another employee, student, or parent/guardian which occurs within or outside the school setting that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and (1) has the effect of substantially interfering with an employee's work performance, student's education, or relationship with a parent/guardian; (2) creates a

threatening environment in the eyes of a reasonable person; or (3) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school, office, or District in general.

Additional information on the District's position on bullying/cyberbullying and harassment and the specific consequences that may be afforded employees who engage in such behavior can be found in Board Policy Nos. 348.1, 448.1, and 548.1.

Cellular Phones

District-owned cellular telephones are provided to some employees for business-related purposes only. Other employees may utilize their personal cellular/smart phones for business-related purposes.

In either case, when conducting District business via a District-owned or personal cellular/smart phone, the District encourages employees to have such devices password protected to ensure the confidentiality of District information and expects employees to adhere to the following common rules of etiquette:

When Conducting District Business

1. Unless you are expecting a call of critical importance *and* you have alerted someone to the fact that you may need to take a call, give the person in your presence **100%** of your attention. Interrupting a face-to-face interaction with another person by answering a call, text, email, etc., via your cellular/smart phone or your office phone, for that matter, can be perceived as rude and unprofessional and it gives the individual the impression that he/she does not deserve your undivided attention. Thus, while cellular/smart phones render all of us more accessible, common courtesy should still take precedence.
2. Refrain from answering texts, emails, and phone calls during a meeting. Scrolling through a cellular/smart phone and/or "banging" on a keyboard – be it on your smart phone, laptop, or other electronic device – is obvious, disrespectful to the speaker, and distracting to others in attendance. If, at all possible, leave the cellular/smart phone or other electronic device behind when attending a meeting, interview, etc. When that is not feasible, cellular/smart phones, at the very least, should be out of sight and silenced. If you have been invited to a meeting or are part of an interview team, it is expected that you will be engaged in same. It is too easy to fall into the trap of constantly checking a cellular/smart phone or other electronic device. Avoid that trap and stay in the moment!
3. Although it is strongly suggested that your cellular/smart phone always be set on "vibrate" when at the workplace, that is not always an option. Therefore, at the very least, your ringtone should be appropriate for a workplace setting, as it will reflect upon you as a professional and the District should your cellular/smart phone ring while you are conducting District business.
4. Be aware of your surroundings and utilize appropriate judgment when discussing District business on a cellular/smart phone while in public. As District employees, we handle a significant amount of confidential information and, therefore, must be very cognizant of our surroundings when conducting District business in public so as to not unintentionally disclose such information to those "without a need to know."
5. Cellular/smart phones **must never** be utilized in a public restroom. That is not the place to share District information, as you never know who may be listening.
6. Whether using a District-owned cellular/smart phone or your personal cellular/smart phone for District business, your automated message indicating that you are unavailable to take the call should be professional. If it is a District-owned device, your name and the position you hold should be part of the message. If you decide to utilize your personal

device for District business, you must, at the very least, identify yourself by name in the message. Creative, cutesy messages must be avoided when conducting District business with these devices.

7. As with voice mail messages left on your office phone, if applicable, such messages should be returned within 24 hours or the next business day, whichever comes first.
8. Under **no** circumstances should employees driving District vehicles be using any type of cellular/smart phone or electronic device while driving.
9. No employee conducting District business should be utilizing a cellular/smart phone – personal or District-owned – while operating a motor vehicle unless voice calls are done hands-free and in accordance with applicable state and local law.
10. No employee conducting District business while in a District vehicle should be wearing or using one or more earphones for any purpose while driving, as such use is against the law.

Personal Cell/Smart Phone Usage

While it is acknowledged that many employees possess personal cellular/smart phones, they are strongly discouraged from making or receiving personal calls, emails, texts, etc., on these phones during working hours, and employees risk disciplinary action when personal cellular/smart phone usage interferes with District operations in the sole discretion of the Administration.

Under **no** circumstances, should such cellular/smart phones or any personal electronic device be utilized in classrooms when students are in attendance. Specifically, personal calls, texts, emails, etc., on cellular/smart phones should be made during lunch or at break times away from the employee's personal workspace.

In addition, employees must be respectful of co-workers, students, and guests when making or taking a cellular phone call. In other words, your personal business should not be discussed within earshot of others or in any areas where students or constituents are waiting for assistance. Furthermore, cellular/smart phone usage during meetings or workshops is prohibited in the absence of an emergency situation.

Any employee possessing a two-way phone and/or audible pager for personal use must ensure that the sound is turned off during work hours and in work areas.

You should provide family members with a general office number to call if they need to reach you in the event of an emergency.

Important Note: Board Policy No. 816 explicitly prohibits employees from (1) providing their personal cell phone number to students and/or their parents/guardians; and (2) collecting and/or contacting students via their personal cell phones or email addresses outside the protocol established by the District. All such contact must be through a student's parent or guardian. Failure to adhere to Board Policy No. 816 will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

Communicating with the Press or Other Media

In general, media inquiries in relation to RSD must be handled through the Superintendent's Office and the Director of Community Engagement. When in doubt, reach out to the Superintendent's Office for guidance.

Competitive Foods in Schools – Guidelines for Teachers

“Competitive Foods” are defined as foods at school other than those provided through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs. The federal government has established stringent guidelines on such foods, and all staff are required to adhere to same. The following provides information on the regulations that have been implemented. Questions regarding these guidelines and how they impact you and your classroom, club, or other student activity should be addressed to your building principal.

Fundraising using Food Items:

- **All** fundraising, regardless of location, type, and organization, must be approved by the principal and Wellness Coordinator and reported to the Food Services Department. *Any fundraiser that is held without approval, reporting, and/or does not adhere to the guidelines will be subject to the forfeiture of funds and/or loss of fundraising privileges at the discretion of the Superintendent.*
- Food items that meet the acceptable criteria:
 - May not be available for student purchase until 30 minutes after the last meal period.
 - May be sold without other limits to number of times or duration of sale.
- Food items that **DO NOT** meet the current requirements may not be sold OR opened OR consumed on the school campus until 30 minutes after the school day ends. These food fundraisers may only:
 - Last for one (1) week at a time.
 - Are currently limited to a max of five (5) per year in the elementary schools.
 - Are currently limited to a max of 10 per year in the secondary schools.
 - This number includes the combined total for all individual classes, groups, clubs, etc., within a school.
- No food used in a fundraiser may be home-made.
- Fundraising may be held outside of the District at fast food establishments although such efforts must be “infrequent” (per PDE).
- Fundraising that is held off-campus and at weekend sports, club, band events, etc., *do not* need to meet the requirements.

After School/Parent Engagement Programs (such as Meet the Teacher Night, Community Resource Events, Wellness Fairs, Watch Dogs) that do or could involve students must limit the availability/sale of foods to three (3) times per year per school. All food must meet current nutritional value criteria.

Classroom Parties and Holiday Celebrations that involve food are limited to three (3) times per *elementary* classroom, which would include any school-wide celebrations. Secondary schools may only have school-wide parties and celebrations and are limited to having same with food three (3) times per year. No food may be home-made. All food must meet the current nutritional requirements and have ingredients and nutritional information labels. Food items may not be available for students to eat until 30 minutes after the last meal period of the day.

The nutritional requirements will be listed on the approval form. Products that meet these requirements can be purchased through the RSD Food Services Department as long as they do not lose profit.

Food shall not be used in the schools as a reward or punishment. (The exception to this is the rewards for completed mands in autistic programs.)

Computers, Hand-Held Devices, and Instant Messaging

Employees issued a personal computer or hand-held device for business-related purposes are responsible for such equipment and are discouraged from using same for non-District related work.

Instant Messaging is strictly forbidden.

For further information on the acceptable use of such technology, see the District's Acceptable Use Policy [Board Policy No.815].

Conduct at District-Sponsored Events

The District does not condone the use of alcoholic beverages on its premises, nor does it provide such beverages at any District-sponsored social event. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including the employee's dismissal.

Conduct Standards and Discipline

RSD expects every employee to adhere to the highest standards of job performance and of personal conduct, including individual involvement with co-workers, students, families, outside business contacts, and the public in general.

The District reserves the right to discipline or discharge any employee for violating any District policy, practice, or rule of conduct. The following list is intended to give you notice of our expectations and standards. It does not, however, include every type of unacceptable behavior that can or will result in disciplinary action. Be aware that RSD retains the discretion to determine the nature and extent of any discipline based upon the circumstances of each individual case.

Employees may be disciplined or terminated for poor job performance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Unsatisfactory quality or quantity of work;
- Repeated unexcused absences or lateness;
- Failing to follow instructions, supervisory directives, or District procedures; or
- Failing to follow established safety regulations.

Employees also may be disciplined or terminated for misconduct, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Falsifying an employment application or any other District record or document;
- Failing to record working time accurately or completing, in whole or in part, a co-worker's timesheet;
- Stealing time; e.g., taking excessive breaks or otherwise accepting pay for time not actually worked;
- Insubordination or other refusal to perform;
- Using vulgar, profane, or obscene language, including any communication or action that violates our policy against harassment and other unlawful forms of discrimination;
- Disorderly conduct, bullying, fighting, or other acts of violence;

- Inability or unwillingness to work harmoniously and respectfully with co-workers;
- Misusing, destroying, or stealing District property or another person's property;
- Possessing, entering with, or using weapons on District property;
- Possessing, selling, using, or reporting to work with alcohol, controlled substances, or illegal drugs present in the employee's system, on District property, or on District time;
- Violating antifraud and conflict of interest rules;
- Violating rules relative to the confidentiality of student information;
- Engaging in behavior that jeopardizes the health, safety, and welfare of others;
- Violating rules prohibiting corporal punishment and inappropriate interactions with students;
- Disclosing or using confidential or proprietary information without authorization;
- Violating the District's computer, social networking and electronic communication, or software use policies;
- Failing to adhere to obligations as a Mandated Reporter under the Child Protective Services Act;
- Willfully failing to cooperate with an investigation into child abuse; and
- Being convicted of a crime that indicates unfitness for a job or presents a threat to the organization, its employees, or its clients in any way.

Confidentiality Obligations

As an employee of a public school district, you likely will come into contact with information that pertains to the District, our students and families, taxpayers, vendors, and suppliers. Such information is strictly confidential and should not be disclosed to those within or outside RSD who have no reason to know such information.

Student information, in particular, must be held in the strictest of confidence. No information regarding a student should be shared with anyone within or outside RSD who does not have a legitimate right/reason to know such information. When in doubt, do not disclose any information regarding a particular student to anyone unless such disclosure is necessary to the educational program of the student.

Please help protect confidential information - which may include, but is not limited to, passwords, access codes, student information, employee information, and organization financial information - by taking the following precautionary measures:

- Discuss work matters only with other RSD employees who have a specific business/educational reason to know or have access to such information.
- Do not discuss work matters, including matters involving students, in public places.
- Monitor and supervise visitors to ensure that they do not have access to confidential information.
- Destroy, by shredding, hard copies of documents containing confidential information that is not filed or archived.
- "Lock" or otherwise secure your computer screen while away from your desktop or laptop.
- Secure confidential information in locked desk drawers and cabinets at the end of every business day.

Your cooperation is particularly important because of our obligation to protect the security of student and other confidential information. Use your own sound judgment and good common

sense; but, if at any time you are uncertain as to whether you can properly divulge information or answer specific questions, please consult a supervisor.

Conflict of Interest

Employees must avoid any interest, influence, or relationship which might conflict or appear to conflict with the best interests of RSD. Specifically, you must avoid any situation in which your loyalty may be divided and promptly disclose any situation where an actual or potential conflict may exist. Please see Board Policy No. 012 for more information on the District's expectations in this area.

Examples of potential conflict situations include:

- having a financial interest in any business transaction with RSD;
- owning or having a significant financial interest in, or other relationship with, a District vendor, supplier, contractor, etc.;
- accepting gifts, entertainment, or other benefits of more than a nominal value from an RSD vendor, supplier, contractor, etc.

Employees with a conflict of interest must disclose it to management and remove themselves from negotiations, deliberations, or decisions involving the conflict. You may, however, state your position and answer questions posed to you when your knowledge may be of assistance.

Dating In The Work Place

Supervisors are prohibited from forming romantic or sexual relationships with those employees they supervise. Such relationships can create the impression of impropriety in terms and conditions of employment and can interfere with productivity and the overall work environment. Co-workers are strongly discouraged from forming such relationships among themselves as such relationships, or the ending of the same, pose the potential for workplace disruption. When such relationships impact negatively on the workplace, appropriate action, up to and including termination, will be taken.

If you are unsure of the appropriateness of an interaction with another employee of the organization, contact Human Resources for guidance. If you are encouraged or pressured to become involved with an employee, student, parent, guardian, vendor, or any individual doing business or associated with the Reading School District in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable and is unwelcome, you should also notify Human Resources immediately. No employee of this District or anyone otherwise associated with the District has the right to subject any employee to sexual or other unlawful harassment, including requests for sexual favors, sexual advances, offensive touching, and any other unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

You also should be aware of, and are expected to comply with, the District's policy against sexual and other forms of illegal harassment in the workplace.

Appropriate action, which may include a transfer or reassignment, suspension, or discharge, will be taken against those who violate this policy.

District Equipment and Vehicles

When using District property, including computer equipment and District vehicles, or when supervising the use of such equipment by students, exercise care, diligently supervise, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Notify your supervisor if any equipment appears to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. This prompt reporting could prevent the equipment's deterioration and could also help prevent injury to you or others. Should you have questions about the maintenance and care of any workplace equipment, contact your supervisor.

If you use, operate, or supervise the operation of equipment improperly, carelessly, negligently, or unsafely, the equipment, at the very least, will be removed as an instructional tool for you. In addition, you may be disciplined or even discharged. In addition, you may be held financially responsible for any loss to RSD because of such mistreatment.

Employees provided access to District vehicles must possess a current Pennsylvania driver's license. Driving without such valid licensure will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. It is the responsibility of employees who operate District vehicles in the performance of their responsibilities to immediately notify their supervisor and the Department of Human Resources if their driver's license has been restricted, suspended, or revoked.

In addition, employees who regularly operate an RSD vehicle in the performance of their duties must undergo an annual physical examination and submit to random drug and alcohol checks. Employees also must agree to have RSD randomly access their motor vehicle records.

District Property

Employees are expected to keep their work area neat and clean and to use normal care in handling District property. Report any broken or damaged property to your supervisor at once so that proper repairs can be made.

You may not use any District property for personal purposes or remove any District property from the premises without prior written permission from your supervisor.

Inappropriate use of District property will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Dress/Grooming Policy

The Reading School District is a professional educational organization dedicated to the educational success of students. In order to promote a positive and professional image consistent with the District's mission and goals, we are implementing guidelines pursuant to Board Policy Nos. 325, 425, and 525 for all employees as it relates to dress and grooming.

As a rule, the District expects that all employees, with the exception of those whose duties require more casual dress or a uniform, such as is the case with Food Services and Safe Schools personnel, will adhere to "business attire" expectations for all workdays, including professional development days. In addition, it is expected that all clothing will be clean, fit properly, and be appropriate for the work being performed.

Exceptions to these guidelines would be District-approved dress-down days, or events such as field trips.

The following is a listing of some general expectations regarding employee dress:

- Any clothing that is badly faded, frayed, worn thin, torn, or clings tightly to the body is not acceptable and is in violation of these guidelines.
- Skirts and dresses are appropriate as long as they are of a length that is not distracting to others and maintain a high level of modesty and ample coverage. If you have to think about how you will pick an item up off the floor or how you will have to sit, the article of clothing is too short and should not be worn to work.
- Capri pants should look professional.
- Spandex® and similar types of apparel **are not** suited for wear in the workplace and should not be worn.
- Leggings **are not** pants and should be avoided unless worn with some article of clothing that reaches almost to the knees and maintains a level of modesty appropriate for a professional environment.
- Clothing should not be “see-through.” When wearing white/sheer fabrics, something should be worn underneath.
- Shirts and blouses create a professional look. Shirts with designs should be in good taste, and staff shall not wear shirts with slang imprinting, offensive pictures, etc.
- Modest necklines for all articles of clothing should be the norm. Cleavage is not to be exposed.
- Spaghetti straps are inappropriate for the workplace.
- No undergarments should be visible; i.e., bra straps, etc.
- Tops and bottoms should “overlap.” Middle parts should not be exposed even when lifting one’s arms or touching one’s toes.
- Athletic clothing, workout wear, and sweat suits should be worn only in designated areas or by designated employees; i.e., physical education teachers.
- Footwear should be appropriate to the position one holds and, for administrative, professional, and office staff should not be overly casual. Beach flip flops **should not** be worn, and sneakers are not appropriate for most staff members. Open-toed and open-heeled and extremely high-heeled shoes are not appropriate for staff providing services to children.
- Dangling necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and other such jewelry shall be removed for safety reasons when it interferes with working conditions.
- Visible tattoos and body piercings that are deemed offensive or disruptive to the educational mission of the District, in the opinion of the employee’s supervisor upon consultation with the Chief Human Resources Officer, must be covered. In addition, all facial rings, including but not limited to, nose rings, lip rings, tongue rings, and eyebrow rings are prohibited and, at a minimum, must be covered while on duty.
- Extreme and/or unnatural hair styles and color deemed distracting and disruptive to the work/educational environment, in the opinion of the employee’s supervisor upon consultation with Human Resources, must be avoided. Remember, we need to promote and project a positive and professional image consistent with our educational mission.

If you are unsure if an article of clothing or accessory is acceptable for the workplace, especially in a Pre-K to 12 educational setting, it most likely is not. Students and visitors should be able to distinguish staff members from students or casual visitors to the District. Appropriate dress and good hygiene go a long way in garnering respect from students, parents, and colleagues. *Please be*

cognizant of your decisions regarding dress in the workplace so as to avoid the uncomfortable conversation that may result from a poor decision on your part.

Employees who fail to adhere to these guidelines will be sent home to change and, if non-exempt under the wage and hour laws, will not be paid for the time they are not at work.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

RSD strives to maintain a workplace free of drugs and alcohol and to discourage drug and alcohol abuse by its employees. Misuse of alcohol or drugs by employees can impair the ability of employees to perform their duties, as well as adversely affect our students and co-workers and the public's confidence in our organization.

Alcohol

Employees are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol while performing any responsibilities on behalf of or for RSD, while operating a motor vehicle in the course of duty, or while on District premises, at a District worksite, or at a District-sponsored event.

Illegal Drugs

District employees are prohibited from using or being under the influence of illegal drugs while performing any responsibilities on behalf of or for RSD, while at a District facility or worksite, while on District property, or while at a District-sponsored event. You may not use, manufacture, distribute, purchase, transfer, or possess an illegal drug while in District facilities, while on District property, while operating a motor vehicle for any job-related purpose, while on the job, or while performing District business.

This policy does not prohibit the proper use of over-the-counter medication or medication prescribed by a physician; however, misuse of such medications is prohibited. In addition, employees taking such medication are responsible for ensuring that such medication is taken properly and does not impair their ability to safely and effectively perform their job responsibilities.

Disciplinary Action

Employees who violate this policy may be disciplined, up to and including termination, even for a first offense. Violations include refusal to consent to and comply with testing and search procedures as described below.

Searches

RSD may conduct searches for illegal drugs or alcohol in District facilities or worksites without prior notice to employees. Such searches may be conducted at any time. Employees are expected to cooperate fully.

Searches of employees and their personal property may be conducted when there is ***reasonable suspicion*** to believe that the employee has violated this policy or when circumstances or workplace conditions justify such a search. Personal property may include, but is not limited to, purses, boxes, briefcases, as well as any RSD property that is provided for employees' personal use, such as desks, lockers, and files.

An employee's consent to a search is required as a condition of employment, and the employee's refusal to consent may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Drug Testing

RSD may require a blood test, urinalysis, hair test, or other drug or alcohol screening of employees suspected of using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol or where other circumstances or workplace conditions justify such testing. The refusal to consent to testing may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Employee Equipment and Access

Depending upon your position with the District, you may be provided work-related equipment and technological access. You are responsible for ensuring that you protect any such equipment from damage or loss and that, if applicable, you ensure that you make such equipment available for routine maintenance and/or necessary repair.

Any and all forms of technological access provided you must be utilized for District-related purposes only in accordance with the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy No. 815.

Upon leaving the District, you must immediately return any equipment issued you to your supervisor. The District reserves the right to take legal action against any employee who has failed to return District property upon separation, with such employee being responsible for any and all costs associated with such legal action.

Employee Privacy and Other Confidential Information

RSD collects only personal information about employees that relates to their employment. Only people with a business-related need to know are given access to this information, and administrative personnel in the Department of Human Resources must authorize any release of this information. Personal information, other than that required to verify employment or to satisfy legitimate investigatory or legal requirements, will be released outside the District only with employee approval.

If you have access to any confidential information, including private employee information, you are responsible for acting with integrity. Unauthorized disclosure or inappropriate use of confidential information will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employee Work Product

For purposes of this policy, the term "Employee Work Product" shall include distinctively and collectively the whole or any part of any software application, idea, concept, know-how, technique, discovery, invention, product, patent, trademark, copyright, copyrightable or patentable creation, process, improvement, or any other item or work conceived, discovered, originated, created, made, written, reduced to practice, or otherwise developed by employee, alone or in conjunction with others, provided that: (1) the work is related to or useful to RSD or its operations; and (2) the work results from any task assigned or performed by employee on District time, or results from any work performed with RSD's equipment, supplies, facilities, intellectual property, or other organization resources. Works that are created through completion prior to the employee's employment with RSD will not be deemed Employee Work Product for purposes of this policy.

Employee agrees that all Employee Work Product shall be the sole and exclusive property of RSD. Employee agrees to disclose promptly and in writing to RSD any and all Employee Work Product and all patent and copyright applications filed by Employee during his/her

employment with the organization or within one (1) year thereafter, so that RSD may take appropriate measures to secure and protect its rights over such works qualifying as Employee Work Product. Employee further agrees to deliver to RSD any and all originals and copies of notes, files, disks, records, software, documents, plans, media, applications, and any other written, printed, electronic, tangible, or intangible materials containing or pertaining to Employee Work Product, which employee has in his/her possession or control, immediately upon the written request of RSD, or automatically upon employee's separation from the organization, whichever occurs first. Employee acknowledges and agrees that all such items are exclusively the property of RSD.

Employee assigns and transfers to RSD all rights, title, and interest in and to any and all Work Product. Employee further agrees that the whole or any part of any Employee Work Product containing copyrightable work is considered "work made for hire" under copyright law, and employee hereby assigns to RSD all rights, title, and interest in such works. Employee agrees that any patent or copyright application filed within a year after termination of his/her employment shall be presumed to relate to a copyrightable work or invention, which was made during the term of employee's employment with RSD, thereby constituting Employee Work Product, unless employee can provide evidence to the contrary.

Ethical and Legal Business Practices

RSD expects the highest standard of ethical conduct and fair dealing from each employee, officer, director, volunteer, and all others associated with the District. Our reputation is a valuable asset, and we must continually earn the trust, confidence, and respect of our students, our families, and our community.

Our reputation for integrity requires careful observance of the spirit, letter, and intent of all applicable laws, regulations, codes of conduct, and Board policy as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The success of RSD is dependent upon trust and the belief of our constituents that we are all conducting ourselves in the best interests of the students and families we serve. Employees owe a duty to RSD, our students and families, and the general public to behave in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

RSD will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects all of its employees to conduct themselves in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, unprofessional, or unethical conduct.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide employees with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with one's immediate supervisor and, if necessary, with Human Resources or any member of the leadership team.

Compliance with this standard of ethical behavior is the responsibility of every RSD employee. Disregarding or failing to comply with this standard of ethics and conduct could lead to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

You are expected to promptly disclose to the management of the District anything that suggests unethical or illegal business practices. We will not tolerate retaliation or retribution against anyone who brings violations to management's attention.

Giving and Receiving Gifts

You may not give or receive money or any gift to or from a supplier, government official, or other organization. Exceptions may be made for gifts that are customary and lawful, are of nominal value, and are authorized in advance.

You may accept meals and refreshments if they are infrequent, are of nominal value, and are in connection with business discussions.

If you do receive a gift or other benefit of more than nominal value, report it promptly to your supervisor, a member of the leadership team, or Human Resources. It will be returned or donated to a suitable charity.

Interactions with Students

Our clients are our students and their families. Therefore, employee interaction with students and their parents/guardians must always be professional and above reproach. Any behavior, including, but not limited to, vulgarity, profanity, physically compelling compliance, inappropriate sarcasm, yelling, etc., that embarrasses, humiliates, or otherwise demeans a student and/or creates conditions which interfere with learning or are harmful to the student's health and safety as determined by the Administration will not be tolerated and will subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Employees certificated through the Pennsylvania Department of Education are encouraged to routinely and regularly review the Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators, which is provided as part of the certification process, as this Code outlines specific professional expectations for such employees, including, but not limited to, proper interaction with students. Employees who do not have or cannot find (via an internet search) a copy of this Code can contact the Department of Human Resources for assistance.

Employees also must avoid any personal contact with students that can be construed as sexually inappropriate or indicative of "grooming," as set forth in District-provided training relative to preventing child abuse. Staff who believe that students are interacting with them in a manner that makes the staff member uncomfortable should immediately report these concerns to their supervisor or Human Resources.

After-School Interactions with Students

By virtue of your employment with RSD, you have been afforded access to students and their families which can lead to complicated, uncomfortable situations if such access is not limited to the school day or after-school activity in which you may be involved. With the heightened desire to protect children and students from predators, staff should avoid after-school involvement with students who are not otherwise related to them by blood or marriage. As discussed in the training offered you as a mandated reporter under the Child Protective Services Act, seemingly "innocent" contact will be viewed with skepticism and may lead to you being named as an alleged perpetrator of child abuse or sexual exploitation. The benefit of the doubt will be given to the child/student, who may innocently view your interest and actions in a manner you never intended. Therefore, it is essential that you avoid placing yourself in such a position.

Corporal Punishment: The District absolutely and without exception prohibits the use of corporal punishment. Although spanking, slapping, or paddling are the most common

examples of such forms of punishment, “corporal punishment” is defined as “the use of any physical force by a parent or any adult guardian for the purpose of managing a child’s behavior.” Therefore, a staff member who uses any form of physical force, unless necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of a student or others, to discipline a student, compel a student to comply, or otherwise manage a student’s behavior is, in fact, guilty of violating the District’s policy against corporal punishment and risks serious disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and potential criminal action.

Physical Restraint: A number of District employees, including but not limited to, Safe Schools personnel, Special Education personnel, and staff members identified to serve as members of a school’s Crisis Team, are trained in appropriate de-escalation techniques when students are in crisis. In some situations, it may be necessary for such staff members to use non-violent, non-harmful, physical crisis intervention for the care, welfare, safety, and security of all individuals. Physical interventions are used to calm a student and only as a last resort when a student is in danger of harm to him/herself or others. When it is necessary to use such physical crisis intervention, staff members involved are *immediately* required to make a written report on a District form approved by the District’s Student Services Department. To the extent that a report of suspected child abuse is made, that report will be requested by Human Resources personnel and law enforcement. Therefore, it is critical that this report be comprehensive, accurate, and completed immediately after the action is taken.

Note: The Child Protective Services Act specifically excludes from the definition of “child abuse” the use of “reasonable force,” which constitutes incidental, minor, or reasonable physical contact with the child when such “reasonable force” is necessary to:

- (1) quell a disturbance or remove the child from the scene of a disturbance that threatens physical injury to persons or damage to property;
- (2) to prevent the child from self-inflicted physical harm;
- (3) for self-defense or the defense of another individual, or
- (4) to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects or controlled substances or paraphernalia that are on the child or within the control of the child.

In the event that such “reasonable force” is necessary under the circumstances outlined above, employees must *immediately* report the incident to their supervisor or other administrator and document in writing the incident on a District-prescribed form. To the extent that allegations of suspected child abuse are made, this form will be important in helping to ascertain the validity or lack thereof of those accusations.

Transporting Students

Under *no* circumstances shall an employee, other than a member of the administrative/supervisory staff as outlined below, transport a student in his/her personal vehicle. Administrative/supervisory staff, including principals, assistant principals, Central Office administrators, and/or Safe Schools *supervisory* staff may, at times, be required to transport a student who has not been picked up at school. Such transport must be a last resort and will require the administrative/supervisory staff member to have one (1) other District employee with him/her. Staff who violate this prohibition against transporting students face significant disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If You Are Accused of Improper Interaction with a Student or Students: When any employee is accused of improper interactions with students, sexual or otherwise, the District is obligated to *immediately* take action to protect both the student and the staff member from further harm or accusations.

- Specifically, the employee accused of such improper action will first be placed on paid leave or reassigned to a position that removes the staff member from any interaction with the student(s) in question until such time as the Department of Human Resources is able to do a preliminary investigation into said allegations.
- Should an employee refuse/fail to cooperate with an internal investigation, the paid status may change to unpaid status depending on the information available to HR at the time and upon consultation with the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

While we understand that, particularly in cases where criminal charges may be pending, an employee may be advised not to answer any questions or participate in any internal investigation being conducted by the Department of Human Resources, the District is not obligated to continue paying an employee who is not working and fails/refuses to participate in said investigation. Placing an employee on unpaid status is not made lightly and will be based upon the information the District has at the time.

Investigations/Searches

In an effort to safeguard the property of our employees, clients, public, and the District in general, RSD reserves the right to inspect property owned and/or supplied by the District. Property supplied by the District, including, but not limited to, offices, desks, file cabinets, computer hardware and software, District vehicles, lockers, and other storage facilities, are considered District property and are subject to inspection by supervisors at any time, with or without notice. Therefore, employees should have no reasonable expectation of privacy in property owned and/or supplied by the District.

Employees may be permitted to decorate their work area with personal items such as pictures, clocks, radios, etc. In the absence of specific contractual language, however, the District is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft of employees' personal belongings, so employees should exercise discretion in bringing such items to the workplace.

Keys/Access Cards

Employees provided keys and/or access cards to District facilities, offices, etc., are responsible for the appropriate use of such keys/access cards. If a key/access card is lost or stolen, you must notify your supervisor *immediately*. Failure to report lost or stolen key/access cards and/or allowing unauthorized individuals to use such keys/access cards will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees also will be charged for replacing lost keys/access cards. Lost access cards, in particular, will result in your being charged \$15.00 for a replacement.

Performance Evaluation

In accordance with the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, and regulations promulgated thereunder, Board policy, contractual language, and/or best HR practices, employee performance will be evaluated – formally and/or informally. The goal of performance evaluation is to promote

organizational efficiency and to assess job satisfaction. Even in the absence of a formal evaluation process, supervisors are encouraged and expected to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, ongoing basis so as to avoid having an employee continue to struggle to meet the expectations of the District without the implementation of a support system designed to assist the employee toward attaining satisfactory performance.

Formal performance evaluations allow both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks; identify and correct performance weaknesses; encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting mutually established goals.

When it has been determined that an employee's performance is marginal or unsatisfactory, supervisors are expected to work with the employee and his/her union/association representative in designing a mutually acceptable action or performance improvement plan that will (1) identify the deficiencies in performance; (2) specify the expectations for the employee; (3) list the resources that will be made available to assist the employee in meeting those expectations; (4) identify the manner in which performance will be evaluated under the plan and the timetable for same; and (5) outline the consequences should performance not improve.

HR is available to assist supervisors and employees (and their representatives) with this process.

Political/Campaign Activities

RSD encourages employees to exercise their constitutional right to vote and participate in the political process. Political and campaign activities, however, can be disruptive and must be limited during work hours. In the interest of maintaining a productive and tension-free work environment, political and campaign-related activities must be restricted in the workplace; and employees do face disciplinary action for engaging in behavior inconsistent with the expectations outlined below:

Prohibited Employee Activities

Employees are not permitted to participate in any political activity that interferes with or disrupts the workplace in any manner. Specifically, employees shall not:

- use work time or District resources to accomplish goals which are politically motivated;
- solicit or encourage monetary contributions or other support for a political party, campaign, candidate, or political belief during workhours;
- use District facilities, such as break or eating areas, conference rooms, or offices for any political or campaign activity;
- utilize the District's property or organization-issued property, including, but not limited to, telephones (both cellular and desk phones), computers, facsimile machines, e-mail systems, interoffice mail, voice-mail, photocopiers, postage, paper, envelopes, or other office supplies, for any political or campaign activity;
- use students for writing, addressing, or distributing partisan political materials; or
- use the District's name or affiliation in connection with any political or campaign activity, at any time, without the District's express written approval.

Requesting Time Off for Voting

The organization encourages every employee to play an active role in the election process. Employees are encouraged to vote during non-working hours. Employees are not permitted to take time off from work to vote.

Political Coercion, Harassment, and Retaliation

RSD embraces diversity and respects each employee's political beliefs and preferences. No employee is permitted to behave in a threatening, harassing, or discriminatory manner toward any other employee with respect to his or her political beliefs or activities. The District does not permit or condone its Board members, administrators, or supervisors to coerce employees into supporting or opposing any political candidate, party, or belief. It is a violation of this District's policy for any Board member, administrator, or supervisor to retaliate, threaten to retaliate, or take any adverse action against an employee for his/her support or opposition to any political campaign or party affiliation.

Employees Running for Public Office

Employees who decide to run for public office are expected to keep politics separate from employment and should not allow political involvement to interfere with work performance. RSD strictly prohibits employees seeking public office from using the District's name in association with any political or campaign activity without the District's express written permission. Employees wishing to run for public office should notify their supervisor and Human Resources in writing of their intentions, specifying the position and venue in which they are seeking election. Employees running for office are expected to maintain all regular work duties during the campaign and upon election.

Employees elected to public office must disclose to the Assistant Superintendent the existence of any potential or actual conflict of interest affecting the employee's duties or loyalty to the District and shall cooperate to the extent practicable to resolve such conflicts to the District's satisfaction.

Recording Devices/Camera Phones

In an effort to secure employee and student privacy as well as the confidentiality of District information and records, RSD prohibits employee use of recording devices such as cameras, camera phones, tape recorders, or any other recording device that may pose a threat to employee, student, and District privacy unless such use is specifically for District purposes.

This policy is applicable to all employees and their visitors while on organization premises. Employees are responsible for making their visitors aware of this policy and that all recording devices should be left either at the reception area or in their vehicles.

Policies

1. Employees are strictly prohibited from bringing cameras or recording devices into the workplace unless prior authorization was granted from Human Resources or a supervisor.
2. While smart phones with built-in cameras and other video and/or audio recording devices are not prohibited at the workplace, use of this functionality is prohibited unless prior authorization from the Superintendent's Office, Human Resources, or supervisor is obtained as outlined below.
3. RSD may grant authorization for the use of these devices when a particular business purpose will be served. Employee/student privacy should not be jeopardized by such usage. Unless otherwise authorized by federal and state law, all parties involved must be aware that the conversation or meeting will be recorded.

4. RSD prohibits the use of camera-equipped and recording devices in areas serving students. Under no circumstances are employees to photograph or record students with personal devices unless done so in accordance with written District protocol.
5. Specifically, photographing and/or recording students must be done in conjunction with the Community Engagement Director and in accordance with federal and state law pertaining to the confidentiality of student information.
6. RSD prohibits the use of camera-equipped and recording devices in areas where there may be sensitive information, such as the Human Resources, Benefits, Payroll Departments, etc., without prior approval from the appropriate administrator.
7. Employees are prohibited from using any camera-equipped or recording device in any District restroom, shower facility, or exercise area at any time.
8. In limited circumstances, employees may be granted permission to use a recording device in the workplace. These requests, however, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
9. RSD reserves the right to revoke authorization at any time for any reason. In such instances, employees will be granted the opportunity to have the equipment removed from District premises.
10. Employees should contact Human Resources with any questions regarding this policy.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

As an employee of the Reading School District, regardless of your position, you are a **mandated** reporter under the Child Protective Services Act.

As a mandated reporter, you have an affirmative legal obligation to report suspected child abuse. Willfully failing to report abuse may lead to criminal charges and will result in severe disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The District provides periodic training required by law on recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse, and you are required, as a condition of employment, to actively participate in such training.

All employees, as mandated reporters, should register on the Child Welfare Information Solution Self-Service Portal at the following Web address:

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS/Public/Home>.

Having a Child Welfare Portal account will expedite your making a report and allows you, as part of the electronic reporting method, to immediately complete the required written report (CY-47).

Although extensively covered in the District-mandated training, the following provides a brief synopsis of your obligations as a mandated reporter in making a report of suspected child abuse:

- Reports of suspected child abuse, including sexual exploitation of a child or student, regardless of age, are to be made *immediately*.
- Although reports may be made orally via phone by calling ChildLine at 1.800.932.0312, employees are encouraged to create an account on the Child Welfare (CWIS) Self-Service Portal at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis and to make such reports via that electronic system. Importantly, ChildLine and the CWIS Self-Service portal are available 24/7.

- If an *oral* report is made to ChildLine, an employee must, within 48 hours, complete a CY-47 form and submit same to Children and Youth. These forms may be obtained through one of the District's nurses. [The completion of this paper form *is not* required when a report is made through the CWIS Self-Service Portal.]
- Once you have made your report, you must inform your immediate supervisor.
- If the suspected perpetrator of the abuse is an RSD staff member, your supervisor must also contact the Superintendent's Office and the Department of Human Resources.
- Reports of suspected child abuse are confidential; and, as a mandated reporter, you are afforded a variety of protections if you make a report in good faith as follows:
 - Immunity from civil or criminal liability, if you
 - Make a report
 - Cooperate with the investigation
 - Testify in proceedings, if necessary
 - Protection from discrimination in employment

NOTE: As an employee, the responsibility of making a report cannot and should not be passed along to someone else. Therefore, while it is appropriate for you, as a mandated reporter, to refer a student with suspicious bruises to the nurse for evaluation, if *you* believe the child is a victim of abuse, *you* must make the report. Do not assume or expect that the nurse or a supervisor will do so on your behalf.

Moreover, never let anyone discourage you from making a report. If, for some reason, you are told not to make a report even though you believe that a report should be made, immediately contact the Department of Human Resources.

NOTE: Under the Child Protective Services Act and Board Policy No. 806, the District and its employees are **required** to cooperate with the Department of Human Services (formerly Public Welfare) or the county agency, generally Children and Youth Services (CYS) or the District Attorney's office, investigating a report of suspected child abuse, including permitting authorized personnel to interview the child while in attendance at school without a school district administrator or employee being present during the interview. Unless authorized by the investigating authority, school personnel also are not permitted to contact the student's parents or legal guardian as we do not necessarily know if the suspected perpetrator is said parent or guardian.

Under the law, a school employee who willfully fails to cooperate with the entity investigating a report of suspected child abuse or when said investigators are assessing safety or risk to a child commits a misdemeanor of the third degree for a first violation and a misdemeanor of the second degree for subsequent violations. An employee also faces disciplinary action from the District, up to and including termination of employment.

Smoking

Smoking is strictly prohibited inside RSD facilities and on property owned and leased by the District. Employees who utilize their break periods to smoke must go off the premises of District facilities and honor the timelines for such breaks.

Social Networking

We are living in a world where the use of technology is generally widespread and is changing every day. The innovations that attract the most attention and exert the biggest impact on our lives are those that enable us to interact immediately with one or many individuals all over the world. Electronic communications and social networking are powerful tools that can help individuals stay plugged into current events, connect with friends and colleagues, and share valuable resources and information.

Electronic communication and social media, such as blogs, forums, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc., represent both opportunities and risks for individuals and organizations. While the Reading School District Board of Directors acknowledges that it must adapt to the ever-increasing use of technology and also sees the value of electronic communication and social media in providing a quality educational program that will prepare students for life in a global economy, it also recognizes that the opportunity for impropriety is increased through the ease of access. Specifically, this accessibility can provide a forum for cyberbullying, inappropriate behavior, and other potential dangers.

With a heightened concern for student safety and well-being and to ensure that the educational environment is safe and conducive to learning, the Board has a very specific policy governing the use of social media and electronic communication. Employees are required to review and understand **Board Policy No. 816**. The following, however, provides just a sampling of some of the important expectations in that policy. Specifically, Board Policy No. 816 prohibits the use of social networking and any electronic communication that:

- damages the reputation and image of the Reading School District as an educational institution;
- has a negative impact on one's ability to effectively perform his/her duties;
- results in the release of sensitive, inaccurate, confidential, or otherwise non-public information;
- results in an employee or the District being in legal trouble.

Under no circumstances should an employee be utilizing any form of social networking to contact or fraternize with students of the Reading School District even if such students are in a private placement or attend a charter school. Please see Board Policy No. 816 for other examples of conduct that will lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Telephone Usage

All telephone systems, including voice mail, provided by RSD are the property of the District and are provided for District purposes. RSD may periodically monitor the use of the telephone systems, including voice mail, to ensure compliance with this policy. Therefore, employees should not consider their conversations on the telephone systems or their voice mail to be private.

Moreover, employees will be responsible for any charges associated with personal calls as billed by the Business Office. Payment is expected within 15 business days.

Whistleblower Protection

RSD is committed to facilitating open and honest communication relevant to its governance, finances, and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Employees and representatives of the organization must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and complying with all applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, Board Policy No. 831 provides that employees who in good faith report to the District or cooperate in investigations of suspected waste or wrongdoing will not be subject to discrimination or other adverse employment consequences.

An employee with knowledge of or a concern regarding waste or wrongdoing as defined in Board Policy No. 831 should first contact his/her immediate supervisor. If the behavior of the immediate supervisor is of concern to an employee, the employee should contact the Superintendent of Schools. If the behavior of the Superintendent is of concern to the employee, then the President of the Board of School Directors should be contacted.

The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations, and any employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to further disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, discharge.

General Employment Policies and Practices

Access to Personnel Files

RSD maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, certifications, clearances, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employment records required by law, RSD policy, or practice. The personnel files do not contain medical information. Health/medical records are maintained separate and apart from the employee's personnel file.

Personnel files are the property of RSD and access to the same is restricted. Generally, only supervisors and management/administrative personnel of RSD with a legitimate reason to review information in a personnel file are permitted to do so.

With reasonable advance notice, employees [or an agent designated by the employee] may review their own personnel files in the Department of Human Resources and in the presence of an HR representative. Employees requesting to review their personnel files may contact Human Resources and must adhere to the process in place for such a request.

Arrest Notification

An employee who is arrested or charged with a felony or misdemeanor is *required* to notify his/her immediate supervisor within 24 hours of such arrest or charge. The supervisor will then notify the Department of Human Resources of the situation.

Any employee who receives a traffic citation while operating a District vehicle is to notify his/her immediate supervisor within 24 hours of the citation. Those employees also must immediately notify their supervisor and the Department of Human Resources if their driving privileges have been suspended and/or revoked for any reason regardless of whether or not such action is the result of driving their personal vehicle or a District vehicle.

Failure to report any of the above incidents will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Certification – General Information

Under the Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators, certificated employees of the Reading School District are responsible for ensuring that they are *legally* certified in their area(s) of assignment. This does not only mean that they possess the specific certificate required by their position based on what they are teaching, but it also means that their Level I certificate has not "lapsed" or expired as outlined below.

Unfortunately, many certificated individuals become confused as to what is required to ensure that their Level I certificate does not "lapse" and how "tenure" impacts the validity of their Level I certificate. The purpose of this information provided below as an "FAQ" is to clear up that confusion and provide all certificated employees of the Reading School District with important information regarding both of these issues. ***Please note, however, that it is the professional responsibility of a certificated employee to educate him/herself on these issues and make sure that he/she maintains proper certification to teach in the public schools of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including the Reading School District.***

Certification – Converting a Level I to Level II Status

What do the terms “Level I” and “Level II” mean?

There are currently two (2) levels of certification in Pennsylvania. The initial certificate awarded is commonly referred to as a “Level I” or “provisional” certificate and is valid for a specific number of *service* years, during which the holder must satisfactorily complete certain requirements. Successful completion of those requirements will allow the holder of the Level I certificate to convert same to “Level II” or “permanent” status.

If a Level I certificate is not converted during the time it is valid, it will lapse. **Importantly**, you cannot be employed in a Pennsylvania public school with a lapsed certificate. Therefore, should the District become aware that your certificate is no longer valid, we will need to suspend you without pay pending a recommendation to the Board of School Directors that your employment be terminated on the grounds that you no longer meet the minimal qualifications for your position.

How do I know if I have a Level I or Level II certificate?

If the paper copy of your certificate does not indicate that it is valid for “99” years, it is a Level I or provisional certificate. Information on the validity of your certificate, including whether it is active for purposes of Act 48, can be obtained by accessing TIMS through the PDE Website. Professional employees are encouraged to routinely verify the validity of their certificate via these means.

When will my Level I certificate expire?

It depends. A Level I or provisional certificate is valid for a defined number of actual years of professional service as an educator in Pennsylvania. Service time earned outside Pennsylvania does not count towards Level II requirements, nor does it count against the service life of the Level I certificate. Currently, instructional and educational specialist certificates are “valid” for six (6) years of actual service.

What constitutes “actual service”?

Essentially, your certificate does not necessarily lapse six (6) years after the date it was issued. Rather, only time during which you have satisfactory service, **including service as a long-term substitute**, for a minimum of 70 days in a single assignment will count against your Level I certificate. Therefore, it is critical that you keep accurate records of any service you have as a long-term substitute or TPE in any public school entity in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Certification Staffing Policy (CSPG) No. 7 on the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Website clearly outlines non-optional service (service which is creditable toward Level II certification and is charged against the validity of the Level I certificate); optional service (service which can be credited toward Level II certification at the option of the certificate holder), and non-creditable service (service which is not creditable toward meeting the experience requirements for Level II certification and is *not* charged against the validity period of the Level I certificate.)

Importantly, “unsatisfactory service” is not creditable toward meeting the experience requirements for Level II certification but *is* charged against the validity period of the Level I certificate.

What are the requirements to convert a Level I certificate to a Level II certificate?

Those requirements are as follows:

- a. Three (3) years of successful teaching, as reflected by six (6) semi-annual evaluations, attested to by a chief school administrator;
- b. 24 post-baccalaureate credits – can be graduate or undergraduate, as well as PDE approved in-service (IU) credits but not community college credits or CEUs;
- c. Completion of a Department-approved Induction Program, and
- d. Evidence of satisfactory achievement in assessment prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, which is reflected in PDE Form 427.

Clarifying details on all of these requirements can be found by reading Certification Staffing Policy (CSPG) No. 7 on the PDE Website.

How do I ensure that my Level I certificate does not expire?

- Familiarize yourself with CSPG No. 7.
- Maintain your own records regarding creditable time on your Level I certificate per CSPG No. 7.
- If you have completed an Induction Program in another public school entity, make sure that documentation of such a program is in your personnel file maintained by the Department of Human Resources for the Reading School District.
- If you have completed an Induction Program with the Reading School District but do not have record of having completed same, immediately contact the Teaching & Learning Department for such documentation.
- If you are new to the Reading School District, ensure that you participate in and complete all elements of the District's Induction Program. **Note:** Participation in and completion of the District's Induction Program is not optional, and you are required to actively participate in required activities as a certificated individual and an employee of the Reading School District. With the exception of illness and/or exigent circumstances approved by Teaching & Learning and the Department of Human Resources, failure to participate in said activities may result in the termination of your employment.
- Ensure that you are working toward satisfying the completion of 24 post-baccalaureate credits as waiting until the last minute may preclude you from meeting this requirement in a timely manner.
- Begin the conversation *now* with your building principal regarding the completion of the PDE Form 427 even if you are new to the Reading School District or do not yet have three (3) years of successful experience. That form can and should be completed after you have three (3) years of successful experience even if you are not yet ready to apply for your Level II as you do not yet have the required 24 post-baccalaureate credits. *The Central Office administrative team is working with building principals to establish a consistent process, whereby, upon hire, principals will begin the process of reviewing with employees the PDE Form 427 and what will be necessary to complete same with Level I-certificated employees. If, however, you have not had such a conversation with your building administrator and have, at least, three (3) years of satisfactory service, initiate that conversation so that this requirement is satisfied in a timely manner.*

What do I do with the completed PDE Form 427?

That form must be submitted, either by you or your building principal, to the Department of Human Resources, which will forward same to the Superintendent's Office for signature by

the Superintendent. (This may take a few days to a couple of weeks for that signature to be secured. Therefore, waiting until the last minute is not advisable.) Once the form is returned to the Department of Human Resources, a copy is made and returned to you. The original is placed in your personnel file for reference when you make application for your Level II.

Does the Reading School District notify me regarding my Level I status?

Although the Department of Human Resources will attempt to periodically send out notices to employees whose Level I certificates appear ready to lapse, it is *your* responsibility, as outlined above, to maintain valid certification. Please do not rely on others for this purpose.

How do I apply for my Level II certificate?

You make application for your Level II certificate through the Teacher Information Management System (TIMS) on the PDE Website. Information on how to use TIMS can be found on PDE's Website. Once you have successfully made application and followed through on what is expected of you as an applicant, which includes paying the required fee, your application will electronically appear on the Reading School District's TIMS dashboard for action.

What exactly does the Reading School District do with my application once it is on its "dashboard"?

The Department of Human Resources *electronically* verifies (1) all satisfactory experience with the Reading School District; (2) verifies the completion of an Induction Program; and (3) verifies that a PDE Form 427 is on file. Therefore, it is critical that we have record of your completion of an Induction Program, as well as a PDE Form 427 in your personnel file, or we cannot finalize your application. ***Please note that the District does not complete any paper documents for this purpose. It is all done electronically through TIMS.***

I understand that the District does not complete any paper documents to be submitted to PDE for my Level II certificate; however, I received notification from PDE that a Form PDE 338-P needs to be completed. I sent it to Human Resources, but it was returned to me. Why?

That form *only* needs to be completed by entities who are not on the TIMS system. Reading School District is on TIMS; therefore, the verification of your experience, which is what the PDE Form 338-P documents, is done on line.

Does the District forward to PDE transcripts verifying my 24 post-baccalaureate credits?

No. Any transcripts you have forwarded to the Department of Human Resources are solely for inclusion in your personnel file and/or for salary schedule purposes. Sealed transcripts for purposes of your Level II certificate must be submitted directly to PDE in accordance with the instructions set forth on TIMS.

Once I make application for my Level II on TIMS and pay the required fee, how long does it take for the District to process my application?

It can take a minimum of two (2) weeks to up to one (1) month for the Department of Human Resources to process applications on TIMS depending upon the time of year and other pressing deadlines. Therefore, as stated before, it is not wise to wait until just before your Level I is set to lapse for you to make application for your Level II.

Once my Level II is approved by PDE, do I have any other obligations relative to ensuring that the District’s records reflect my updated certification status?

Yes. Unfortunately, the District is unable to download paper copies of certificates from the TIMS Website although state auditors require that we have same on file and available for review. Therefore, once your Level II is approved, please download a paper copy of same and send to the HR Specialist for Professional Employees via interoffice mail or email. In order to ensure that we satisfy the expectations of state auditors, we do not update our electronic records with information on your Level II until we have received the paper copy. Therefore, it is possible that you may receive word from a representative from the REA that your Level I is set to lapse even though you have your Level II in hand, since he/she can only go from information gathered as part of a query run by the IT Department on the electronic system.

What happens if my Level I certificate lapses?

Unfortunately, if that happens, you are no longer appropriately credentialed for your position. Therefore, the Department of Human Resources *must* immediately suspend you without pay pending a potential recommendation that your employment be terminated. Notably, maintaining proper certification is the responsibility of the professional employee, and there are virtually no options for those who allow their Level I certificate(s) to lapse.

Certification – Tenure

What is “tenure”?

“Tenure,” which provides certificated employees with a number of protections outlined in the Pennsylvania Public School Code, is “earned” after three (3) consecutive years of satisfactory service as a “Temporary Professional Employee” (TPE) in the same public school entity. Importantly, “satisfactory service” is established by the TPE’s bi-annual ratings. Specifically, the law provides that a TPE, whose work has been certified by the Superintendent of Schools, as being “satisfactory” during the last four (4) months of the third (3rd) year of service shall, thereafter, be considered a “professional employee” and have all the “tenure” protections afforded by law.

Importantly, for purposes of tenure, you must possess the required certification; therefore, those on emergency permits – even if employed in a vacancy – will not be afforded tenure inasmuch as the District is obligated, every year, to recruit for fully certificated individuals for all vacancies. Unlike in the past, those on emergency permits are not “guaranteed” continued employment even if they satisfy the requirements imposed by said emergency permit.

What are some of the protections afforded as a result of my attaining “tenure”?

Although TPEs can be dismissed after being rated once as “unsatisfactory,” those employees with tenure must receive two (2) consecutive “unsatisfactory” ratings before they can be dismissed on the grounds of unsatisfactory teaching performance. In addition, six (6) members of the Board of School Directors must vote to dismiss a tenured professional employee; whereas, only five (5) votes are required for TPEs and other District personnel. Moreover, once “tenure” is attained in any one school district, such status must be honored by any public school system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In other words, “tenure” is portable; therefore, it is important that employees retain documentation of having earned such status – either in the Reading School District or elsewhere.

How do I learn that I have attained “tenure”?

The Department of Human Resources, upon your hire as a teacher or educational specialist; e.g., nurse, guidance counselor, etc., will determine if you should be classified as a TPE or PE based on a review of your application materials and any records you provide as part of the hiring process. If you are hired as a TPE, then notation is made in the District’s human resources management information system as to when you will be eligible for tenure. That information is shared with the supervising principal or administrator, as the process by which you are formally evaluated is dependent upon your status.

Once it has been determined that you have satisfied the three (3) years of consecutive service with the Reading School District and that you have been rated as “satisfactory,” specifically during the last four (4) months of your third (3rd) year of service, your name will be presented to the Board of School Directors at a regularly scheduled public meeting for the purpose of awarding you tenure. You will then be contacted by someone in the Department of Human Resources to sign two (2) copies of your contract as a Professional Employee. Once you have signed these two (2) copies, Human Resources then secures the signature of the Board President and returns one executed contract to you for your files. The other copy is retained in your personnel file.

What do I do if I believe I should have earned “tenure” based on three (3) years of satisfactory service in the Reading School District but have not received notice that my status has changed?

Please contact the Department of Human Resources at 484.258.7011. We will research the matter and get back to you as soon as possible.

Does my status as a PE or TPE have any impact on the validity of my certificate?

No. The validity of your certificate depends upon your converting same to Level II status in a timely manner as outlined above. In addition, you must also ensure that you are in compliance with the continuing professional education requirements established under Act 48 of 1999. Act 48 requires you to complete continuing education requirements every five (5) years in order to maintain your certificate in active status – regardless of whether you possess a Level I or Level II certificate. As with a certificate that lapses, an individual with an inactive certificate cannot be employed as a professional or temporary professional employee by a Pennsylvania public school entity. More details on Act 48 can be found on the PDE Website.

Clearances

Upon hire and every five (5) years employees are required to submit updated clearances pursuant to Act 153 of 2014. This requirement is a condition of employment, and the District cannot retain employees who fail to provide up-to-date documents before they expire. Employees will receive automated notification as to when updated clearances are due.

District Email

Even if an employee is not provided a computer as his/her job does not necessitate the provision of such equipment, he/she will be provided with a District email address to be utilized for District business only. Although often considered a more informal manner of communicating, email can often create dissension in the workplace and is subject to discovery in litigation and also a request under Pennsylvania’s Open Records Law. Therefore, the following etiquette guidelines are in place for the use of District email in addition to the prohibitions and expectations set forth in the District’s Acceptable Use Policy – Board Policy No. 815.

1. **Be concise.** Longer messages are difficult to read, and most people will put them aside.
2. **Always use a descriptive subject line that is short and sweet.** This allows the recipient to prioritize emails appropriately.
3. **Remember, emails are written communications that should contain appropriate elements.** For example, all emails should have a salutation, which may simply be the individual's name, and a closing containing appropriate contact information such as name, position, Reading School District, and telephone number(s), including direct line, cellular phone number, if applicable, and facsimile number. When the email becomes an ongoing conversation, the formalities of a salutation and formal closing are not necessary. All other rules of etiquette, however, should be followed.
4. **As written business communications, emails should contain proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.** It is critical that you proofread emails carefully and ensure that they are professional in nature.
5. **Never use all caps or all lower case letters.** Again, email is a business communication. The style should reflect same.
6. **Email should not be utilized when you need an immediate answer or to communicate information to a coworker that is more appropriate in person.** Oftentimes, individuals will utilize email, intentionally or unintentionally, to avoid a face-to-face communication and/or to place the "ball in someone else's court" for action. Using email in this matter is inappropriate and unprofessional.
7. **Judiciously tag emails as "high importance."** You risk being considered the proverbial "boy who cried wolf" if you regularly mark your emails as "high importance." Only do so when truly necessary.
8. **Avoid sarcasm and too much humor.** It can come across as rude or abrupt, and the recipient does not have the benefit of reading your body language or gauging the tone of your voice.
9. **Never send an email when emotional or angry.** Sit on it for 24 hours.
10. **Avoid emoticons textese, and background designs.** This should be reserved for personal email.
11. **Remember, email is not private.** Do not put anything in email that you would not want communicated to the whole world. Specific care should be taken in utilizing email to communicate confidential information involving staff and/or students. Review the District's Acceptable Use Policy – Board Policy No. 815 and/or information you may receive from your supervisor or the Department of Human Resources regarding utilizing email to convey information regarding students and/or staff members.
12. **Think twice before hitting "Reply All."** Ask yourself if all of the original recipients really need to know of your reply. If not, reply only to the original writer.
13. **Respond within 24 hours.** If you require more time to respond fully, let the sender know that you are reviewing the email and when you expect to get back to them with a response.
14. **Be proactive with appropriate out-of-office messages.** Employees who will be out of the office for more than one (1) day for a planned absence; e.g., vacation leave, should prepare an appropriate out-of-office automatic message indicating same and providing information as to the anticipated date of their return and/or who should be contacted (with appropriate contact information) in the event the sender needs immediate assistance.

Eating at Your Desk

It is our desire as an organization to promote a professional working environment at all times. Therefore, RSD strongly discourages employees, who do not have private offices or cubicles not visible to the public, from eating at their desks during work hours, whether or not the employee is on a break. Moreover, although all employees may have covered drink containers on their desks, spilled drinks can ruin a keyboard or other electronic equipment. Therefore, employees should use care when having drinks in their work area. Please see your supervisor to ascertain when and where you should be taking your breaks.

Employee Access Center (EAC)

RSD utilizes Sunguard (eFinance) as its data management system, which provides a user-friendly tool – the Employee Access Center (EAC) – to allow our employees to have access to various information we have in our personnel records. Employees can review their own information by accessing the EAC through the District’s Website at www.readingsd.org as follows:

- Click on the **Employees** tab
- Click on **Employee Access Center (EAC)**

Once in EAC, you will find the following tabs upon which you can “click”:

- Employee Information
- Paychecks
- Salary & Benefits
- Absence Information
- W2s
- Tax Information
- “What If” Pay Calculator

If there are any discrepancies relative to your salary/wages or other general payroll information, you must contact the Payroll Department. For all other discrepancies or questions, please contact the Department of Human Resources.

Employment Reference Checks

To ensure that individuals who join RSD are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of RSD to check the employment references of all applicants above and beyond that required by Act 168, which is focused on inappropriate sexual contact with children. Applicants will be required to provide contact information for references who can speak to the applicant’s ability to perform the position for which they are applying. Moreover, RSD reserves the right to contact all prior employers once the applicant is in the final stages of the interview process.

In that Pennsylvania law protects employers who provide information about a former or current employee’s job performance to a prospective employer unless the employee can prove by clear and convincing evidence that the employer acted in bad faith, the District will respond fully to reference inquiries with true and accurate information regarding a current or former employee’s job performance with RSD.

Energy Conservation

All employees are encouraged to actively practice energy conservation throughout the buildings whenever possible. This includes, but is not limited to, turning off lights in rooms not in use, ensuring that space heaters and fans are used judiciously and are turned off when the room is not in use, and turning computers and all other equipment off at the end of the day and especially before a weekend or holiday break.

Exit Interview

All employees are required to participate in an exit interview with their supervisor to include, in part, a retrieval of all RSD keys, equipment, access cards, etc.

In addition, employees are encouraged to participate in an exit interview with the Department of Human Resources. This is not a mandatory meeting but will help us evaluate why you are leaving.

Grievances

RSD recognizes that a peaceful working environment facilitates productivity and, therefore, will continue to take the necessary steps to create a harmonious working environment. In the event that a misunderstanding or conflict arises, every effort should be made to resolve the situation in a timely manner. For matters covered under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, employees should adhere to the grievance process outlined in the applicable agreement. For matters not covered in a collective bargaining agreement or when a formal grievance process is not available in an employment agreement or compensation and benefits plan, employees with such complaints are encouraged to bring the concern to the attention of management as outlined below:

1. First, discuss the situation with your immediate supervisor. If this is not sufficient or appropriate, then proceed to Step 2.
2. Following the chain of command, meet with your supervisor's supervisor, who may proceed to conduct an investigation into the situation with the goal of identifying and, perhaps, implementing possible remedies. [The District will attempt to respond and/or resolve the situation within 14 days or sooner as circumstances warrant. Notably, however, depending upon the nature of the complaint, the extent of an investigation, and availability of all pertinent information, this timeline may need to be extended. At the very least, you should be receiving periodic updates regarding the nature of your complaint.]
3. While your supervisor may elicit the support of the Department of Human Resources in responding to a concern brought forth, you also are free to schedule a meeting with HR as well with your concerns. Although, based on the nature of the complaint, you may be referred back to your supervisor or someone in that individual's chain of command, Human Resources will guide you through that process and the information that will be gathered in addressing your concerns.
4. Should the Superintendent be the subject of your grievance/complaint, then the Board of Directors may be notified. This may be done by first notifying the Board President.

Note: Complaints alleging violations of the District's Unlawful Harassment Policy should be handled in accordance with said policies – Nos. 348, 448, and 548, respectively. Importantly, these Board policies also include a form that can be utilized for this purpose. While the completion of such a form is not necessary to file a formal complaint, employees should be prepared to provide the information elicited in such form so that a proper investigation can ensue.

Non-Business or Social Visits to the Worksite

While personal visits are not absolutely prohibited, the ability of the District to condone and accommodate personal visits to employees providing services to children is extremely limited and must never interfere with the educational program. For visits to employees not providing direct services to children, their frequency and duration should be limited and should not interfere with on-going work nor fellow employees.

NOTE: As a general rule, the District does not participate in activities such as "Bring Your Son/Daughter to Work Day," and District personnel should not be bringing their children to

work unless authorized by Central Office administration. Staff *should never* bring a sick child to the workplace – whether working or not.

In all situations, visitors to the work area must sign in on the visitation list, obtain and wear a visitor's badge for identification purposes, and have an employee escort them while on the District's premises. Unaccompanied visitors will be asked to leave the premises. The employee shall be responsible for the acts of social visitors in the workplace.

Nursing Mothers

The Affordable Care Act amended the Fair Labor Standards Act to require an employer to provide reasonable break time for a *non-exempt (hourly)* employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one (1) year after the child's birth. The employer is not required to compensate an employee receiving reasonable break time for any work time spent for such purpose and must provide a place, other than a bathroom, for the employee to express breast milk.

Non-exempt employees who need release (break) time beyond that provided under their collective bargaining or employment agreement for this purpose should speak with their supervisor who will, in turn, contact the Department of Human Resources for guidance. A private area, other than a bathroom, will be identified for this purpose.

Exempt employees, such as teachers, will be provided a private area, other than a bathroom, for the purpose of expressing milk during their prep and/or meal breaks.

Open-Door Policy

Communication is a two-way street. RSD has an open-door policy whereby any employee can speak to any administrator or supervisor on any matter with the understanding that you may be referred to someone who may more readily and appropriately respond to your concerns. Our leaders are dedicated to being available and attentively listening to employees. The bottom line is that we cannot implement change(s) if we are unaware of the need for change(s).

Outside Employment

Employees may hold outside jobs as long they meet the performance standards of their positions with RSD and the outside employment is not in conflict with their RSD employment. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to RSD's scheduling demands regardless of any existing outside work requirements. If RSD determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of RSD as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if she or he wishes to remain with RSD.

Perfumes/Air Fresheners

Even though the District does allow some flexibility in the manner in which employees personalize their work area, all employees must be cognizant and responsive to the sensitivity that some employees may have to perfumes, air fresheners, and various fragrances in general. Employees who are experiencing such a sensitivity and are uncomfortable with discussing this concern with a co-worker should contact their supervisor and/or the Department of Human Resources for assistance in communicating a fragrance sensitivity to a co-worker. Angrily demanding that the employee cease and desist from utilizing a certain perfume or air freshener is not appropriate and must be avoided.

Under no circumstances should any employee be using candles or any type of open flame in any buildings owned, leased, and/or occupied by the District.

Personal Hygiene

RSD is a large service organization with many employees working in close quarters. Employees are expected to adhere to the highest standards of personal hygiene, including, but not limited to, ensuring that their clothing is clean, they are well groomed, and that they are not emitting offensive body odors. Employees who have a concern regarding the personal hygiene of a co-worker should not confront that employee. Rather, these concerns should be brought to the attention of a supervisor or the Department of Human Resources.

Personal Mail

All mail delivered to RSD is presumed to be related to District business. Employees should not have personal mail delivered to the District, and RSD is not responsible for any invasion of privacy allegations resulting from the opening of mail deemed to be personal in nature.

Personal Property

In the absence of contract language which may provide employees with some protection for damage to personal property, RSD cannot be responsible for loss or damage to the personal property of employees. It is critical, therefore, that employees use care in the control of their personal property and respect the personal property of their co-workers.

Employees are prohibited from touching, viewing, or accessing property of RSD or other employees that is not required by the nature of the employee's position. This includes, but is not limited to, lunchboxes, paychecks, purses, desks, company files, company computers, etc. Violations of this policy shall be considered a critical offense and subject the employee to immediate termination.

Personnel Data Changes

It is the responsibility of each employee to *promptly* notify RSD of any changes in personnel data. Specifically, personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, information relative to dependents, emergency information, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any such information has changed, notify the Department of Human Resources within five (5) work days of the effective date of such change.

In some situations, employees will be required to submit such changes in writing on a "Change of Information" form [**See:** S:\FORMS\HR] and provide confirming documentation, such as marriage certificates, birth certificates, divorce decrees, new Social Security cards, etc. Please contact the Department of Human Resources if you have any questions in this regard.

If the changes relate to benefits eligibility for any employee or his/her dependents, that information must be shared with the Benefits Office.

Failure to notify Human Resources and/or the Benefits Office of information that may impact on benefits eligibility for an employee or his/her dependents will result in the employee being responsible for any costs borne by RSD because such information was not conveyed in a timely manner.

Photo Identification Cards

All employees are provided a photo identification card with the current school year indicated on the front of same. Employees working in or visiting school buildings *must* have their photo identification card readily visible. Employees working in and/or visiting the Administration Building, the ROCC, or the Facilities Department must have their photo identification card readily available for inspection.

If your photo identification card is lost, you must immediately contact the Department of Human Resources to make arrangements to secure a new one. Failure to safeguard your photo identification card may result in your being charged \$5.00 for a replacement and disciplinary action, if warranted.

Posting of Vacancies

RSD provides employees an opportunity to indicate their interest in open positions within the District based on their skills and experience. In general and subject to contractual obligations under our various collective bargaining agreements, notice of all job openings are posted on the District's Website. The posting of a position, however, is not an indication that the position ultimately will be filled.

Such posting notice generally will include the dates of the posting period, job title, department, location, job summary, qualifications (required skills and abilities), and essential duties.

To be eligible to apply for a posted position, employees must possess the required skills, competencies, and qualifications for the same and *must* adhere to the process set forth in the posting to successfully apply for the position(s) in question. The Department of Human Resources will not entertain any candidate who fails to adhere to the stated process, including but not limited to, the failure to submit a complete application packet within the time frame established for applications. Moreover, as part of the screening process, Human Resources will review the personnel file, including attendance, performance, and disciplinary records of any internal candidate seeking another position within the District.

While job posting is a way to inform employees of vacancies and to identify qualified and interested internal applicants, other recruiting sources also may be used to fill open positions in the best interests of the District. Such efforts may be concurrent with the internal job posting process.

Progressive Discipline

RSD values its employees and recognizes that individuals will make mistakes in the course of their employment. Mistakes, intentional or not, however, often come with consequences. Therefore, RSD retains the discretion to discipline its employees under a philosophy of progressive discipline. Specifically, oral and written warnings and progressive discipline up to and including suspension without pay and discharge may be administered as appropriate under the circumstances.

Please note that RSD reserves the right to accelerate the level of discipline, up to and including immediate termination, for any employee whose conduct merits such acceleration without resorting to any aspect of the progressive discipline process.

Recycling

Employees are encouraged to recycle glass, plastic, aluminum, and cardboard. These items should be deposited in the proper recycling containers placed throughout the buildings.

Return of Organization Property Upon Separation

When an employee's employment with RSD terminates for whatever reason, the employee is required to immediately return all District-owned property used during his/her employment, as well as all documents, disks, and other materials containing proprietary or confidential information belonging to the District, to his/her supervisor. This includes, without limitation, access cards, keys, handbooks, credit cards, computers and data storage devices, vehicles, communication devices, uniforms, identification cards or badges, and any other equipment, materials, or items purchased, leased, owned, or otherwise belonging to RSD.

Unpaid Suspension as a Disciplinary Measure

RSD expects the highest standards of professional conduct at all times.

In accordance with RSD's policies on harassment, drug or alcohol use, and other work conduct rules, coupled with obligations, if any, under applicable collective bargaining agreements, the organization reserves the right to discipline or discharge any employee for violations of rules pertaining to behavior within the workplace.

An employee will be subject to an unpaid disciplinary suspension for infractions of workplace conduct rules. Suspensions without pay apply to everyone in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements, Board policy, and administrative practice. For exempt employees, suspensions without pay will be in one or more full-day increments. For non-exempt employees, unpaid suspensions may be for any period of time within the District's discretion.

Voice Mail

In order to provide the best customer service possible, RSD prefers that all telephone calls be answered by an employee and that the use of voice mail is limited. That being said, the District recognizes that no office has a receptionist per se; and, as is the case with cellular/smart phone etiquette, interrupting a meeting or face-to-face interaction to answer your office phone can be perceived as disrespectful and unprofessional. Thus, employees are encouraged to forward their phones to another extension and/or directly to voice mail when otherwise engaged if they need to be away from their desks and/or when they will be out of the office for a period of time.

When voice mail is a business necessity, employees must ensure that all telephone calls are returned promptly. Check with your supervisor as to his/her specific expectations regarding voice mail.

Out-of-Office Messages

Employees who will be out of the office for more than one (1) day for a planned absence; e.g., vacation leave, should ensure that their voice mail message provides information as to their return and/or who should be contacted in the event the caller needs to speak with someone immediately.

Workplace Solicitation

To promote a professional and collegial workplace, prevent disruptions in business or interference with work, and to avoid personal inconvenience, RSD limits solicitation in the workplace.

Employees may solicit on RSD property for such things as Girl Scout cookies, school-sponsored fundraisers, or community fundraisers that are consistent with the educational mission of the organization. Employees *should not* be soliciting their co-workers on work time utilizing District resources for private enterprises; for example, selling vitamins, supplements, beauty products, etc. Management reserves the right to prohibit or suspend any solicitation at any time or for any reason.

“Working time” means time during which employees are expected to be actively engaged in their assigned work; it does not include scheduled meal or break periods.

You may solicit another employee only if both you and the other employee are not on working time and you may distribute literature while not on working time to other employees who are not on working time.

Non-employees may not make solicitations or distribute literature at any time.

RSD may grant limited exemptions from these rules for charitable purposes at its discretion.

Workplace Violence

RSD has a “**zero tolerance**” policy concerning threats, intimidation, and violence of any kind in the workplace, either committed by or directed toward our employees. Employees who engage in such conduct will be disciplined, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Employees are not permitted to bring weapons of any kind onto District premises or to District functions. Any employee who is suspected of possessing a weapon will be subject to a search at the District’s discretion. Such searches may include, but not be limited to, the employee's personal effects, desk, and work area.

If an employee feels he or she has been subjected to threats or threatening conduct by a co-worker, vendor, student, parent, guardian, or visitor, the employee should notify his/her supervisor or another member of management immediately. Employees will not be penalized for reporting such concerns.

Leave – Paid and Unpaid

Leave in General

Although regular and consistent attendance during the established work day is essential for all employees who work for Reading School District, the District does recognize that certain circumstances necessitate an employee being absent from work.

Employees of the Reading School District are afforded general leave benefits – both paid and unpaid; however, the availability of such leave does not give employees license to abuse leave, take excessive leave, or to falsify the reasons for an absence. The abuse of sick leave or the falsification of the reasons for an absence are serious offenses and will result in severe disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The following is a listing of the paid and unpaid leave that may be available to employees based upon their respective collective bargaining agreement or Board policy and any eligibility requirements set forth therein. Please note that a number of these reasons will necessitate the completion and submission to the Department of Human Resources of an “Employee Request for Absence” form [**See:** S:\FORMS\HR] that is first signed by the employee’s supervisor. While it is critical that supervisors are made aware of the attendance or absence of all of their direct reports, the signature of the supervisor merely reflects his/her knowledge of the request as final approval of the request for paid leave is within the purview of the Department of Human Resources so as to ensure continuity across the District and for all employees.

Call-Off Procedures

REA EMPLOYEES ONLY

AESOP/Substitute Teacher Service (STS): All employees covered under the REA collective bargaining agreement are required to report most absences via the AESOP system.

The only absences that are **not** to be reported via AESOP are **personal** days and **contractual “at-will”** days, which are subject to prior approval of the Department of Human Resources.

Emergency and **Compelling Reason** days are to be reported via AESOP, but final determination as to the validity of such requests will be made by the Department of Human Resources. If the underlying facts surrounding a request for emergency or compelling reason leave do not support the approval of such time, the employee will either be charged with other available leave time, such as personal or sick (if applicable) leave or will not be paid for the time off in question.

Routine absences that must be reported by REA employees via the AESOP system include sick, family sick, emergency/compelling reason, bereavement, field trips (if approved), conferences (if approved), jury duty, and military duty (unless extended) absences. With the exception of sick leave, all other absences require either the completion and submission of an “Employee Request for Absence” form along with supporting documentation as outlined below for each specific absence or a Request for Conference – Professional Visitation form verifying the approval of a conference or field trip.

These routine absences, for which REA employees are required to report via the AESOP system, must be made prior to **6:30 a.m.** on the day of the absence. Notably, however, the District and STS encourage you to make this report as soon as possible so as to increase the possibility of securing a substitute, when applicable.

Reporting an absence can be made either by calling **1.800.942.3767** or by logging in to www.aesopeducation.com. As the District has approximately 1,100 employees utilizing the AESOP system, it is expected that you provide the following information:

- Name
- School [If you are assigned to more than one (1) school on the day(s) of the absence, please provide this information in the proper order for that day. For example, Northeast Middle School (am)/Southern Middle School (pm).]
- Grade or Subject
- Date of Absence
- Reason for Absence

Important Notes:

(1) Do Not call AESOP if your absence is for the same day and it is past **7:00 a.m.** Under those circumstances, you must call the Attendance and Leave Specialist at **484.258.7008**. This would include if you need to leave for a partial-day absence.

The Attendance and Leave Specialist is required to report to HR administrative staff any and all calls made via him/her and not through AESOP. STS personnel also will be reporting to the Department of Human Resources any and all calls not made by 6:30 a.m. as expected. Employees who routinely do not adhere to the expected process of reporting an absence by 6:30 a.m. will face disciplinary action.

(2) If for some reason you do not require a substitute, please note such information when you report your absence via AESOP or the Attendance and Leave Specialist.

(3) Please either email or call your building principal or assistant principal to notify him/her of your absence unless such absence has been pre-approved.

RSAA AND RSSSA EMPLOYEES ONLY

Routine absences for administrative, supervisory, and administrative support staff members must be reported to the Attendance and Leave Specialist at **484.258.7008** prior to **6:30 a.m.** on the day of the absence. *Routine absences* would include sick, family sick, emergency/compelling reason, bereavement, jury duty, and military duty (unless extended) absences. With the exception of sick leave, all other absences require the completion and submission of an “Employee Request for Absence” form along with supporting documentation as outlined below for each specific absence.

In addition, please either email or call your supervisor to notify him/her of your absence unless such absence has been pre-approved.

SUPPORT STAFF EMPLOYEES ONLY

AFSCME Employees

Routine absences for AFSCME employees must be reported to the Human Resources Specialist – Support Staff at **484.258.7006** prior to **7:00 a.m.** on the day of the absence. *Routine absences* would include sick, family sick, emergency/compelling reason, bereavement, jury duty, and military duty (unless extended) absences. With the exception of sick leave, all other absences require the completion and submission of an “Employee Request for Absence” form along with supporting documentation as outlined below for each specific absence.

Cafeteria (Food Services) Employees

Routine absences for Cafeteria (Food Services) employees must be reported directly to the Food Services Department at **610.371.5739** prior to **6:00 a.m.** on the day of the absence. *Routine absences* would include sick, family sick, emergency/compelling reason, bereavement, jury duty, and military duty (unless extended) absences. With the exception of sick leave, all other absences require the completion and submission of an “Employee Request for Absence” form along with supporting documentation as outlined below for each specific absence.

Custodial/Maintenance (Teamsters) Employees

Routine absences for employees belonging to the Teamsters bargaining unit must be reported to the Facilities clerk by calling **610.371.5828** one (1) hour before the start of one’s shift on the day of the absence. *Routine absences* would include sick, family sick, emergency/compelling reason, bereavement, jury duty, and military duty (unless extended) absences. With the exception of sick leave, all other absences require the completion and submission of an “Employee Request for Absence” form along with supporting documentation as outlined below for each specific absence.

RESPA Employees

Routine absences for RESPA employees must be reported to the Human Resources Specialist – Support Staff at **484.258.7006** prior to **7:00 a.m.** on the day of the absence. *Routine absences* would include sick, family sick, emergency/compelling reason, bereavement, jury duty, and military duty (unless extended) absences. With the exception of sick leave, all other absences require the completion and submission of an “Employee Request for Absence” form along with supporting documentation as outlined below for each specific absence.

Security Employees

Routine absences for employees belonging to the Security bargaining unit must be reported to the Facilities clerk by calling **610.371.5828** one (1) hour before the start of one’s shift on the day of the absence. *Routine absences* would include sick, family sick, emergency/compelling reason, bereavement, jury duty, and military duty (unless extended) absences. With the exception of sick leave, all other absences require the completion and submission of an “Employee Request for Absence” form along with supporting documentation as outlined below for each specific absence.

“At-Will” Days

While regular and consistent attendance is essential for all employees of the Reading School District, some collective bargaining agreements provide employees an opportunity to *request* and take days without pay for personal reasons. This time is generally referred to as “at-will” days in applicable collective bargaining agreements and taking such time may obligate the employee to pay the full cost of his/her medical benefits.

“At-will” requests must be approved by the Department of Human Resources – generally *in advance* of an employee taking such time. To that end, an “Employee Request for Absence” form must be completed, signed by the employee’s supervisor, and submitted to Human Resources. On that form, employees must provide an explanation to support the request.

In the absence of contractual language providing employees with “at-will” days, employees are not guaranteed the right to be absent from work without paid leave or approved unpaid leave (FMLA, for example) available to them.

NOTE: Further, it is a common misconception that those employees entitled to “at-will” days by virtue of the collective bargaining agreement may access same simply because they have exhausted all paid sick leave available to them. “At-will” days under the applicable collective bargaining agreements are, however, *pre-approved* absences for personal reasons. If an employee exhausts all paid leave available to him/her and then is unable to report to work because of illness or injury, he/she is actually “absent without leave” and in an unpaid/deduct status. Under those circumstances, someone from Human Resources or Benefits will be reaching out to the employee to discuss his/her status and options available to him/her.

Bereavement Leave

Employees must have worked at least one (1) day to be eligible for bereavement leave. Eligibility for bereavement leave is based upon the employee's respective collective bargaining agreement, compensation and benefits plan, individual employment agreement, or Board policy.

One’s entitlement to bereavement leave and the length of such leave are dependent upon the relationship of the employee to the deceased and the applicable collective bargaining agreement, compensation and benefits plan, individual employment agreement, or Board policy.

The Department of Human Resources must approve all bereavement leave, and employees are required to submit written documentation verifying the facts surrounding the request for leave. Bereavement leave will not be paid if it occurs when the employee is on a leave of absence, absent due to illness or injury, or not working due to a paid holiday or program break.

If possible and before you take such leave, you are required to complete an “Employee Request for Absence” form with the required documentation. If it is not possible for you to complete this form before you take the leave, you are required to complete and submit such form with the required documentation immediately upon your return to work. Failure to submit the documentation in a timely manner will result in a denial of such paid leave.

Childbearing/Childrearing Leaves of Absence (Non-FMLA)

In addition to the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, employees may be eligible for an unpaid leave of absence with or without the continuation of paid medical benefits pursuant to the birth or adoption of a child.

Please refer to the applicable collective bargaining agreement, compensation and benefits plan, or other employment agreement for further information regarding what you may be entitled to in this regard. All requests for such leave must be made to the Benefits Office.

NOTE: Although the District will entertain one (1) reasonable request to extend a childrearing leave of absence, such request must be made in writing and submitted to the Benefits Office at least 30 calendar days prior to the expiration of the originally approved return-to-work date. Absent exigent circumstances generally involving the medical needs of the child, more than one (1) extension will not be entertained. Moreover, the District will not guarantee that it can accommodate an employee's request to return earlier from a leave than the date originally approved by the Board of School Directors.

Compelling Reason Days

Some employees are, by virtue of the applicable collective bargaining agreement, entitled to paid leave for "compelling reasons" as defined in said applicable collective bargaining agreement. ***Such time can be taken in ½-day or full-day increments, and employees should be prepared to justify when a full day is needed.***

In general, a "compelling reason" for absence is the need for an employee to be at a certain place at a certain time for his/her *own* personal welfare. For example, a legal mandate that the employee be present elsewhere during school/work hours would be an example of a "compelling reason." In further clarification, the reason is of a "compelling" nature if no other time can possibly be arranged and/or no one can substitute for the employee in fulfilling the obligation mandated.

With the desire to ensure continuity across the District and for all employees, the Department of Human Resources will make the final determination as to whether the facts satisfy the requirement for a "compelling reason" absence. Listed below are some examples of absences that will or will not meet the definition for "compelling reason" leave. This list, however, is not exhaustive, but it does provide employees with an idea as to what will or will not be considered under this category.

Valid Reasons:

- House Settlement
- Subpoena to Testify in a Court Hearing
- Religious Holiday

Invalid Reasons:

- Taking a Child Back to College
- Attending Non-Mandatory Hearings or Ceremonies
- Attending/Coaching Sporting Events
- Inability to Make Airline Reservations or Cancelled Flights Relative to Personal Trips
- Delivery of Furniture or Appliances

Employees requesting to be off for a "compelling reason" are required to complete and submit an "Employee Request for Absence" form and to provide documentation supporting the request for same within the time frame established within the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Notably, a "compelling reason" absence does not generally constitute an "emergency." Therefore, prior notice, including the completion and submission of the "Employee Request for Absence"

form and supporting documentation, is required. Failure to submit such documentation in a timely manner will result in the denial of such paid leave even if the underlying reason for same arguably does fall within the stated definition. The Department of Human Resources **will not** continue to follow up with employees who fail to submit such documentation.

Doctor Appointments

Employees shall make every effort to schedule doctor appointments during non-working hours. When this is not possible, some collective bargaining or employment agreements stipulate a specific period of time that an employee can be released for a doctor's appointment (otherwise known as "doctor hours") with prior approval of the employee's immediate supervisor. In that case, the employee is required to take a form to the doctor for verification of his/her appointment, and an "Employee Request for Absence" form must be completed with the original verification form from the doctor attached. This information is then sent to the Department of Human Resources where a record of the appointment is retained.

In the absence of specific contract language regarding "doctor hours," employees have been permitted to utilize paid sick leave for doctor appointments and medical testing. Again, the expectation of the District is that such appointments be scheduled outside of the employee's work hours if at all possible. Repeated and routine requests to use sick leave for such appointments and testing will be addressed by the Department of Human Resources.

Emergency Leave

Some employees are, by virtue of the applicable collective bargaining agreement, entitled to paid leave for "emergencies" as defined in said applicable collective bargaining agreement. ***Such time can be taken in ½-day or full-day increments, and employees should be prepared to justify when a full day is needed.***

In general, an "emergency" for purposes of being afforded paid leave is defined as a personal catastrophe that may occur with a member of an employee's immediate family or to his/her property. An "emergency" is such that an employee cannot be on duty that day and would, therefore, need to apply for such leave at a later date. A serious medical crisis to a member of an employee's immediate family would be an example of an emergency. A serious medical crisis to the employee him/herself would, however, necessitate the use of sick leave, as it is not considered an "emergency" for purposes of one's entitlement to "emergency leave."

With the desire to ensure continuity across the District and for all employees, the Department of Human Resources will make the final determination as to whether the facts satisfy the requirements for "emergency leave." Listed below are some examples of absences that will or will not meet the definition for "emergency leave." This list, however, is not exhaustive, but it does provide employees with an idea as to what will or will not be considered under this category.

Valid Reasons:

- A seriously ill child that needs to be taken to the emergency room. (*Documentation from the hospital indicating that the child was ill needs to be submitted for emergency leave to be afforded the employee.*)
- An immediate family member is scheduled for surgery – medical or dental. (Again, medical documentation is required.)
- House or property fire.

- Burglary and the need for the employee to be available for law enforcement officials.
- Burst pipes or some other house problem that requires immediate attention.
- Vehicular problems, including, but not limited to, an accident, flat tire, or breakdown. *(It is expected that the employee will report to work as soon as he/she can safely get to work or provide documentation as to why he/she could not do so.)*

Invalid Reasons:

- A doctor’s appointment or medical testing for the employee during the work day. (Employee is required to take sick leave for such purposes.)
- Inclement weather.
- Commitments relative to non-RSD employment.
- Scheduling installations for cable service, garage doors, etc.
- General home repairs that do not necessitate “immediate” attention to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the employee and his/her family.

Employees requesting to be off for “emergency reasons” are required to complete and submit an “Employee Request for Absence” form and to provide documentation supporting the request for same within the time frame established within the applicable collective bargaining agreement, not to exceed five (5) business days. All employees, however, should strive to complete and submit the required form and documentation immediately upon return to work. Failure to submit such documentation in a timely manner will result in the denial of such paid leave even if the underlying reason for same arguably does fall within the stated definition. The Department of Human Resources **will not** continue to follow up with employees who fail to submit such documentation.

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) Rights

You may be eligible for family and medical leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 if you have been employed by RSD for at least **12 months** and have worked at least **1,250 hours** during the 12-month period before the leave is to begin.

NOTE: The District utilizes a “rolling” 12-month period for purposes of FMLA entitlement. Specifically, you have a right to up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave in a twelve (12)-month period calculated as a rolling twelve (12)-month period measured backward from the beginning date of any FMLA usage.

Reasons for the Leave

You may be entitled to take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave:

- to attend to the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of your child;
- to attend to the serious health condition of your child, spouse, or parent;
- to receive care for your own serious health condition;
- a “qualifying exigency,” as defined in Department of Labor regulations, arising from the fact that the employee’s spouse, child, or parent is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation; or
- to care for a spouse, child, parent, or next of kin who is a covered service member undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy; is otherwise in outpatient status; or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness.

A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition during which you are incapable of working that involves either:

- treatment requiring inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential care facility, or
- continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that lasts more than three (3) consecutive days, or for pregnancy or prenatal care, or for a chronic health condition which continues over an extended period of time, requires periodic visits to a health care provider, and may involve occasional episodes of incapacity, such as serious asthma or diabetes.

The definition of a “serious health condition” also includes a permanent or long-term condition such as Alzheimer's, a severe stroke, and terminal cancer. In addition, leave may be used to cover absences due to multiple treatments for restorative surgery or for a condition that would likely make you incapable of working for more than three (3) days if not treated, such as chemotherapy or radiation treatments for cancer.

Active Duty/Call to Active Duty

An employee shall be eligible for leave because of a qualifying exigency due to the fact that the employee's spouse, child, or parent is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call to active duty.

If the necessity for leave is foreseeable, the employee will provide notice as soon as practicable.

RSD requires that a request for leave because of a qualified exigency be supported by a certification issued in accordance with regulations issued by the Secretary of Labor.

The employee must provide the required certification in a timely manner.

Care of Covered Service Member

An employee is eligible for leave of up to twenty-six (26) weeks per year to care for a covered service member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, when that service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy; is otherwise in outpatient status; or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness.

If the necessity for leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, the employee will make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment to minimize disruption of RSD's operations and will notify the Benefits Office of his/her intention to take leave not less than thirty (30) days prior to the beginning date of the leave. If the date of treatment requires leave to begin in less than thirty (30) days, the employee will provide notice as soon as practicable.

RSD will require that a request for leave to care for a covered service member be supported by certification signed by a health care provider of the individual in need of care. The employee must provide the required certification in a timely manner. The certification must contain the following:

1. Date the serious health condition, injury, or illness began.
2. Probable duration of the condition.
3. Appropriate medical facts regarding the condition.

An employee is eligible to take intermittent or reduced schedule leave for planned medical treatment. The required certification must contain the dates the treatment is expected to be given and the duration of such treatments.

Leave to care for an ill or injured covered service member, when combined with other qualifying leave under FMLA, will not exceed twenty-six (26) weeks in a single twelve (12)-month period.

Use of Paid Leave

Employees must use applicable personal, vacation, and sick leave during the FMLA leave.

An employee may *not* require RSD to provide paid leave pursuant to a request for an FMLA leave under circumstances in which RSD would not normally provide any such paid leave. For example, an employee may not utilize more paid sick leave than that which is available by collective bargaining or employment agreement for a family illness.

Notice of Leave

If your need for leave is foreseeable, you must give 30 days prior notice if possible. If you do not give such notice, the leave may be delayed for up to 30 days.

If your need for leave is due to a planned medical treatment, make every attempt to schedule the treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the operations of your school or department. If your need for leave is not foreseeable, you must request it as soon as practicable, but no later than two (2) business days after the need for leave arises.

Medical Certification

If leave is requested due to your own or a family member's serious health condition, you must provide medical certification from an appropriate health care provider. RSD requires that the employee submit a completed Certification of Health Care Provider form approved by the Department of Labor for this purpose. This form may be obtained by contacting the Benefits Office.

You may be denied leave if you do not provide satisfactory certification. RSD, at its expense, may also require a second and/or a third opinion certifying the need for leave due to a serious health condition.

Returning to Work

If your leave is due to your own medical condition, you are required to provide medical certification that you are able to resume work before returning.

At the conclusion of the FMLA leave, you will be restored to your original position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms as if you had not taken such leave. You do not, however, have any greater right to reinstatement or other benefits or conditions of employment than if you had been continuously employed during the leave period. If you do not return to work at the end of the leave and do not notify RSD of your status, you may be terminated.

Benefits During Leave

Taking family and medical leave will not result in your losing any employment benefits accrued prior to the first day of leave. Employees on FMLA leave, however, will not accrue any other additional benefits during the leave period.

RSD will maintain your medical insurance and long-term disability benefits while you are on leave although you will be required to pay your portion of the premium. If, however, you do not return to work after the leave, you will be asked to reimburse the organization for the cost of maintaining insurance coverage during the leave. This provision will not apply in cases where your inability to return is through no fault of your own; for example, at the end of the leave, you remain physically unable to return due to your serious health condition.

Employee payments for the continuation of insurance coverage must be made according to RSD's existing rules for payment by employees on leave without pay. Please contact the Benefits Office for these rules and requirements. Failure to make the required payment in accordance with said rules will cancel RSD's obligation to maintain such coverage.

Misrepresenting Reasons for Leave

If you intentionally misrepresent the reasons for requesting family and medical leave, you may be discharged.

General Leave

The District recognizes that employees may, under certain circumstances, need leave for an extended period of time for personal reasons not covered by any other contractual benefit and that the District could benefit from accommodating this need and the eventual return of the employee to his/her position. Although the employee's employment is guaranteed, a "general leave" is an uncompensated leave with no benefits unless otherwise provided in a collective bargaining or employment agreement.

Requests for such leave must be made in advance of the start date through the Benefits Office and are subject to approval by the Board of School Directors. Prior notice will be waived in emergency situations as sufficiently documented by the employee.

As the needs of our organization and the students we serve necessitate consistency and continuity in terms of the individuals providing services at all levels, the District will not, absent exigent and unique circumstances, entertain requests for multiple general leaves of absence by an employee, nor will such a leave exceed one (1) school/work year.

Jury Duty

Employees are encouraged to serve on jury duty and fulfill their civic obligations. Employees who are scheduled for jury duty must immediately submit a completed "Employee Request for Absence" form to their supervisor to be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources. A copy of the jury summons must be attached to the form.

REA employees **shall not** report the absence into AESOP until they know for sure they must serve. Other employees should utilize the appropriate call-in procedures for "Routine Absences" as outlined above once they learn that they must serve.

Upon return to work after jury duty service, employees must submit to the Department of Human Resources evidence of service. This evidence will be attached to the “Employee Request for Absence” form and justify the District’s compensation of the employee, as outlined below, for the day(s) he/she was absent for jury duty purposes.

RSD will compensate employees at their regular pay for the time period during which they are required to serve minus any payment received by the court for jury duty service.

Any monies, excluding travel expenses, received by the employee for jury duty should be cashed by the employee. Immediately upon return to work after jury duty, the employee is required to submit to the **Payroll Office** documented evidence from the court of the monies received for jury duty service. The Payroll Office will deduct that payment from your next pay check. No deduction will be taken for any mileage or other travel reimbursements you may have received.

DO NOT send any documentation to Human Resources regarding the payments you received from the court for jury duty to avoid the risk of having these payments deducted twice from your paycheck.

When excused or released from jury duty, employees are expected to return to work promptly.

Medical Leaves

In addition to the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, employees may be eligible for an unpaid leave of absence with or without the continuation of paid medical benefits for their own serious medical condition. Please refer to the applicable collective bargaining agreement, compensation and benefits plan, or other employment agreement for further information regarding what you may be entitled to in this regard. All requests for such leave must be made to the Benefits Office and will require the completion and submission of the “Certification of Health Care Provider” form developed by the Department of Labor.

In general, however, the District only will grant a leave for one (1) year or for the duration of one’s entitlement to paid sick leave, whichever is longer.

Personal Days

Some employees are, by virtue of the applicable collective bargaining agreement or compensation and benefits plan, entitled to paid leave for personal reasons as defined in said applicable agreement. ***Such time only can be taken in full-day increments and must be requested in advance.***

Employees requesting a personal day or days are required to complete and submit an “Employee Request for Absence” form within the time frame established within the applicable collective bargaining or employment agreement. All employees should strive to complete and submit the request as soon as possible as there may be a limit established in the applicable collective bargaining or employment agreement as to the number of employees that may be absent on a given day. Failure to adhere to the stated timeline may result in the denial of such paid leave.

Unless otherwise specified in a collective bargaining agreement, approval of personal days will be based upon a “first come/first approved” basis. The Department of Human Resources only will take official action when the “Employee Request for Absence” form is received. Verbal/informal approval will not be given to any employee.

In addition, unless otherwise specified in a collective bargaining or other employment agreement, employees will not be paid for accrued unused personal days upon separation.

Religious Holidays

RSD will accommodate requests for time off due to religious reasons. Such requests must be made in writing on an "Employee Request for Absence" form. As indicated above, a religious holiday is a valid reason for a "compelling reason" day. Otherwise, the time requested will be without pay unless the employee is eligible and obtains approval for other paid leave; i.e., vacation or personal, available to him/her.

Sabbatical/Compensated Professional Development Leaves

The Public School Code of 1949, as amended, provides certain individuals employed by the Pennsylvania public school system with the right to compensated leave under certain circumstances and provided they meet statutorily-defined eligibility requirements. Board Policy Nos. 338, 338.1, 438, and 438.1 outline the District's policies on sabbatical leaves for restoration of health, occupational classroom exchange leave, and professional development leave. Please refer to those policies for further information

Sick Days

Most employees are, by virtue of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, applicable collective bargaining agreement, or compensation and benefits plan, entitled to paid sick leave. ***Such time can be taken in ½-day or full-day increments.*** Sick days are cumulative and may be carried into the next fiscal/school year. Please refer to your collective bargaining or employment agreement for specific information as to the amount of sick leave to which you may be entitled.

To be eligible for a sick day, you must report off in accordance with the expectations outlined above. If you do not report off from work as set forth above, your absence may be considered unexcused, and disciplinary action may be taken.

Subject to any limitations imposed in a collective bargaining agreement, RSD reserves the right to request a doctor's certificate for any sick day requested. When sick day absences are in excess of three (3) days, a doctor's certificate certifying that you were unable to report to work due to an illness or injury is required and must be submitted immediately upon return to work. [If there is an indication that the employee may not be returning to work in the near future, the Department of Human Resources may request that a doctor's certificate be completed and submitted prior to the employee's return so that the District is able to make arrangements to cover the employee's absence.]

If a doctor's certificate is requested and/or required and you cannot produce it within the applicable time frame, the absence may be considered unexcused, your pay will be deducted for the day(s) in question, and you are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Family Sick/Doctor Appointments

Although "sick days" were originally designed to be used when an employee is unable to perform his or her duties because of an illness or injury to the employee him/herself, the District has in the negotiations process expanded the use of sick leave for family members residing in the household or for whom the employee is designated as a caregiver. Please refer

to your collective bargaining agreement for information as to the specifics regarding utilizing your paid sick leave for family illnesses or injuries.

In addition, although the District expects employees to schedule doctor appointments outside the work day, it is acknowledged that sometimes such scheduling is not possible. Therefore, in those instances when an employee must schedule a doctor's appointment, including medical tests, during working hours, he/she may be eligible to utilize paid sick leave for the same. [As sick leave may be used in ½-day increments, employees should try to schedule their appointments so that only a half day is necessary.] In some situations, a supervisor, in the best interests of the District, may be able to flex your schedule so as to allow you to attend the appointment without having to utilize paid sick leave for the same. Employees should not assume that such an accommodation can or will be made and must secure prior approval from their supervisor before flexing their time to accommodate a doctor's appointment.

Vacation

RSD provides paid vacations for eligible employees according to the employee's respective collective bargaining or employment agreement. All vacation requests must be documented on an "Employee Request for Absence" form and submitted to one's supervisor in advance for approval.

RSD reserves the right not to approve a vacation request if it will interfere with District operations or adversely affect staff coverage. Whenever possible, employees' requests for vacation will be accommodated; but where scheduling conflicts arise, requests will be considered on a first come-first approved basis subject to any limitations outlined in a collective bargaining or employment agreement.

Moreover, employees must utilize all vacation in accordance with the terms of the applicable collective bargaining or employment agreement or lose the same. In the absence of any "carryover" language in the applicable collective bargaining or employment agreement, all vacation leave must be utilized by June 30th, or the employee will lose the same.

Safety & Emergency

Emergency Measures Because of Inclement Weather

Inclement weather during the school/student year may necessitate delaying the opening of schools, closing schools for students and 10-month staff members, or closing down District operations for the day. Even when the District is closed for the day, certain staff members, pursuant to their collective bargaining or employment agreement, may be required to work unless notified otherwise.

If it becomes necessary to delay the opening of schools, dismiss early, or close down operations altogether due to a weather-related or other emergency, every effort is made to notify employees in a timely manner. ***While the District does announce these decisions on various radio and television stations as outlined below, the most timely and accurate information can be obtained by accessing the District's Website at www.readingsd.org and by ensuring that you have provided the Department of Human Resources with an accurate telephone number for the District's automated telephone notification system.*** Various departments and schools may also institute internal phone chains for this purpose as well.

Operational changes for the District are generally announced on the following radio and television stations:

WFMZ-TV, Channel 69

WGAL-TV, Channel 8

WIOV-FM 105.1

WEEU-AM 830

We realize that, regardless of the decision being made by the District regarding its operations, bad weather or hazardous commuting conditions may occasionally make it impossible for employees to report to work on time. You are, however, expected to make a diligent effort to report to work when conditions have improved. If you determine that you are unable to report to work on time or at all because of the conditions, inform your supervisor and call off according to the appropriate procedures as soon as possible. Your absence will be charged to personal or vacation time, if available. If no time is available, you will be docked for the time/day.

Essential Operations

Under the terms of their collective bargaining agreement, custodial and maintenance employees and any other employee assigned building and grounds maintenance and snow removal responsibilities are expected to report to work or stay at work regardless of the decision made regarding District-wide operations unless notified otherwise by their supervisor(s). Failure to report to work or stay as requested/required is grounds for disciplinary action.

"Grace Period"

There will be occasions when the District will close schools for students and 10-month employees but will not close the entire District. When a delayed opening is *not* called for District offices, office employees are afforded a one (1)-hour "grace period" to allow them

to safely travel to work. When an employee will be late, he/she must contact his/her direct supervisor or designee to inform him/her of his/her expected late arrival. No leave time, however, will be charged any employee who arrives within this "grace period." When an employee arrives after the "grace period," appropriate leave time, be it paid or unpaid, will be charged unless arrangements to make up the time can be made in the best interests of the school or department. Such time should be reflected on time sheets in accordance with expected payroll procedures.

Please note that this "grace period" does *not* apply when the Superintendent has delayed the opening of normal operations.

Inability to Report to Work

When an employee chooses to not report to work because of weather-related conditions, he/she must immediately utilize the appropriate call-off procedures to report off work using appropriate accrued paid leave. Under such circumstances, the use of such leave will not be denied even if required prior notice and approval, such as is the case with personal and vacation leave, was not provided. If, however, no such leave is available, the employee will be charged with a "deduct day."

In general and unless otherwise governed by the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, calling in "sick" on a day when an employee is expected to work regardless of inclement weather will require the employee to submit a doctor's note. This is done to preserve the integrity of the fringe benefit program and to ensure that sick leave is used solely for the purpose intended by state law and the RSD Board of Directors.

As outlined above, "emergency" and/or "compelling reason" time cannot be used when an employee does not report to work during inclement weather.

While inclement weather is difficult for all of us, RSD, as a public employer, must ensure that every reasonable effort is made to fulfill our obligations to continue operations despite unfavorable conditions. Please know that it is understandable that an employee in difficult weather conditions may need to choose to use appropriate paid leave or even leave without pay. Such decisions should be made with safety as the first consideration and will be respected. That being said, some employees have, as an essential function of their position, responsibilities associated with building and grounds maintenance. Employees in this group who routinely do not report to work to fulfill this responsibility may not be appropriate for continued employment.

Should you have any questions with regard to this information, please do not hesitate to contact the Department of Human Resources.

Fire Safety

Every employee is responsible for recognizing potential fire dangers and taking an active role in preventing fires. Employees are prohibited from using unauthorized space heaters, candles, etc., that create the potential for a fire in their work area. Authorization for the use of space heaters, fans, or other cooling/heating appliances must be obtained by contacting the Facilities Department.

Employees are required to observe all safety requirements and regulations. Flammable materials are to be stored in covered metal containers. Employees should not block any fire

doors, fire exits, fire extinguishers, windows, or doorways. Fire doors must be kept closed at all times. Review the fire escape routes posted in each work area.

First Aid

All District buildings have first-aid kits available for administering minor first aid. District employees are, however, encouraged to call “911” when more than minor first aid is appropriate. This would include an employee or visitor with chest pains, an apparent fracture, etc.

In that the District is concerned about employees who may be exposed to blood and other bodily fluids when rendering first aid, whether to employees, visitors, clients, or students, the following procedures are to be used:

- Always use protective gloves that are supplied in the first-aid kit.
- In the event CPR becomes necessary, a CPR Micro-Shield should be used, if available. Preferably, only those employees who are certified to perform CPR should perform CPR. While performing CPR, send an available employee/person to ensure that 911 is called. If the AED (Automated External Defibrillator) is needed, please also send an available employee/person to ensure that 911 has been called.
- Any materials, including protective gloves and CPR Micro-Shields used in administering first aid, should be discarded by double bagging the materials and discarding it in an appropriate District waste container.
- Hands should be thoroughly washed following any first-aid procedure.

Treatment of Staff by School Nurses

Although the District’s school nurses are available for treatment of staff, they are required to document all treatment, including “health counseling,” provided to staff per their licensure as Registered Nurses and for Department of Health documentation for School Health Reimbursement purposes. Staff will be required to sign a form authorizing treatment by the school nurse and releasing the school nurse and RSD from liability related to treatment and recommendations.

Safety

RSD is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all employees. Report all accidents, injuries, potential safety hazards, safety suggestions, and health and safety-related issues immediately to your supervisor, the Benefits Department, or a member of the Safety Committee. Each building should have a current listing of Safety Committee members posted.

Safety Equipment/Safe Working Practices

Employees are expected to adhere to safe working practices and to utilize required safety equipment when performing responsibilities on behalf of the Reading School District. For example, some employees by virtue of their responsibilities are required to wear steel-toed shoes, safety goggles, harnesses, etc. Any questions regarding the need and/or appropriate use of safety equipment should be addressed with your supervisor.

Further, *all* employees of the Reading School District are expected to work safely utilizing common sense. Running in heels on ice; standing on furniture, including but not limited to, rolling chairs; feeding wild animals, such as mice; lifting/moving furniture or heavy boxes without assistance – whether or not such task is within your job description; ignoring

medical restrictions; and blocking doorways or stairwells to impede the progress of students or others, are unsafe practices that are not condoned and will not be tolerated. [The foregoing list actually represents real-life scenarios – seriously. Work Smart/Stay Safe!]

Failure to work in accordance with specified or commonly recognized safe working practices and/or to utilize appropriate safety equipment is grounds for severe disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Security

RSD is committed to ensuring employees security. All of our premises are equipped with security alarms that are active outside working hours, cameras, and a fire-alarm system.

In addition, all employees are given photo ID cards, and many are provided keys and/or building access cards when they join the organization. Unless otherwise authorized, employees are not to enter school district premises outside their regular work year or work hours. This includes 10-month employees who wish to enter school premises to prepare for the upcoming school year, as certain building maintenance activities may be taking place that necessitate limited access. Even when authorized, staff are required to follow that building's particular protocol for after-hours access so as to preclude a false security alarm. Permission to enter buildings during non-business hours must be obtained from your supervisor.

Even if your position provides you with unlimited access to District facilities, entering the same during non-business hours may require you to deactivate the alarm system. Please check with your supervisor and the Facilities Manager regarding the procedures associated with disarming said system.

Important Phone Numbers

Human Resources

	Internal	External
- Chief Human Resources Officer gokayk@readingsd.org	01100	484-258-7011
Linda Pelker – Human Resources Specialist (Professional Staff) pelkerll@readingsd.org	01110	484-258-7011
Christine Moszcienski – Assistant Director of Human Resources Employee Relations & Internal Affairs moszcienskic@readingsd.org	01101	484-258-7003
Bonnie Leonti - Human Resources Specialist (Support Staff) leontib@readingsd.org	01104	484-258-7006
Cristina Raimondi - Human Resources Specialist (Recruitment) raimondic@readingsd.org	01105	484-258-7007
Nydia (Nina) Silva - Human Resources Specialist silvan@readingsd.org	01108	484-258-7010

Benefits

Lisa Magrowski – Assistant Director of Human Resources Employee Benefits & Risk Mgmt. magrowskil@readingsd.org	01103	484-258-7023
– Attendance & Leave Specialist leontia@readingsd.org	01106	484-258-7008
Denise Templin - Benefits Coordinator / Workman’s Compensation templind@readingsd.org	01147	484-258-7025
Damaris Sanchez – On-Site Loomis Co. Representative dsanchez@loomisco.com	01107	484-258-7009

Payroll

Desiree Corchado – Payroll Clerk corchadd@readingsd.org	01335	484-258-7072
Vera Kochen – Payroll Clerk kochenv@readingsd.org	01325	484-258-7068

Teaching & Learning (Curriculum Department)
(My Learning Plan, Induction, and Act 48)

Jennifer Murray, Assistant to the Superintendent murrayj@readingsd.org	01142	484-258-7041
JuliAnne Kline, Director of Instructional klinej@readingsd.org	01141	484-258-7014
Sheryl Clemens – Department Clerk clemenss@readingsd.org	01205	484-258-7032
Debra Siggins – Department Clerk sigginsd@readingsd.org	01215	484-258-7041