



WEST DES MOINES
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Innovative Spirit. Inspiring Success.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

RESOURCES FOR ALL WDMCS EMPLOYEES

2024-25

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This handbook is a general source of information and is intended to be a resource that will help inform employees of expectations and available services. It is not intended, nor does it constitute, a contract between the school district and employees. It does not address every employment issue that may arise. It is the employee's responsibility to refer to WDMCS policies, comprehensive agreements, and administrative rules and regulations for further information. If provisions of this handbook conflict with those of board policy or collective bargaining agreements, the terms of the board policy and/or collective bargaining agreement shall govern.

Although every effort will be made to update the handbook on a timely basis, the district reserves the right, and has the sole discretion, to modify or change any portion of this handbook at any time with or without advance notice. Employees are required to review this handbook annually and to certify understanding of employee's responsibilities to comply with WDMCS policies, practices, and work rules.

If you have any questions about the contents of the handbook, please contact:

Nora E. Ryan, Ph.D.
Chief Officer of Human Resources
(515) 633-5000
ryann@wdmcs.org

Welcome aboard!

Welcome to the West Des Moines Community Schools! Thank you for choosing WDMCS to share your talents and gifts. We have nearly 9300 students counting on us each and every day to provide an outstanding school experience and I know we can deliver!

There is no better feeling than educating responsible lifelong learners to ensure they thrive in and contribute to a diverse and changing world! It sounds like a monumental task, but the good news is we don't have to do it alone! It's a partnership between the schools, families and the community. Each employees' lived experiences, talents, and humanity enriches WDMCS. You are the vessel for authentic partnerships. The whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts. If we engage in this purposeful work together anything can be accomplished.

All of our employees are mission-critical. We all contribute to a caring community of learners that knows and lifts every child. I hope you recognize we can't do this without you. I'm confident we can meet the high expectations of the parents/guardians and community if everyone understands how their efforts contribute and impact the system.

This handbook serves as a guide to our district employees and outlines many of our employment expectations as well as highlights some of our policies and programs. If you have any questions do not hesitate to reach out to your building principal, director, or our Human Resource professionals and they will be happy to assist you. You've picked a very rewarding career and a great place to serve!

Matt Adams, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Mission

Working in partnership with each family and the community, it is the mission of the district to educate responsible lifelong learners so that each student possesses the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth, and values necessary to thrive in and contribute to a diverse and changing world.

Shared Vision

WDMCS will be a caring community of learners that knows and lifts every child. We will inspire joy in learning. Our schools will excel at preparing each student for their life journey.

Portrait of a Graduate

A West Des Moines Community Schools graduate will possess the essential skills and integrity to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems as a confident citizen, embracing our diverse and changing world.

Educational Non-Discrimination Statement

The West Des Moines Community Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, familial status, and socioeconomic status in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equity Coordinator, Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265; Phone: 515-633-5040; email jokd@wdmcs.org. (Adherence to bona fide occupational/educational qualifications will not be interpreted as discriminatory).

****WDMCS is currently completing a Strategic Planning Process.****

Guiding 'Principles'

Agreements

West Des Moines Community Schools works in collaboration with the West Des Moines Education Association and the West Des Moines Educational Support Personnel to develop collective bargaining agreements. Employees are encouraged to be familiar with the information in these documents, accessible on the district's website at wdmcs.org. These documents provide additional information regarding employment with WDMCS.

Board Policies

Board policies are established for the success, safety, and protection of all school employees in the performance of their job duties. Board policies are linked on the district's website at wdmcs.org. While a number of policies are included in the employee handbook, employees are expected to know existing Board policies and refer to the policies when necessary. Policies are subject to ongoing review and revision. Check the district website for the most current policies.

Equal Employment Opportunity ([Board Policy 401.01](#))

The goal of the Board of Education of the West Des Moines Community School is to provide fair and equal opportunity for employment, promotion, wages, benefits and all other privileges, terms and conditions of employment. The district will affirmatively recruit diverse talent (e.g. gender, racial/ethnicity, abilities, etc.) for job categories where the representative groups are underrepresented. Employees will be given annual notice of this policy, and all employees will support the established plan and policies.

The West Des Moines Community School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity, military services, genetic information, and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equity Coordinator, Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265; phone: 515-633-5040; email: jokd@wdmcs.org. (Adherence to bona fide occupational/educational qualifications will not be interpreted as discriminatory.)

Prior to a final approval of employment for any regular position whether part or full-time, the school district will perform a criminal background check in accordance with law.

Equity Grievance Procedure - Employees and Applicants for Employment

Employees and applicants for employment in the district will have the right to file a formal complaint alleging discrimination under federal or state regulations requiring non-discrimination in programs and employment.

LEVEL 1: (INFORMAL) The employee or patron will first discuss the complaint with the person(s) involved with the objective of resolving the matter informally. This step is optional and may be bypassed or ended at any time by grievant.

LEVEL 2: If the complaint is not resolved at Level 1, the grievant may pursue the grievance by filing (FORMAL) a written complaint. The grievance form may be obtained from the immediate supervisor or building principal, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The written complaint must be filed with the immediate supervisor or building principal within fifteen (15) working days from the date of the event giving rise to the grievance or from the date the grievant could reasonably become aware of the occurrence. An investigation of the complaint will be completed and a written response from the immediate supervisor, building principal, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will be sent to the grievant within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the complaint. A copy of the complaint and supervisor's response will be filed with Human Resources.

LEVEL 3: If the complaint is not resolved at Level 2, the grievant may present a copy of the grievance (FORMAL) form and a written appeal to the Director of Human Resources within ten (10) working days after receiving the response from the immediate supervisor or building principal.

An investigation of the complaint will be completed by the Director of Human Resources and an attempt will be made to resolve it. A written report will be sent to the grievant within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Director of Human Resources shall be final.

Individuals can file formal complaints with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission and the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at any time within the requirements of those agencies.

Persons found to have engaged in impermissible discrimination shall be subject to discipline or other appropriate measures. As necessary, the district will take steps to prevent the recurrence of discrimination and to correct its discriminatory effects on the grievant and others. The district prohibits retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation. Retaliation may result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, any individual intentionally providing false information in a complaint investigation may be subject to disciplinary action. An alternate investigator will be designated in the event it is claimed that the regular investigator committed the alleged misconduct or some other conflict of interest exists. Information relating to a complaint will be disclosed only as reasonably necessary in connection with the investigation or as required by law.

Inquiries or grievances related to these WDMCS policies may be directed to: Equity Coordinator/Affirmative Action/EEO Coordinator, Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265, (515) 633-5040. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Milwaukee Area Office, Reuss Federal Plaza, 310 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 500, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203 (1-800-669-4000) or the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400 East 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319 (1-800-457-4416). This inquiry or complaint to the federal office may be done instead of, or in addition to, an inquiry or complaint at the local level.

Further information and copies of the procedures for filing a complaint are available in the school district's Office of Human Resources.

The district has a Board approved and legally required Affirmative Action / Equal Employment Opportunity Plan available on the district's website. For additional information regarding the Plan, visit the district's website at wdmcs.org.

WDMCS Online Calendar

The official school district calendar is the reference for district activities, events, and other important dates that occur throughout the school year. The official school calendar and a printable PDF calendar at a glance are available on the district's website at wdmcs.org.

Procedures and Guidelines

Dress Code

Employees should use professional judgment in choosing attire that is appropriate for their particular job responsibilities. Employee attire should help project a professional atmosphere with students, staff, parents/guardians, and other guests at our offices and schools. Individual buildings or departments may maintain a more detailed dress code than the general guidelines contained in the Employment Handbook. Employees may be required by law or WDMCS to wear a uniform, personal protective equipment, or other job-specific clothing and/or gear during working hours while on duty.

Employee Absences

Most employees are assigned a Personal Identification Number (PIN) in order to access the [Absence Management system](#). Those employees using Absence Management must enter leave into the system no later than one hour before their start time if they are unable to report to work. In unusual circumstances when an illness/emergency occurs after that time, the employee must notify the Substitute Caller at (515) 633-5120 and contact their supervisor. Employees should check with their supervisor to understand the specific procedures for their department.

Employees covered by the WDMEA or WDMESP Agreements should refer to those agreements about the specific types of leave available and the circumstances under which those leaves may be utilized. Any request for leave should be submitted as soon as possible to the employee's supervisor and/or Human Resources.

Administration has discretion to request doctors' notes after three or more consecutive days of sick leave or if there is suspected abuse of leave.

Employees requesting an extended leave of absence pursuant to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) should consult the appropriate agreement and/or Board policy 409.03 - Employee Family Medical Leave. Questions regarding FMLA should be directed to Human Resources.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

West Des Moines Community Schools provides a confidential resource for employees to consult regarding a variety of topics, such as family and personal relationships, emotional or mental health, work and life balance, and financial or legal concerns. EAP counseling professionals will work with employees to understand their concerns and connect them with appropriate resources.

The first three sessions are free and EAP services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800-327-4692 or by visiting the website at www.efr.org/myeap.

Employee Benefits

West Des Moines Community Schools provides benefit packages for eligible employees. Information regarding eligible employee benefits is presented in the Benefits Guide, annually reviewed and updated by the Insurance Committee. This information is located on the Employee Portal of the District website, under Benefits, Benefit Guide. The District Insurance committee reviews benefit information, trends, and discusses pertinent benefit topics. Information on employee benefits can be found online <https://www.wdmcs.org/faculty-staff/employee-benefits>.

Employee Work Assignment

Determining the location of an employee's assignment is the responsibility and within the sole discretion of the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Designee. In making such assignments, WDMCS will consider the qualifications of each candidate/employee and the needs of the district.

Employees should be at their assigned WDMCS location for the duration of the contract day and/or shift. If an employee is not at their assigned location during the regular work-day or shift, then the employee should be on leave as described in Board policy, this Handbook and/or WDMEA or WDMESP Agreements. If the employee is at a WDMCS building or department that is not their regularly assigned location, then the employee must follow the Visitor Check-in Process and ensure there is no disruption to the work day and the purposeful learning environment.

Employee Evaluations

Supervisors will provide employees with the evaluation guidelines and schedule for their classification and assignment. Evaluations for teachers are based on the Iowa Teaching Standards & Criteria. For additional information, teachers should review the Professional Growth Model and Evaluation Guidelines available on the district's website at wdmcs.org. Administrators are evaluated based upon the Iowa Standards for School Leaders. All other employee classifications are evaluated according to the evaluation tool available in TalentEd.

Service and Therapy Animals

In accordance with state and federal law, WDMCS recognizes there may be a need for employees or students to use or have access to qualified service animals or registered therapy animals. Employees who require the assistance of a service dog, which is defined as "dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities," should consult with Human Resources.

Registered therapy animals are animals trained and certified to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship. Buildings that wish to have a therapy animal on district property to meet with individual students or groups of students, need to ensure the following conditions are met prior to the presence of the therapy animal on school property:

- The building administrator needs to submit a proposal to Superintendency and receive approval.

- The owner of the therapy animal may be required to provide proof of registration as a therapy animal and current vaccinations.
- If the therapy animal is to be used in a classroom(s), the teacher(s) must agree to the presence of the therapy animal in the classroom. Should the teacher(s) agree, but later find the therapy animal is not serving the overall best interest of the classroom(s), the teacher(s) may require the therapy animal be removed from the classroom.
- Parents of the children with whom the therapy animal will be used must approve.

For individual requests for employee use of therapy animals, employees must work with their building supervisor and forward any documentation to Human Resources.

Staff Meetings

Staff meetings provide an opportunity for the communication of important school district information to be shared between administration and employees.

Employees may be required to remain after the usual workday for the purposes of attending a staff meeting or other administratively called meeting. These meetings should not extend to more than one-half hour beyond the usual work day and not more than once a month. Other meetings may be scheduled by the principal / supervisor according to need.

Student Teachers

Student teachers are assigned to non-probationary, qualified teachers, if the teacher agrees and the principal recommends the assignment. During this time, the teacher maintains full responsibility for the classroom and supports the student teacher throughout the assignment.

No teacher shall be assigned more than one student teacher in any school year, except in extenuating circumstances. During the period of student-teaching, student teachers are not considered employees of WDMCS.

TimeClock Procedures

All non-exempt (hourly) employees must report their work time through an electronic time tracking system. Non-exempt employees are required to clock-in at the start and end of the assigned work time, and may be required to clock in/out for scheduled breaks. Any variation in the assigned work time should be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor.

Some exempt employees, including but not limited to certified personnel, may need to utilize the electronic time tracking system for additional assignments, additional positions, or other duties as assigned ("Additional Assignments"). For these Additional Assignments and/or other duties, exempt employees are required to follow these procedures.

If an employee is paid from multiple funding sources or has more than one position within WDMCS, the employee will be assigned a separate job code for each position. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that they are clocking in at the correct time, and with the correct job codes.

All hours for non-exempt employees must be reported using the timekeeping system.

Transfer Procedures

Reassignment: A reassignment shall be defined as an in-building or in-department (for nutrition, transportation, and operations) movement that is mutually agreed upon by the administration and the individual staff member prior to the determination that a vacancy exists. The reassignment must be within the same job classification and have HR approval.

Voluntary Transfer: A voluntary transfer shall be defined as the movement of an employee to a different job classification, grade level, building, route, or other defined work assignment which is initiated by the employee. As soon as practical, WDMCS will post the vacancy online. Employees should apply for a voluntary transfer to a vacancy by applying online as an internal candidate. WDMCS has discretion to evaluate applicants' qualifications for all positions, and may consider the following criteria including, but not limited to: physical and educational requirements of the position; the applicants' work, education, attendance, experience, and seniority. Certified voluntary transfers will not be approved after July 15 for the upcoming school year, except in extenuating circumstances as approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Involuntary Transfer: An involuntary transfer may be necessary due to changes in programming, enrollment, or other Board approved program modifications. An involuntary transfer will be made only when WDMCS determines it necessary and has reviewed all voluntary requests that are submitted and applicable. No position will be filled through an involuntary transfer if there is a qualified applicant to fill the position.

WDMCS will notify employees of an involuntary transfer as soon as possible. An involuntary transfer shall be made only after a meeting between the employee involved and the employee's supervisor at which time the employee shall be given written reason(s) for the transfer if requested by the employee. Employees shall receive a notice of involuntary transfer that will include the grade and/or subject, building, route, classification, or assignment to which the employee will be transferred.

The assignment of teacher leadership positions shall not be subject to transfer procedures. No employee will be involuntarily assigned to a teacher leader position. Any current teacher leader may request a reassignment to an open teacher leader position in the same category for which they are qualified.

Work Comp

If a work injury occurs, employees should follow these procedures:

- Get first aid promptly and/or call 911 (9-911 from school phone) if it is an emergency.
- Report the injury to the immediate supervisor or principal/designee on the day of the incident. As soon as the injury is reported, the injured employee and the employee's supervisor should call the MeM NurseAid Work Injury Line at 1-800-442-0593 together. If a supervisor isn't immediately available, the employee should call the Hotline.

Safety and Security

The district is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning and working environment for students and employees. In order to accomplish this, it is the responsibility of all employees to do their part to create this safe and secure environment. Employees should contact their supervisor and a district administrator to report any security or safety hazard they identify.

ID Badges/Door Access

All employees are issued a badge that must be visibly worn when present on school district property. Employees who need a replacement badge should contact Administrative Services.

External building doors are locked at all times and may only be open with the appropriate identification badge or through entering buildings at specific locations. Employee identification badges unlock assigned building doors. Access is based on an employee's job responsibilities and employee classification.

Incidents

The employee will inform administration immediately, or as soon as possible, if assault, battery, or a traumatic event has occurred and in which they have been involved. The administrator will coordinate classroom or duty coverage if immediate time away from duties is needed. The employee shall be given up to (1) hour without loss of leave time immediately following the event to resume normal duties.

The employee whose absences result from school-related assault or battery will be paid up to three full days full salary for the time of their temporary incapacity and no deductions will be made from accumulated sick days.

Pets

Employees and students need to obtain permission from their supervisor or principal prior to bringing an animal to school.

Animals that are kept at school for instructional purposes will be in good health with no evidence of disease, be of such disposition as to not pose a safety threat to children, and be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner. Documentation of current vaccinations will be available for all cats and dogs. Pets/animals and/or their cages will not be allowed in kitchen, sinks, nurses' offices, or food preparation areas due to health and sanitation guidelines.

Safety Drills ([Board Policy 910](#))

Periodic drills, including fire, tornado and emergency drills, will be held throughout the school year and all employees are expected to know the proper procedures for their building and assignment. Employees should consult with their supervisors about appropriate procedures and review information available in their assigned building(s) and location.

It is the responsibility of each teacher to read instructions carefully regarding the different types of drills and instruct students regarding where to go and what to do. Class rosters must be carried and attendance taken in each situation.

Use of Cleaning Products

WDMCS custodial service area has standardized cleaning and disinfecting products, maintains required documentation, and meets the standards set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Buildings and classrooms may only have district- selected cleansers, disinfectants, and chemicals that are issued, approved, and managed under the guidelines of the Hazard Communication and Indoor Air Quality Programs. No additional products should be brought into the school buildings unless otherwise approved by Human Resources.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Operations Department at 515-633-4901.

Use of Security Cameras

Security cameras are installed on school property and on buses. The cameras are used to ensure safety of all students and employees while on school property. Employees are hereby notified that the contents of the recordings may be used in the facilitation of investigations. The contents of the recordings shall be treated as confidential student and employee records when and to the extent provided by applicable law. The recordings will only be retained if necessary, as determined by the district.

Visitor Check-in Process

Building administrators have a plan for the control of entry into the building and monitoring of visitors to the building. All employees must know and follow these building specific procedures when inviting visitors into a WDMCS classroom or building. When employees are at a building that is not their assigned building, then the employee must follow the building's visitor check-in process. All visitors will adhere to all applicable board policies and laws.

Because WDMCS adheres to state and federal laws, all visitors and volunteers on school grounds must comply with the [State of Iowa's Senate File 482](#), which states individuals must use the restroom of their assigned gender at birth. All schools have multi-stall, gender-specific, and individual restrooms available.

Weather

When school must be canceled, delayed, or dismissed early because of weather conditions or other emergencies, the Communications Department will inform families and staff in a timely manner. Learn more about specific cancellation and closings procedures online at <https://www.wdmcs.org/our-district/departments/communications>.

Standards of Conduct

District employees shall maintain high standards of conduct and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. Employees shall not engage in activities which violate federal, state or local laws, or in which any way diminish the integrity of efficiency of the District.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA) are federal laws that require certain employers, including the WDMCS, to not

discriminate against applicants and individuals with disabilities. When needed, the WDMCS will provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees who are qualified for a job, so they may perform the essential job duties of the position.

If you have questions or need additional information about the ADA or reasonable accommodations, please contact Human Resources.

Complaints Regarding School Personnel ([Board Policy 906.01](#))

WDMCS provides a process for students, parents, and community members to file complaints regarding any WDMCS staff member. Any oral complaint which could lead to disciplinary action against an employee must be brought to the employee's attention. A copy of any disciplinary action is placed in the employee's personnel file and will be given to the employee. The employee may provide a written response to any disciplinary action which is attached to the disciplinary action document and a copy given to their supervisor.

Cooperation in Investigations ([Board Policy 402.12](#))

All employees are required to fully cooperate with any representative of the District who is conducting a work-related investigation. Employees are expected to provide truthful and complete information.

Employees will not impede, obstruct, or fail to cooperate with an inquiry or investigation conducted by any representative of the District. "Obstructing" includes, but is not limited to, threatening, intimidating, or coercing other individuals who may be contacted by a representative of the District, and discouraging other individuals who may be contacted by a representative of the District from responding to or cooperating with the District. "Failing to cooperate" includes, but is not limited to, failing to provide information, documents, or materials requested by a representative of the District, and providing information, documents, or materials to a representative of the District which are dishonest, misleading, inaccurate, or incomplete.

Retaliation against persons filing complaints and/or participating in the investigation is strictly prohibited. Retaliation occurs when an individual participating in the investigative process is subjected to any conduct or action because of their participation that would make a reasonable person unwilling to participate in the District's process in the future.

If an employee is the subject of an investigation, the District will respect the rights afforded to the employee by the Iowa Public Employment Relations Act, the United States Constitution, and any other applicable state or federal law. Employees who fail to comply with this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Dangerous Weapons ([Board Policy 402.15](#))

While on District property (including parking lots), in District vehicles, or the employee is on non-school property if the employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity, event or function, such as field trips or athletic events or students are under the control of the District or where the employee is engaged in District business, employees are prohibited from possessing firearms of all descriptions (including air-powered

weapons), firecrackers and any other exploding devices, and any dangerous weapons, unless the weapon is one which the employee is required to possess in order to perform the duties of the employee's position. Any violation of this policy concerning dangerous weapons will result in employee discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

As used in this work rule, the term "dangerous weapon" means:

1. A "firearm" as defined by Title 18, Section 921 of the United States Code.
2. A "dangerous weapon" as defined by Iowa Code Section 702.7.
3. Any dangerous instrument or device which is designed to inflict death or injury to a human being or animal.
4. Any instrument or device which is used to inflict death or injury to a human being or animal regardless of whether or not it is designed to inflict death or injury.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

Gifts ([Board Policy 905](#))

It is the responsibility of each district employee to know when it is appropriate to accept or reject gifts. A district employee is prohibited from directly or indirectly soliciting, accepting, or receiving a gift or a series of gifts from a "restricted donor." For additional information regarding the definition of a "restricted donor," please refer to the full text of the board policy.

Students are not to exchange gifts among themselves and employees are to refrain from giving gifts to students.

Harassment of Employees ([Board Policy 402.06](#))

The Board is committed to providing all students, employees, and visitors with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the district are treated with dignity and respect. Harassing behavior can seriously disrupt the ability of employees to maintain a safe and civil environment. Harassing behaviors are against federal, state, and local policy and are not tolerated. It is a violation of this policy for any employee, official or visitor of the district to harass anyone through conduct or communications. The district includes district facilities, district premises and non-school property if the employee is at any school sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the control of the district or where the employee is engaged in district business.

Harassment

Harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of the employee's age, race, color, creed, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, socio-economic status or any other characteristic protected by law and that:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment,
2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassment may take the form of, but is not limited to, jokes, stories, pictures, comments or other actions that are offensive, abusive or otherwise demeaning in nature, provided the conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create a hostile educational or employment environment. Harassment by Board members, administrators, employees, parents, students, vendors, volunteers and others having business or other contact with the district is prohibited.

Employees whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy, following an investigation process, may be subject to discipline, up to and including, termination or other appropriate action in accordance with law and policy. Appropriate action may include the filing of a complaint against the employee with the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners if the employee is licensed.

Sexual Harassment

It is a violation of this policy for any employee, official or visitor of the district to harass others through conduct or communications of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is defined as conduct including, but not be limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts or favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment; or
3. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment or educational environment.

Employees who believe they have been the victim of conduct prohibited by this policy or believe they have witnessed such conduct should report such matters to the Office of Human Resources, which will advise them of the district's processes for investigating such complaints. However, claims regarding harassment may also be reported to the Associate Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, Chief Financial Officer or the employee's supervisor. The district recognizes an employee's right to complain about conduct they feel is prohibited by this policy and will not take retaliation against an employee for filing a complaint pursuant to this policy, however, false and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation may subject an employee to disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent or designee, to maintain administrative rules implementing this policy, including training and education of employees.

Insubordination ([Board Policy 402.16](#))

Insubordination interferes with the district's ability to provide educational opportunities for all students. Insubordination includes, but is not limited to, disobedience, failure or refusal to follow the written or oral instructions of a supervisor or a representative of the District, failure or refusal to carry out work assignments, public display of disrespect for a supervisor, or the use of

abusive language toward a supervisor. Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Neglect of Duties ([Board Policy 402.17](#))

Neglect of duties interrupts the district's essential functions and programs that provide educational opportunities for all students. Neglect of duties includes, but is not limited to, failure to perform duties as outlined in the employee's job description or carry out reasonable assignments or instructions, failure to follow the proper procedures or policies of the District, and negligence in the operation of or care of any equipment or vehicle which results in damage to the equipment or vehicle. Employees who neglect their duties may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Notification of Arrest, Criminal Charges, or Child Abuse Complaints ([Board Policy 402.09](#))

Employees are expected to perform their assigned jobs, respect and follow Board policies, and obey the law. In the event that employees experience any arrests, the filing of any criminal charges, the disposition of any criminal charges pending against them, and/or any charges relating to operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated, they must notify the Office of Human Resources. Notification to Human Resources should occur within five (5) business days of notification to the employee. Employees whose duties require possession of a Commercial Driver's License and/or who regularly and frequently operate district vehicles must report all charges and citations, including traffic tickets such as speeding tickets; employee's will be responsible for the payment of fine, penalty, or ticket. Other employees need not report such traffic tickets.

Employees must notify the Office of Human Resources of any child abuse complaints filed against them. Employees must notify Human Resources regarding the findings in any complaint against them alleging child abuse. Human Resources should be notified of any complaints and findings within five (5) business days of notification to employee.

Information relating to arrests, criminal charges and child abuse complaints shall be treated as confidential and maintained as part of the employee's personnel file.

Employees who do not notify the district as required by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Tobacco/Nicotine Free District ([Board Policy 908](#))

West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS) is tobacco free within and upon all district property. WDMCS realizes that tobacco use is detrimental to health and is concerned about providing a healthy environment for students, employees, and community members. In that regard, WDMCS recognizes the importance of adult role modeling for students and each other, particularly in an educational environment.

The Board of Education understands the impact our district can have toward supporting our students, employees and community members to choose healthy behaviors. Therefore, the Board of Education directs there be no use of tobacco products on any WDMCS property, which includes vehicles, buildings, and grounds. WDMCS grounds specifically include, but may not be

limited to parking lots, athletic fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, and other outdoor area under the control of the district, including inside any vehicle located on such grounds.

WDMCS facilities and grounds, including school vehicles, are off limits for tobacco or nicotine use, including the use of look-alikes. This requirement extends to students, employees, and visitors. This policy applies at all times, including school-sponsored and non-school-sponsored events. This policy does not apply when appropriately administered to tobacco/nicotine cessation medication. Persons failing to abide by this request are required to extinguish their smoking material or dispose of the tobacco, nicotine or other product, or leave the WDMCS premises immediately. Students and employees failing to comply with this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. It is the responsibility of the administration to enforce this policy.

WDMCS intends to provide education, encouragement, and assistance for all students, employees, and community members in making a personal choice to refrain from tobacco use while within or upon any/all district property. This will allow students, employees, and community members to share the responsibility for creating a healthy environment, in which we all live, learn and grow.

It will be the right and responsibility of all students, employees and community members to observe and support this policy through personal commitment and advocacy.

Workplace Inspections ([Board Policy 401.13](#))

As a part of employment, a desk or work space may be made available to an employee. The desk and the work space are District property. Because the desk and the work space are District property, not the employee's personal property, the desk and the work space are subject to being inspected by the District at any time, with or without notice to the employee.

The District assumes no responsibility or liability for any items of personal property which are placed in the desk or work space which is assigned to the employee.

The District may also provide the employee with a telephone (including a cell phone and other electronic communication devices), computer (including a laptop and tablet), and/or associated network resources to perform their job. The District may enter and copy any computer file, may examine and copy any computer communication, may monitor and record any telephone communication, and may examine and copy or record any voice mail communication. The employee's continued employment with the District constitutes the employee's consent to the interception and recording of any of these communications. At any time, with or without notice to the employee, to the extent that any computer or telecommunication activities are regulated by state or federal law, the District will observe all such regulations imposed upon it.

If the District conducts an examination or inspection under the terms of this policy, there will be at least two supervisors present at the time of the examination or inspection.

No employee shall have any expectation of privacy in any desk, workspace, telephone, computer, or other equipment or supplies owned by the District and provided to the employee.

Students and Classrooms

Abuse of Students by a School District Employee ([Board Policy 503.02](#))

The district will respond promptly to allegations of abuse of students by school employees by investigating or arranging for the investigation of an allegation. In compliance with state regulations, WDMCS has appointed the following individuals as level one investigators of allegations of abuse of students by school employees: the Chief Officer of Human Resources Dr. Nora Ryan (515) 633-5037 and the Director of Human Resources, Megan Thole, (515) 633-5036.

Access to Student Records ([Board Policy 506.03](#))

WDMCS complies with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Parents and eligible students will have a right to access the student's record upon request within a reasonable period of time.

Administration of Medication to Students ([Board Policy 507.02](#))

The board is committed to the inclusion of all students in the education program and recognizes that some students may need prescription and nonprescription medication to participate in their educational program.

Medication shall be administered when the student's parent or guardian (hereafter "parent") provides a signed and dated written statement requesting medication administration and the medication is in the original, labeled container, either as dispensed or in the manufacturer's container.

When administration of the medication requires ongoing professional health judgment, an individual health plan shall be developed by an authorized practitioner with the student and the student's parent. Students who have demonstrated competence in administering their own medications may self-administer their medication. A written statement by the student's parent shall be on file requesting co-administration of medication, when competence has been demonstrated. By law, students with asthma or other airway constricting diseases or students at risk of anaphylaxis who use epinephrine auto-injectors may self-administer their medication upon the written approval of the student's parents and prescribing licensed health care professional regardless of competency. The school nurse will keep a record of student and/or parent reports of an occurrence of self-administration of asthma or other airway constricting disease medication or use of an epinephrine auto-injector by a student pursuant to this policy.

Persons administering medication shall include authorized practitioners, such as licensed registered nurses and physician, and persons to whom authorized practitioners have delegated the administration of medication (who have successfully completed a medication administration course). A medication administration course and periodic update shall be conducted by a registered nurse or licensed pharmacist, and a record of course completion shall be maintained by the school. A written medication administration record shall be on the file including:

- date;
- student's name;
- prescriber or person authorizing administration;
- medication;

- medication dosage;
- administration time;
- administration method;
- signature and title of the person administering medication; and
- any unusual circumstances, actions, or omissions.

Medication shall be stored in a secured area unless an alternate provision is documented. Emergency protocols for medication-related reactions shall be posted. Medication information shall be confidential information as provided by law.

Disposal of unused, discontinued/recalled, or expired medication shall be in compliance with federal and state law. Prior to disposal school personnel shall make a reasonable attempt to return medication by providing written notification that expired, discontinued, or unused medications need to be picked up. If medication is not picked up by the date specified, disposal shall be in accordance with the disposal procedures for the specific category of medication.

Conferences

Time for parent-teacher conferences is scheduled at each school a minimum of twice per year. If a family is unable to attend, or unable to meet with a specific teacher during the scheduled time, it is the responsibility of the teacher to communicate with the parent/guardian or arrange another conference time. Principals can assist teachers with this if requested. Teachers must attend all eight hours of fall conferences to be eligible for the flex day in November and all eight hours of spring conferences to be eligible for the flex day in March.

Teachers are expected to keep families informed of student progress as well as significant behavior problems which may exist. A record should be kept of conversations with parents/guardians about their child's progress.

A systematic record of each student's progress must be maintained. Use of work folders, portfolios, student self-evaluation checklists, and anecdotal records provide the student, teacher, and parent with an ongoing record of accomplishments.

Confidential Information/Safeguarding

For purposes of this Handbook, confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

- **Personally Identifiable Information or "PII."** PII includes all of the following information:
 - Student's name and name of student's parent, guardian, or other family members;
 - Student's address;
 - Student or Employee Social Security Number, Student ID Number; and
 - Other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student or employee that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student or employee with reasonable certainty.

- **Student Educational Records.** Student Educational Records include any information directly related to a student and maintained by WDMCS as defined by the Federal Educational Records Privacy Act
- **Student Health Records.** Student Health Records include all Individual Health Plan (“IHP”) information including IHP assessments; Individualized Educational Plans (“IEP”)
- **Passwords.** All passwords used by employees for access to WDMCS devices, software, vendors, or other
- **WDMCS Personnel Information.**
- **Financial Information** includes any bank account number and/or WDMCS issued credit card account number.

Some employees may have a need to access certain Confidential Information to complete assigned duties. If an Employee has access to any Confidential Information, the employee shall take reasonable measures to safeguard this information from disclosure. These shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Never share user names or passwords with anyone, including a co-worker.
- Do not leave PII unattended on a desk, printer, fax machine, or copier.
- Appropriately destroy all printed and electronic copies of PII.
- Complete all assigned training regarding cyber-security.
- Report to a supervisor for any suspected incident of a breach of Confidential Information.

Field Trips and Excursions ([Board Policy 606.03](#))

The Board of Education recognizes that a properly planned, well-conducted and carefully supervised field trip can be a vital part of the curriculum. As such, student trips of significant value are encouraged.

Field trips will have the approval of the building principal or designee in advance of the trip. Consent of the pupil’s parent or guardian is required in advance. Schools will establish provisions to cover the costs of field trips.

Activities other than interscholastic competitive events require Board approval if they require out of state travel and/or if they involve trips where students will be staying overnight. Such trips will have the approval of the principal, the appropriate director, the superintendent and the Board of Education. Such trip requests should be submitted in sufficient time to receive prior Board approval.

Interscholastic competitive events that are an extension of the activity program sponsored by the District may involve unforeseen travel for student participation in the events. Such trips will have the approval of the principal, the appropriate director, and the superintendent. The superintendent and Board President will report such trips to the Board.

Health Services/School Nurses

The services of the school nurse are available to students. If a student becomes ill during the day, the student is to ask the teacher for a pass from class and go immediately to the nurse’s office. If it is necessary for the student to go home, the parents will be contacted and arrangements made to take or send the student home. Under no circumstances are students to

go home or leave the school grounds without contacting the office or the nurse. If a student is seriously injured or becomes ill, every effort will be made to contact the parents immediately.

Restraint and Seclusion of a Student ([Board Policy 503.02](#) and [Board Policy 503.04](#))

Board Policy 503.02: EMPLOYEE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH A STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE WITH A STUDENT

The use of corporal punishment, mechanical restraint and/or prone restraint is prohibited in all schools. Corporal punishment is defined as the intentional physical punishment of a student. It includes the use of unreasonable or unnecessary physical force or physical contact made with the intent to harm or cause pain. No employee is prohibited from any of the following which are not considered corporal punishment:

Using reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain, in order to accomplish any of the following:

- To quell a disturbance or prevent an act that threatens physical harm to any person.
- To obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object(s) within a student's control.
- For the purposes of self-defense or defense of others as provided for in Iowa Code section 704.3.
- For the protection of property as provided for in Iowa Code section 704.4 or 704.5.
- To remove a disruptive student from class or any area of school premises or from school-sponsored activities off school premises.
- To protect a student from the self-infliction of harm.
- To protect the safety of others.

The student's parents or guardians will be notified.

Using incidental, minor, or reasonable physical contact to maintain order and control, not designed or intended to cause pain.

Mechanical restraint means the use of a device as a means of restricting a student's freedom of movement. Mechanical restraint does not mean a device used by a trained individual for specific approved therapeutic or safety purposes for which the device was designed and, if applicable, prescribed, including restraints for medical immobilization, adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without use of such devices or mechanical supports; and vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle.

Prone restraint means any restraint in which the student is held face down on the floor.

Reasonable force should be commensurate with the circumstances of the situation. The following factors should be considered in using reasonable physical force for the reasons stated in this policy:

1. The size and physical, mental, and psychological condition of the student;
2. The nature of the student's behavior or misconduct provoking the use of physical force;
3. The instrumentality used in applying the physical force;
4. The extent and nature of resulting injury to the student, if any including mental and psychological injury;
5. The motivation of the school employee using physical force.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

Board Policy 503.04: PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION OF STUDENTS

It is the goal of the district that all students can learn and grow in a safe and peaceful environment that nurtures the student and models respect for oneself and others. On occasion, trained district employees and others may have to use behavior management interventions, physical restraint and/or seclusion of students. The goal of these interventions is to promote the dignity, care, safety, welfare and security of each child and the school community. With this objective in mind, the district will prioritize the use of the least restrictive behavioral interventions appropriate for the situation.

Physical restraint means a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move the student's arms, legs, body, or head freely. Physical restraint does not mean a technique used by trained school personnel, or used by a student, for the specific and approved therapeutic or safety purposes for which the technique was designed and, if applicable, prescribed. Physical restraint does not include instructional strategies, such as physically guiding a student during an educational task, hand-shaking, hugging, or other non-disciplinary physical contact.

Seclusion means the involuntary confinement of a child in a seclusion room or area from which the child is prevented or prohibited from leaving; however, preventing a child from leaving a classroom or school building is not considered seclusion. Seclusion does not include instances when a school employee is present within the room and providing services to the child, such as crisis intervention or instruction.

Physical restraint or seclusion is reasonable or necessary only:

- To prevent or terminate an imminent threat of bodily injury to the student or others; or
- To prevent serious damage to property of significant monetary value or significant non monetary value or importance; or
- When the student's actions seriously disrupt the learning environment or when physical restraint or seclusion is necessary to ensure the safety of the student or others; and
- When less restrictive alternatives to seclusion or physical restraint would not be effective, would not be feasible under the circumstances, or have failed in preventing or terminating the imminent threat or behavior; and
- When the physical restraint or seclusion complies with all applicable laws.

- Prior to using physical restraint or seclusion, employees must receive training in accordance with the law. Any individual who is not employed by the district but whose duties could require the individual to use or be present during the use of physical restraint or seclusion on a student will be invited to participate in the same training offered to employees on this topic.

When required by law, the superintendent or the superintendent's designee will ensure a post-occurrence debriefing meeting is held, maintain documentation and fulfill all reporting requirements for each occurrence of physical restraint or seclusion as required by law.

Cross Reference: 503.02 Employee Physical Contact with a Student and Employee Use of Reasonable Force with a Student

Search and Seizure ([Board Policy 502.09](#))

School officials may, without a search warrant, search a student, student lockers, student desks, student backpacks (or any other container used by a student for holding or carrying personal belongings of any kind), student work areas, student electronic devices, or student automobiles to maintain order and discipline in the schools, promote the educational environment and protect the safety and welfare of students, school personnel and others on school premises or at school-sponsored activities. School authorities may seize any illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials discovered in the search. The district will make a reasonable effort to notify parents/guardians prior to searching a student's electronic device.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

West Des Moines Community Schools provides a confidential resource to help students and a student's immediate family members with guidance and support for a variety of concerns, including: school-life balance, emotional issues, substance abuse, and more. SAP counseling professionals will work with students to understand concerns and connect them with appropriate resources.

The first three sessions are free and SAP services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800-327-4692.

Student Injuries

Students who suffer injuries should be brought to the nurse's office. The school nurse maintains a record of all accidents resulting in injuries to students. Any change in the student's condition occurring throughout the day should also be made known to the nurse.

Injury to a student shall be promptly reported by the building administrator or designee to Administrative Services on the WDMCS Student Incident Report.

Technology

Technology Use By Staff ([Board Policy 605.09](#))

District-provided technology tools and resources are the property of the district and are offered for the advancement and promotion of learning and teaching. The use of these resources will be consistent with the district's educational mission and policies, as well as state and federal laws

and regulations. Staff will participate in staff development and training activities in order to keep their skills up to date as is appropriate for the staff members' assignment.

Laptop/Mobile Device User Agreement ([Board Policy 605.09](#))

As determined by employee group, WDMCS employees have been issued the following equipment: laptop, power cord, and carrying case ("Tech Equipment"). Employee agrees that the equipment is in good working order at the time the equipment is issued to employees. If the employee retires or resigns from WDMCS, all equipment must be returned to the employee's supervisor, or to another designee. If an employee needs assistance with Tech Equipment or if there is any damage to Tech Equipment, the employee should notify the Technology Help Desk through the WDMCS Staff webpage.

The employee is responsible for taking reasonable precautions to secure the Tech Equipment in such a manner that it will not be subject to theft or damage. Loss, theft or damage to the Tech Equipment must be reported to WDMCS Technology Department. Employees may be responsible for loss, theft, and/or damage to Tech Equipment. Employee use of WDMCS-issued laptops or other mobile devices must be consistent with applicable law, District policies, and sound professional judgment.

Employees are also expected to comply with all state and federal privacy laws and regulations. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and personally identifiable information. Employees must refrain from taking photographs, audio or videos of students without the written, informed consent of the student's parent or legal guardian. Violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Telephones

School district and personal phones are to be used appropriately at times that do not conflict with employee duties. The district provides telephones to employees because communication is essential for the performance of their duties. In addition, the district provides a voice mail system which permits employees to receive and retrieve messages from locations outside of their offices.

The landline telephones provided by the district to employees are to be used primarily for school business. Employees may use land line telephones for personal business, provided such personal use is limited in frequency and duration and does not interfere with the performance of an employee's job.

Use of Personal Devices During Work Hours

Personal network devices may, in some situations, be allowed to connect to the district network and devices. Staff seeking to connect their devices to district equipment and networks agree that the contents of these personal devices may be inspected by district personnel on request and in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

All WDMCS-issued or personal electronic devices (including smart phones, tablets, cell phones) are not to be used during the employee's supervisory, instructional, or "on-the-clock" time unless the use is related to the performance of employee's assigned duties. Personal communications

should be made during a time that does not interfere with employee's assigned duties; employees must ensure student and staff safety is a priority.

WDMCS District Departments

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services department oversees the Business Services, Nutrition, Operations, and Transportation departments. The WDMCS Chief Financial Officer (CFO) leads a talented group of individuals who support Business Services, Nutrition, Operations, and Transportation.

Business Services

The learning that occurs in our classrooms is supported by quality facilities and sound financial management. WDMCS' Business Services department oversees a \$154 million budget and more than 1.5 million square feet of building space.

The department works with representatives in the community and staff to ensure our buildings and funding support student learning. Learn more about [WDMCS budgets online](#).

Nutrition

WDMCS' Nutrition department participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs. Meals and snacks must meet the standards set forth by the USDA. The department oversees breakfasts and lunches throughout the school year and helps provide a summer food service program to ensure children continue to receive nutrition meals. Learn more about [nutrition services, free and reduced meal qualifications, and meal pricing online](#).

Operations

The WDMCS Operations department provides maintenance and custodial services for more than 1.5 million square feet of space, including more than 500 classrooms. It also provides services that support the delivery of education to our students. For example, our warehouse completes work orders, stores and transfers materials, textbooks, and food supplies. Learn more about [current projects online](#).

Transportation

The WDMCS Transportation Department strives to serve the needs of our students and to provide safe, efficient transportation to school and school-related activities. Free transportation is provided to the following groups meeting the listed criteria (Iowa Code Section 285.1):

- Grades K-8 students living more than two miles from their assigned schools as determined by their primary residence.
- Grades 9-12 students living more than three miles away from their assigned schools as determined by their primary residence.
- Involuntary Transfers, who are students transferred by the district to a school other than their designated attendance center.

Students who do not qualify for free transportation and live outside the walk zone for their assigned school are eligible for paid transportation. Transportation is not available for families who live inside the walk zone.

Any student who lives in the paid transportation area and qualifies for the free and reduced-priced meal program may also apply for free and reduced-priced bus pass fees. A voluntary transfer is a student who attends a school other than the assigned school within the district due to a family request granted by the district. Voluntary transfer students may ride a district school bus if they meet the established criteria. For more detailed information on transportation, visit <https://www.wdmcs.org/our-district/departments/transportation>.

Community Education

Community Education is the outreach department of WDMCS. It provides opportunities for learning, service, and fun to people of all ages and serves the needs of the community by connecting people, ideas, and resources. Learn more about the opportunities available through Community Education online at <https://communityed.wdmcs.org/community-education/about-us>.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department works in partnership with students, staff, and the community to provide a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where each student and employee can belong and thrive. The West Des Moines Community School District is actively engaged in ongoing equity training, capacity building, and learning opportunities for students and staff. Equity work is supported by an Executive Director, equity leads, and teams at each of our school buildings. Learn more online at <https://www.wdmcs.org/our-district/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department oversees one of our district's greatest resources – its employees. The department strives to provide students and parents with a talented, knowledgeable, and dedicated workforce by:

- Reaching out locally and nationally to recruit quality and diverse staff members;
- Supporting professional development and training; and
- Fostering an engaging and caring work environment.

The Human Resources supports more than 1,600 employees and substitutes. Learn more about the [human resources department and available career opportunities online](#).

Communications Department

The Communications Department supports WDMCS district-wide and school-specific communication. From weather alerts and crisis notifications to event reminders and sharing student success stories, the Communications Department provides timely, relevant information to district staff, students, families and the broader community.

Teaching and Learning Services

WDMCS has long been known for offering a comprehensive education with variety, depth, and rigor. The Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Services leads a talented group of individuals who oversee the following areas: Curriculum, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Gifted and Talented (GT), Homeless Youth, Home Schooling, Project-Based Learning Network (PBLN) Reading Resource, Special Education, and Title I.

Curriculum

WDMCS curriculum is embedded in sound, successful, and researched-based perspectives of the past, yet continues to be a fluid, dynamic instrument of the present. The teachers of WDMCS endeavor to implement ideas and skills that reflect the ever-changing technology and cultural changes of our society and needs of our learners.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

At WDMCS, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is designed instruction that supports English Learners (ELs) in developing and enhancing their English language skills in order to acquire academic content and language. ESOL instruction is primarily in English.

All new students to WDMCS are required to fill out a Home Language Survey. If it is evident the student has a native language other than English, the child and family are referred to the child's designated school for registration and assessment for possible language services. Learn more about [ESOL services online](#).

Gifted and Talented

West Des Moines Community Schools provides programming for gifted and talented learners. In grades K-12, Gifted/Talented provides learners with ideas and resources for differentiated experiences. In addition to differentiated classroom experiences, students meet in small groups in their own buildings with specially trained teachers to work on group and individual projects according to their needs, abilities, and interests. Learn more about [Gifted/Talented online](#).

Homeless Youth ([Board Policy 501.16](#))

West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS) believes all students should have access to a free, appropriate public education. WDMCS will ensure that homeless children and youth have equal/equitable access to the same free, appropriate public education as other children and youth.

The term “homeless children and youth” means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
 - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled up”);
 - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

To help ensure that homeless children and youth have a full opportunity to enroll, attend, and succeed at school, the board shall:

- Designate a WDMCS employee, Dr. Kim Davis, as the local homeless children and youth liaison;
- Provide training opportunities for staff so staff may help identify and meet the needs of homeless children and youth;
- Remove barriers, including those associated with fees, fines, and absences, to the identification, enrollment, retention, attendance and/or success in school for homeless children and youth;
- Ensure collaboration and coordination with other service providers;
- Ensure transportation is provided in accordance with legal requirements;
- Provide stability in school assignment according to the child's best interests;
- Ensure the privacy of student records, including information about a homeless child or youth's living situation, as provided by applicable law;
- Engage in the dispute resolution process for decisions relating to the educational placement of homeless children and youth as provided by applicable law; and
- Prohibit the segregation of a homeless child or youth from other students enrolled in the district.

The superintendent may develop an administrative process or procedures to implement this policy. [Learn more about enrollment procedures and support services available for homeless youth online.](#)

Home Schooling

The WDMCS Home School Assistance Program has been offering support to families who wish to educate their children at home since the early 1990s. Today, more than 125 home-schooled students are enrolled in grades K-12. Teacher assistance and enrichment classes are provided to supplement parents' home schooling efforts. Students can now take writing, science, physical education, Spanish, drama, and art enrichment classes. In addition to these classes, a wide array of field trips are provided throughout the year. [Learn more about homeschooling support online.](#)

Special Education

The goals for our Special Education program are aligned with state law and the federal Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) law, which:

- Assures all children with disabilities are provided a free, appropriate, public education designed to meet their unique needs.
- Protects children's rights and the rights of their parents or guardians.
- Assists state and local districts in providing education that assesses students' strengths and weaknesses and assures the effectiveness of the educational efforts.

Families who move to the West Des Moines Community School District and have a child with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will find similar student-focused programming

and services at each of our schools. [Learn more about Special Education support services online.](#)

Technology

West Des Moines Community Schools strives to create a technology-rich environment for its entire learning community. It has been a state and national leader in making a wide range of technologies available to students, staff and other learners.

In order to provide cost effective and reliable services, the district utilizes a fiber optic wide area network that connects all district facilities. The creation of this network was created through WestNET, a cooperative partnership between the West Des Moines Community Schools, City of West Des Moines, City of Clive, City of Urbandale, and the Iowa Communications Network. Through the use of Infinite Campus, the district provides students and families with live access to grades, attendance, and other student information. In addition, Infinite Campus also has a phone notification system, which places automated phone calls to parents for weather related notifications. [Learn more about WDMCS technology services online.](#)



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The West Des Moines Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and socioeconomic status in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equal Opportunity Coordinator, Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Culture and Access, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265; Phone: 515-633-5040; Email jokd@wdmcs.org. (Adherence to bona fide occupational/educational qualifications will not be interpreted as discriminatory.)