

NRHEG

Public Schools



Employee Handbook

2025-2026

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Introduction

We appreciate the service of all staff members and recognize their contributions on behalf of students.

This employee handbook is provided to highlight important information, including general employment policies and requirements that will be useful to you as an employee of NRHEG Public Schools. It is intended to provide guidance and support to you in your position; it is not intended to be legal advice.

This employee handbook is not all-inclusive. In addition to the general information outlined in it, all employees are expected to familiarize themselves with the information and abide by all School Board policies and procedures. All school district policies and related forms are available in their entirety on the District website.

This employee handbook does not replace your collective bargaining agreement. Please consult your collective bargaining agreement or employee work agreement for specific information on the terms and conditions of your employment. If you have any questions related to your terms of employment, please contact your building administrator or the Superintendent.

The information in this handbook is subject to change at any time. This is not an employment contract and does not create a contractual obligation of any kind.

District Strategic Plan

The NRHEG Strategic Plan was created with input from parents, community members, business leaders, students, staff, and teachers and approved by the School Board.

NRHEG Strategic Plan

Belief Statements

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) School District believes:

1. in challenging all students to reach their full potential as confident and responsible thinkers, problem solvers, and decision-makers;
2. that education is a collaborative partnership among students, parents, staff, and the community that results in a positive impact on the entire school community;
3. in supporting staff by providing them with the necessary resources to assist students in reaching their full potential;
4. in a system of personal accountability to include the school board, administration, staff, students, parents, and the community;
5. in providing a comprehensive educational program that will offer our students an opportunity to succeed as adults in the community, college, career, and real-world;
6. that a safe, respectful, and caring environment, coupled with a strong educational foundation, promotes self-esteem and facilitates success; and
7. that we need to operate and maintain efficient and secure facilities for students and staff.

Mission Statements

Empowering students with knowledge and skills to succeed.

Vision Statement

To be the school district of choice, inspiring excellence in academics, arts, and activities.

Focus Areas

1. **Student Achievement:** Achieve the goals of the World's Best Workforce for all students in the district; and expand how we define, measure, and report student achievement with a focus on each student's mastery in areas that extend beyond traditional academic indicators.
2. **Student Support:** Develop and implement a sustainable and well-defined support system that enables all students and staff to achieve at high levels.
3. **Facilities:** Ensure that the facilities and infrastructure of the school district are designed to optimize staff performance and student learning in a safe, sustainable, and attractive environment.
4. **Workforce:** Recruit and retain quality educators and provide opportunities for the development of all staff.
5. **Communication & Marketing:** Foster partnerships with parents, communities, businesses, and organizations in support of the district's mission and vision; and develop a multi-faceted public relations plan that is designed to promote the school district.
6. **Finance:** Preserve the district's strong financial standing while maintaining programs, services, and facilities at maximum efficiency.

Employee Benefits

The District offers a broad range of benefits to employees. Actual benefits and eligibility levels will vary based on the employee group you are a part of. For detailed information about employee benefits, and the specific benefits for which you are eligible, please review the Employment Agreement for your employee group or visit the Staff Resources pages on our school website. The insurance benefits offered by the District include

- * Medical
- * Dental
- * Term Group Life
- * VEBA/HSA Accounts
- * Supplemental Life
- * Flexible Spending Accounts
- * Long-Term Disability
- * AFLAC
- * 403(b) District Match
- * Employee Assistance Program

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment for insurance benefits takes place on an annual basis, usually in May for all benefits other than the Flexible Spending Account. FSA open enrollment is in November. During this time, you will be provided the option to make changes to your benefit elections. Any changes made outside of this enrollment period will require a qualifying “life event” such as marriage, the birth of a child, etc.

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA)

All certified employees are required to contribute to TRA through payroll deductions at the current employee rate. The district is also required to contribute to TRA, on your behalf, at the current employer rate. Amounts contributed to TRA are done on a per pay period basis. Contact information for TRA is as follows:

Teachers Retirement Association
60 Empire Dr., Suite 400
St Paul MN 55103-4000
651.296.2409 or 800.657.3669
www.tra.state.mn.us

Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA)

Non-certified employees, earning over \$425 per month in gross wages, are required to contribute to PERA at the current rate. The district is also required to contribute to PERA, on your behalf, at the current employer rate. Amounts contributed to PERA are done on a per-pay period basis. Contact information for PERA is as follows:

Public Employees Retirement Association
60 Empire Dr., Suite 200
St Paul MN 55103-2088
651.296.7460 or 800.652.9026
www.mnpera.org

District Policies

District policies and procedures are a way for the School Board to establish rules and expectations to guide acceptable behavior and ensure that the school and work environment is safe for students and staff. As an employee, you are accountable for knowing, understanding, and complying with all School Board policies. The policies highlighted in this handbook are just a few of the policies that impact your work. You can access all current Board Policies on our webpage.

[Policy 103 Complaints](#)

[Policy 401 Equal Employment Opportunity](#)

[Policy 404 Employment Background Checks](#)

[Policy 404 FORM Employment Background Check](#)

[Policy 406 Public and Private Personal Data](#)

[Policy 410 Family and Medical Leave](#)

[Policy 414 Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect](#)

[Policy 418 Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School](#)

Note: The Drug-Free Workplace Act requires that school district employees be notified by a published statement of the prohibition of the use of controlled substances and actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibition. 41 United States Code section 8103; 34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 84.

[Policy 419 Tobacco Free Environment](#)

[Policy 424 License Status](#)

[Policy 425 Staff Development and Mentoring](#)

[Policy 515 Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records](#)

[Policy 524 Internet Acceptable Use and Safety](#)

Note: Materials prepared by employees for the purpose of teaching and presenting to students is property of ISD 2168 and the district retains rights to such materials.

Use of School Property and Equipment

School property and equipment are intended for official school use only. Staff members are not permitted to use or remove school-owned items—such as tables, chairs, technology, or other equipment—for personal use or private events (e.g., graduation parties, family gatherings, etc.). Any exceptions must be approved in advance by the administration.

Workplace Expectations

The School District recognizes each employee's right to individual respect and dignity and is committed to establishing and maintaining a professional, respectful, and productive working environment for all employees. As a result, employees are prohibited from engaging in behavior that substantially interferes with work, including behavior that is disrespectful, obscene, inappropriate, offensive, or bullying.

The School District defines bullying as repeated conduct that is intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harmful, is objectively offensive, and is conducted by one or more persons against another or others at the place of work or during employment.

Bullying may be intentional or unintentional. However, when an allegation of bullying is made, the intention of the alleged bully is irrelevant and will not be given consideration when deciding on discipline. As in sexual harassment, it is the effect of the behavior upon the individual(s) that is important.

The following types of behavior are considered examples of bullying and will not be tolerated:

- Verbal bullying: Slandering, ridiculing, or maligning a person or their family; persistent name-calling that is hurtful, insulting, or humiliating; using a person as the target of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks.
- Physical bullying: Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault (physical attack), or threat of physical assault; damage to a person's work area or property.
- Gesture bullying: Non-verbal threatening gestures or looks that convey threatening messages.
- Exclusion: Socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities.
- Social Media/Cyberbullying: Using technology or other electronic communication for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, abusing, or harming another in the

workplace to the extent that it substantially and materially disrupts an employee's right to a professional and respectful working environment.

Any employee who feels they have been victimized by bullying must report the matter to their supervisor or to the Human Resources department. In addition, employees who witness prohibited conduct or possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a staff member is a target of bullying will report the prohibited conduct to the employee's supervisor or to the Human Resources department.

Dress

All staff are expected to dress in an appropriate manner, commensurate with the staff member's position. Attire should be neat and clean and should reflect the staff member's role in providing a high-quality education to the learners in the District. Attire or other articles that convey obscene messages or messages that are designed to incite hostilities in other staff members, students, or visitors are prohibited while the employee is at work. Custodial and food service employees are provided with school district-issued work shirts and, in some cases shoes, and are required to wear such attire unless otherwise authorized.

Political Activities

Employees of NRHEG Public Schools are public employees and, as such, may have a stake in political decisions and events. Employees are encouraged to express their political views and participate in the political process as their own interests and values guide them. However, while on active duty time, employees must not engage in any political activity that could create the impression to the public that the School District, as a public body, endorses any particular candidate, party, or position, or encourages or discourages voting in a particular fashion.

Employees' Children at Work

The presence of children in the workplace with the employee's parent during the employee's workday should be avoided except in emergencies. This practice has been established to avoid disruptions in the job duties of the employee and co-workers, reduce liability, and help maintain the District's professional work environment.

If bringing a child to work with the employee is unavoidable, the employee must contact their supervisor as soon as possible to discuss the situation and request permission. Factors the supervisor will consider are the nature of the parent's work, the age of the child, how long the child needs to be present in the workplace, etc. Consideration will not be given to allowing a child with an illness to come to work with the employee

A child brought to the workplace in an unavoidable situation, and with the approval of the employee's supervisor, will be the responsibility of the employee and must be accompanied and under the direct supervision of the employee at all times.

Classroom Environment

The district strives to create a safe, inviting, and aesthetically pleasing building and classroom environment. Staff should limit the use of large items such as couches, overstuffed chairs, and other fabric or upholstered furniture, and pillows in classrooms due to the increased fire hazard and potential for allergens and indoor air quality problems.

Employee Name and Address Changes

Please report all name, address, and phone number changes to the District Office and your building's administrative office as soon as possible. Contact information will not be distributed to persons outside of the District without the employee's consent.

Storage of Personal Items on/in School District Property

School district lockers and storage areas, including locking desk drawers and/or locking cabinets, remain the property of the school district. The District reserves the right, at all times, to have authorized personnel conduct searches or inspections of employee lockers or storage areas. There is no general or specific expectation of privacy for items stored on/in school district property. If an employee uses a locker or other storage area at work, including a locking desk drawer or locking cabinet, the lock or key shall be provided by the district; no employee shall place a personal lock on the property of the district. Placing a personal lock on school district property may result in the forcible removal of the lock by whatever means necessary.

Policy 409

EMPLOYEE PUBLICATIONS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, INVENTIONS, AND CREATIONS

The purpose of this policy is to identify and reserve the proprietary rights of the school district to certain publications, instructional materials, inventions, and creations that employees may develop or create, or assist in developing or creating, while employed by the school district.

Reporting Criminal Charges or Arrests

To help us maintain a safe workplace, employees must report any arrest or criminal charge (misdemeanor or felony) that occurs while employed by the District. Minor traffic offenses do not need to be reported unless the employee is in a driving position or drives on District time. Employees must notify their direct supervisor and provide documentation (such as a police report or charging document) within two (2) business days of the arrest or charge.

The District does not take action based solely on an arrest; any decisions are based on the underlying facts and how they may affect the employee's duties or safety responsibilities. Failure to report, misrepresentation of the circumstances, or being unavailable for work due to incarceration may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Volunteers must also report any arrests, charges, or convictions before returning to volunteer service.

Workplace Communication

Website

The School District website, www.nrheg.k12.mn.us, contains a wide variety of information about the School District, our programs, employment policies, telephone numbers, upcoming events, and community education. Employees should familiarize themselves with the School District website and refer to it in order to obtain necessary information.

Email

As an employee of the School District, you will have access to the School District email system. Email is our primary source of providing information to our employees. Employees should review their messages as frequently during the day as their schedule allows and reply in a timely manner. It's a good practice to use the "out of office" feature on the email system when you will be gone for an extended period of time. School

District-assigned email accounts are the property of the School District and are intended to be used to conduct School District business.

Voicemail

Employees with voicemail should listen to their messages during the day as their schedule allows and return messages in a timely and responsive manner. It's a good practice to use the "extended absence" feature on the voicemail system when you will be gone for an extended period of time.

Mailboxes

An individual mailbox may be assigned to employees at their work site. Employees should check with their supervisor regarding expectations for checking their mail. Mailboxes

assigned in the buildings are the property of the School District and should be utilized for school district business.

Workplace Health, Safety, and Security

NRHEG Public Schools strives to achieve a work environment that is warm, friendly, and welcoming, and, at the same time, one that is safe and secure for all who use our building.

Job Safety

The School District is committed to developing and maintaining safe working environments. Help prevent injuries by observing general safety rules, removing hazards in the workplace, and immediately reporting unsafe conditions to the appropriate person. It is very important for all employees to follow safety guidelines to avoid injuries on the job. The following is a list of safety protocols all employees are required to follow:

- Know the locations of exits, fire extinguishers, alarms, Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), and first aid materials at the worksite.
- Seek information or training from the appropriate person when required to operate any equipment or handle any type of chemical.
- Abstain from attempting to lift or carry an object that is too heavy to handle. Seek help from another employee to minimize the potential for injury.
- Report any safety hazards and any information received from others that could impact the health and safety of others to a supervisor.
- Be aware of the surroundings and wear appropriate apparel for the current weather conditions and work environment.
- Report to a supervisor any information received regarding an individual who may be considering harming himself/herself or others.

Annual Employee Safety Training

The school district provides information and training to employees in a number of areas on an annual basis. These trainings, provided through Infinitec, are mandatory for all employees.

Building Access/Visitor Screening

Designated entrances at each site will be the only point(s) to enter and exit the building during normal operations. All school buildings shall remain locked during normal school hours. Anyone not employed by the District shall be required to check in at the building's main office or welcome desk, where individuals will be screened via the District's visitor screening system and issued a visitor pass before access to the building will be allowed.

Maintaining Secured Perimeters

Perimeter doors will be secured during school hours.

Security Badges

The District issues staff identification badges, which also serve as building access cards, to all staff and other authorized personnel. These badges are issued for the purpose of ensuring the safety of district employees, students, and visitors and protecting district property, and must be worn at all times when an employee is in a district building. Access cards are the property of the school district and must be returned upon termination of employment. Obsolete or unneeded access cards should be returned to the District Office or Building Office.

If an individual loses an access card or it is stolen, the individual must immediately report this to the office and also notify their immediate supervisor. There will be a \$5.00 fee assessed to individuals requesting a replacement card due to loss or theft. Faulty cards will be reissued at no cost to the employee.

Access cards are provided expressly for the purpose of conducting school district business. It is a violation of district policy for any individual to provide an access card issued by the district to someone other than the registered user. Any misconduct, misuse, or behavior deemed to be inappropriate by the Administration while the cardholder is in the facility after normal school hours will result in termination of entry access card privileges and possible disciplinary action.

Video Surveillance

Independent School District #2168 uses internal and external video surveillance for all district facilities.

Building Keys

District keys will be distributed on an as-needed basis. Your supervisor will determine if you require keys and will take the necessary steps to get them for you. Keys are the property of the school district and must be returned when changing work locations or upon termination of employment.

Wage Theft Law

Minnesota Statutes (Minn. Stat. §§ 175, 177, 181, 16C & 609) provides wage and hour protections for employees. Employees have a right to receive wages at the employee's rate(s) of pay or the rates required by law, whichever is greater, as well as the right to be paid at specific intervals on a regular payday. Each employee must receive written notice at the start of their employment conveying an accurate statement of pay, benefits, potential deductions, and other important information.

Work Schedule

Your supervisor determines an employee's specific work days and hours. Any time an employee is absent from work, they are required to submit a request for time off. Approval of such leave must be obtained prior to the absence, except when using sick leave for unplanned absences due to illness. All time off should be recorded in Frontline Absence Management

When all available paid leave has been exhausted, leave without pay may be granted by the district in limited situations, as provided in the applicable employee agreement or collective bargaining agreement. These situations are considered to be "once in a lifetime" occasions or are required by federal or state law.

Hourly employees must obtain supervisor approval prior to working any hours beyond their regularly scheduled workday. If the additional time is approved by your supervisor, you must include a note on your timecard providing an explanation and that approval was obtained.

Hourly Employees - Hours Worked Time Tracking

All hourly employees are required to check in and out of work each day, using Frontline Time and Attendance. This system is used for recording employees' time worked in lieu of paper timesheets.

To access Frontline Time and Attendance, click on the "Staff Resources" tab on the District web page at www.nrheg.k12.mn.us. Once there, click on the Frontline Time and Attendance (Employee) link.

The following are key points related to entering your time worked:

- You are allowed to clock in up to five minutes prior to your scheduled work time.
- Being ready to begin work at your scheduled start time is a requirement of your position. If you clock in or out a time earlier or later than your scheduled start time, you will be required to enter a note explaining the reason.
- The system will round to the nearest quarter hour (seven minutes and less rounds back, eight minutes and more rounds forward).

- You may not, under any circumstances, punch in or out for another employee.
- At the end of each day, you should review and approve your hours for that day, making sure to enter a note if it varies from your normal work schedule.

Breaks

The grid below provides the minimum required breaks according to MN State statutes M.S. 177.263 and M.S. 177.254. Please see your employee contract for negotiated break times.

Employees should work with their supervisors to determine their schedules and the best time for breaks to take place during their workday. An employee may not skip a paid work break to use it in lieu of an unpaid lunch. With supervisor approval, an employee may combine a break with their unpaid lunch break.

Scheduled to work (Hours)	Paid Breaks (Adequate time to use the restroom – 15 min or less)	Unpaid lunch – 30 minutes
Less than 4	-	-
4-5.75	(1)	-
7-7.5	(1)	(1)
8+	(2)	(1)

Leaves/Time-Off – Hourly Employees

Any time an employee is absent from work, they are required to submit a request for time off. Leave can be requested in quarter-hour increments. Approval of such leave must be obtained prior to the absence, except when using sick leave for unplanned absences due to illness. All time off should be recorded in Frontline.

When all available paid leave has been exhausted, leave without pay may be granted by the district in limited situations, as provided in the applicable Employee Agreement/Collective Bargaining Agreement. These situations are considered to be “once in a lifetime” occasions or are required by federal or state law.

Documents:

- [Unpaid Leave Administrative Regulation for Teachers and Paraprofessionals](#)
- [Unpaid Leave Request Form](#)

Leaves/Time-Off – Teachers and Salaried Employees

Teachers must enter their absence into the Frontline Absence Management System anytime they will be absent from work. This system tracks available leave and is used to secure substitute coverage for their absence. Staff should enter their absence(s) into the system, using the correct absence code, as early as possible to increase the likelihood of obtaining a substitute. If a substitute teacher is required, the amount of leave requested by the teacher must be equal to the amount of time a sub will be paid. (For example, if a teacher is out three hours, a half-day sub is required; thus, the teacher is required to request a half-day of leave.)

There are several new provisions under the Earned Safe and Sick Time (ESST) law that may apply to specific types of absences. One such provision is **Bereavement Leave**, which may, in certain circumstances, be used in conjunction with ESST. For further guidance, please refer to the official ESST State Statute or contact Mr. Meihak directly.

Additionally, please note that ESST may be used for the treatment of **mental illness** and for **preventive care**. However, it does not extend to general **mental health days**. The key distinction is that mental illness refers to a diagnosed condition by a licensed medical provider, whereas mental health, in this context, relates to non-diagnosed, stress-related concerns. As such, NRHEG Public Schools does not recognize general mental health days as an eligible use of ESST, in accordance with state guidelines.

Approval of leave must be obtained prior to the absence, except when using sick leave for unplanned absence due to illness. For absences other than unplanned sick leave, employees must include a note for the administrator as to the reason for the request for absence.

When all available paid leave has been exhausted, leave without pay may be granted by the district in limited situations, as provided in the applicable Employee Agreement/Collective Bargaining Agreement. These situations are considered to be “once in a lifetime” occasions or are required by federal or state law.

Documents:

- [Unpaid Leave Administrative Regulation for Teachers and Paraprofessionals](#)
- [Unpaid Leave Request Form](#)

Jury Duty

Employees who are called to serve on a jury, or subpoenaed to appear in court due to or because of their position with the school district, on a day when they are scheduled to report to work, shall remit payment received by the court to the district, excluding amounts paid for mileage, and receive their regular daily rate.

Emergency Closing

Reporting requirements if school is closed by the Superintendent, due to weather conditions or other emergencies, are provided in the master agreement for each union.

General Guidelines:

1. Teachers - work with students, and the day counts as a work day.
2. Hourly employees have four options:
 - a. Complete the staff development/training assigned by the department director or coordinator. To receive full-day pay, approximately half (or more) of an employee's regular time should be spent on training. i.e., an 8-hour-a-day employee should complete at least 4 hours of training.
 - b. Skip the training and use a PERSONAL DAY
 - c. Skip the training and take it as an UNPAID DAY
 - d. Skip the training and take it as a sick/ESST day—but the following criteria must be followed for a sick/ESST day.

*MS 181.9447, Subd. 1(4), (see page 7), allows use of ESST when the employee's place of business is closed "due to weather or other public emergency." **The Minnesota Department of Labor has indicated the place of business transitions to an employee's home on an e-learning day, therefore, the place of business is not closed.** However, if the employee has a "need to care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed due to weather or other public emergency," they may be eligible to use ESST.*

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care
- To bond with a child (leave must be taken within 1 year of the child's birth or placement)
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition
- For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee
- unable to perform the employee's job
- For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is an employee's spouse, child or parent
- An eligible employee who is a covered service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member with a serious injury or illness.

An employee who works for a covered employer must meet three criteria to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must:

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;

- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave; and
- Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

A doctor's note will be required for any absence exceeding three days. While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health coverage as if the employees were not on leave.

Generally, employees must give 30 days advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the usual FMLA procedures.

Employee Rights and the FMLA application are available on Frontline Central under Family and Medical Leave Act. Contact the Human Resources department for additional information or questions specific to your situation.

Minnesota Paid Leave (MNPL)

Effective January 1, 2026, the State of Minnesota will implement the Minnesota Paid Leave program (hereafter referred to as "MNPL"), providing eligible employees with paid time off for family and medical leave reasons. MNPL benefits are funded through premium contributions divided evenly between employee and employer, and payable to the State of Minnesota or a private insurance provider; the District has currently chosen to partner directly with the State of Minnesota, instead of a private insurance provider.

The information contained below is intended to assist employees in navigating the MNPL process and benefits. If, at any time, an employee has a question regarding MNPL, please contact the Human Resources department.

Premiums: MNPL is funded by payroll premiums shared equally between the District and employees. The total premium rate is subject to rates established by the State of Minnesota or a private insurance provider. The District pays 50% of the total premium, and employees will provide the remaining 50% of the total premium through automatic payroll deduction beginning January 1, 2026. The premium rate may be adjusted annually on a calendar-year basis by the State or private insurance provider. Any changes will be communicated to employees in advance.

Eligibility: Eligibility determinations for MNPL benefits are made by the State of Minnesota or private insurance provider pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 268B. Generally, to be eligible for MNPL, an employee must:

- Meet the requirements for the reasons for leave; and
- Work at least 50% of the time from a location in Minnesota, including employees who work from home or spend time in other states occasionally; and
- Meet the financial eligibility requirements by having earned over a specific amount of wages as defined by Minnesota law at the time of the requested leave.

Benefit Amount: An employee's weekly MNPL benefits are calculated and determined by the State of Minnesota or private insurance provider pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 268B.

The amount determined is based on the employee's income level, and the maximum employees will receive will be between 55% and 90% of their regular wages while on MNPL, with a maximum weekly benefit set at the state average wage.

Benefit Year: The benefit year is a 12-month period measured from the date of the employee's first day of MNPL taken.

Leave Entitlement and Usage: The State of Minnesota or private insurance provider may approve MNPL leave for the following conditions in a benefit year:

- Up to 12 weeks of medical leave to take care of self for a serious health condition, including pregnancy, childbirth, recovery, or surgery; and/or
- Up to 12 weeks of family leave to:
 - Bond with a child through birth, adoption, or foster placement; and/or
 - Care for a family member with a serious health condition; and/or
 - Support a military family member called to active duty; and/or
 - Receive covered types of care for self or a family member because of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.

Employees may take both types of leave in the same year, but employees cannot exceed twenty (20) weeks total within a single benefit year. An employee's individual benefit year begins the first day the employee utilizes MNPL. There is no waiting period for MNPL if the employee is granted the benefit.

Definitions:

"Family member" includes:

- Spouse or partner; and/or
- Child (including biological, adopted, step, or foster children, or a child the employee raises, even if the employee is not legally related); and/or
- Parent or person who raised the employee; and/or
- Sibling; and/or

- Grandchild or grandparent; and/or
- In-laws (including son, daughter, father, or mother); and/or
- Anyone close to the employee who depends on the employee like family, even if not related by blood

“Serious health condition” means a physical or mental illness, injury, impairment, condition, or substance use disorder. Taking care of self for this serious condition may involve evaluation, treatment, inpatient care, recovery, and/or not being able to perform regular work, attend school, and/or complete regular daily activities. This includes childbirth, conditions related to pregnancy, and/or surgery.

Supplementing Pay: Employees will receive wage replacement directly from the State of Minnesota or private insurance provider based on the statutory formula, which provides a percentage of regular wages up to the program maximum. Employees may use accrued vacation, personal and/or sick leave to “top off” payments from the program. Employees can choose to use these supplemental payments to make up the difference between Paid Leave and their regular wages while on leave. At no time can you be paid more than your current contract rate. Accrued leave will be deducted in the smallest amount allowed to use as indicated in your contract.

Use of Vacation and/or Sick Leave in Lieu of MNPL: If an employee needs time off that would qualify for MNPL, they can choose to use accumulated leave benefits (e.g., ESST, vacation) instead. However, this leave still counts toward their leave length entitlement under MNPL.

Benefit Contributions During Leave: Employees who apply for Minnesota Paid Leave Benefits will be placed on unpaid leave with Independent School District 2168. Unless the employee revokes coverage while on MNPL, District will continue to provide insurance benefit coverages for an employee on MNPL under the same conditions as the coverage was provided before the employee took leave. When employees are approved for leave under MNPL, they will receive wage replacement directly from the State of Minnesota or the private insurance provider. If employees are not choosing to top off with their accrued leave, employees will not receive regular pay from the District during the period they are receiving MNPL benefits. Because no payroll is processed through the District during this time, normal payroll deductions (including, but not limited to: health insurance premiums; dental coverage premiums; vision coverage premiums; life insurance premiums; retirement contributions; flexible spending accounts; union dues; and/or other elected deductions) will not occur automatically.

Employees are responsible for making arrangements in advance with the Human Resources department to ensure continued coverage of any benefits that require employee contributions during their MNPL period. Payment arrangements must be made before MNPL begins, whenever possible to avoid interruption of benefits.

Pension Contributions During Leave: Pension contributions (TRA and PERA) are not deducted from MNPL payments. Employees should contact TRA or PERA about service credit purchases related to their use of MNPL.

Coordination with Other Leave Programs: MNPL runs concurrently, where applicable, with other leave laws and district benefits, including but not limited to:

- FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act): Paid Leave and FMLA will generally run concurrently when the reason for leave qualifies under both laws.
- PPL (Paid Parental Leave): MNPL will run concurrently with State of Minnesota pregnancy and parenting leave.
- Child Care Leave (in master agreements, if applicable): MNPL will run concurrently with Child Care Leave as it exists in various master agreements.

The Human Resources department will assist employees in coordinating benefits to ensure compliance and prevent duplication of pay.

Intermittent Leave Increments: Intermittent leave through MNPL may be taken in increments as small as one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) day. Employees must schedule intermittent leave in a manner that does not unduly disrupt District operations, subject to reasonable notice requirements.

Employees may apply for intermittent leave in most cases, provided the leave is reasonable and appropriate to the needs of the individual requiring care.

- Eligibility. In addition to the other eligibility requirements under MNPL, employees seeking intermittent leave must have at least eight (8) hours of accumulated leave [unless more than thirty (30) days have lapsed since taking the initial leave].
- Notice. In situations where employees seek MNPL on an intermittent basis, employees must make a reasonable effort to provide written notice to the Human Resources department of the need for intermittent leave before applying for MNPL benefits.
- Increments of Leave & Maximum Number of Hours. Employees may take intermittent leave in increments as small as one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) day. If eligible for intermittent leave, the District allows a maximum of 480 hours of intermittent leave in any 12-month period. After reaching the maximum amount of allowed

intermittent leave, employees may request continuous MNPL provided the continuous leave does not exceed the maximum amount of MNPL allowed by law. As part of the employee's responsibility to provide timely and appropriate notice, employees must provide District with the following:

- Proposed intermittent leave schedule; and
- A completed certification from a health care provider identifying the leave as necessary; and
- A reasonable estimate of the frequency and duration and treatment schedule for the leave.

Intermittent and Continuous Leave Limitations: After an employee has used 480 hours (12 weeks) of intermittent leave within a benefit year for the same qualifying reason, any additional leave for that reason may be required to be taken on a continuous basis for the remainder of the leave period. Employees should work with the Human Resources department to plan and schedule any extended or ongoing leave.

Attendance and Call-Out Procedures: Employees are required by law to begin their MNPL application through their employer before filing with the State of Minnesota or private insurance provider.

Employees must:

- Notify their supervisor and HR as soon as possible when a qualifying event occurs; and
- Follow the District's normal call-out procedures for any absences; and
- Complete the required Leave of Absence form located on the District website.

Failure to provide required notice may result in a delay of benefit approval or pay. The District will provide employees with all necessary forms and information for completing the application process.

Notice: Prior to starting a claim with the State of Minnesota or private insurance provider, employees must notify the Human Resources department of their intention to take leave by completing the Request for Leave form located on the District website and provide the Human Resources department with the appropriate supporting documents. If the need is foreseeable, employees must provide at least two (2) weeks notice prior to taking leave. If the leave is not foreseeable, employees may still be able to take leave under MNPL, but employees must give notice as soon as practicable, considering circumstances like medical emergencies or sudden changes. "As soon as practicable" generally means the same day or next day after becoming aware of the need for leave, unless a medical emergency prevents it.

Claim Submission and Completion: It is the employee's responsibility to initiate a claim and to provide all necessary supporting information and documents in a timely manner as required. If the employee fails to initiate a claim and/or provide all requested information within the required timelines, the claim may be denied or closed.

Determination of Claim Approval or Denial: The District does not make the determination of whether or not an employee's claim is approved or denied. The District will provide information to the State of Minnesota or private insurance provider as requested; however, the District does not determine the outcome of the claim.

Reinstatement: Upon return from covered MNPL, employees will be reinstated to their previous position or to an equivalent position, with the same status, pay, employment benefits, length-of-service credit, and seniority credit as of the date of leave as long as the employee has been employed by the District for a minimum of ninety (90) calendar days. Upon return to work, if it becomes evident that the employee is unable to perform the key essential functions of their position (with or without reasonable accommodation), the District may engage in an interactive process consistent with the American with Disability Act (ADA) and/or Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) and other applicable workplace policies, including workplace safety protocols, to determine appropriate next steps.

Termination of Employment During MNPL: MNPL benefits are not tied to continued employment; they are based on prior wage history and qualifying events. Employees who sever employment while on MNPL may still receive partial wage replacement benefits if they continue to meet MNPL eligibility requirements.

Retaliation: The District will not interfere with or retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with the MNPL statute.

Short Periods of Time Off – Guidelines for Teachers

We know that from time to time, you may need to be absent from the building for a short period of time (an hour or less). Here are the expectations for how these situations should be handled:

Half-Day or Full-Day Policy

Teachers may only record absences in half-day or full-day increments. If you need to be away from school for more than an hour—for example, to attend a child's parent-teacher

conference at another site or to watch your child’s daytime event—you will need to request a half-day of leave.

Short Periods of Time (an hour or less)

If you are able to make a special arrangement with a colleague to cover your class for an hour or less, you do not need to record an absence. The district would not compensate the colleague covering your assignment. These arrangements must always be reported to your principal, who needs to be informed when staff members are out of the building, and to monitor the usage of this special arrangement.

Additional Expectation for Teachers

Teachers who encounter an unusual situation that requires them to leave early or arrive late due to extenuating circumstances, outside of student contact time, must always communicate with their building principal. Together, you will determine whether an arrangement can be made for the missed work time or if paid leave is required.

The Golden Rules

1. If a substitute is being paid to cover your class, then an absence must be recorded to justify the cost of hiring a substitute.
2. Always assume paid time off is required for situations that require a teacher to arrive late or leave early, even when not during student contact time. The building principal has the final decision on classifying a situation as “unusual” and “due to extenuating circumstances”.

Building Differences

Each building and each person’s situation may have different levels of flexibility for coverage, so practices may not look exactly the same across sites. For example, elementary staff attending their elementary child’s special event may more easily find a colleague to cover, compared to a high school staff member needing to travel to the elementary site to attend the special event, or vice versa. While we strive for consistency, structure, and convenience, it will sometimes mean that things look a little different at each site.

Above all, communication is essential. Please notify your principal of any arrangements and use these opportunities with thoughtful consideration.

Short Periods of Time Off – Guidelines for Hourly Employees

We understand that occasionally you may need time away from work during the day. Here are the expectations for how these short absences should be managed:

Hourly Policy

Hourly employees may take Earned Safe and Sick Time off in one-hour increments. Requests for time off exceeding one hour will typically require the use of paid time off. The building principal will always attempt to hire a substitute. Personal Leave Time absences are allowed in full-day or half-day increments.

Short Periods of Time (an hour or less)

If you are able to make a special arrangement with a colleague to cover your assignment, you do not need to record an absence. The district would not compensate the colleague covering your assignment. These arrangements must always be reported to your principal, who needs to be informed when staff members are out of the building, and to monitor the usage of this special arrangement.

Additional Expectation for Hourly Employees

Staff members who encounter an unusual situation that requires them to leave early or arrive late due to extenuating circumstances must always communicate with their building principal. The building principal has the authority to require the use of paid time off in such situations.

The Golden Rules

1. If a substitute is being paid to cover your assignment, then an absence must be recorded to justify the cost of hiring a substitute.
2. Always assume paid time off is required for situations that require a staff member to arrive late or leave early. The building principal has the final decision on classifying a situation as “unusual” and “due to extenuating circumstances”.

Building Differences

Each building and each person’s situation may have different levels of flexibility for coverage, so practices may not look exactly the same across sites. For example, elementary staff attending their elementary child’s special event may more easily find a colleague to cover, compared to a high school staff member needing to travel to the elementary site to attend the event, or vice versa. While we strive for consistency, structure, and convenience, it will sometimes mean that things look a little different at each site.

Above all, communication is essential. Please notify your principal of any arrangements and use these opportunities with thoughtful consideration.

Complaints – Students, Employees, Parents, and Other Persons

The NRHEG School District takes all concerns or complaints by students, employees, parents, or other persons seriously. While written reports are encouraged, a complaint may be made verbally. A person may file a complaint at any level of the school district; i.e., principal, superintendent, or school board. However, persons are encouraged to file a complaint at the building level when appropriate. It is best to discuss concerns or complaints with the person most familiar with the incident, and if the concern or complaint is not satisfactorily addressed, to the principal or supervisor, superintendent, and school board.

[NRHEG School Board Policies](#)

**2025 - 2026 Staff Reporting Obligations for
Emergency School Closures, Late Starts, Early Dismissals and E-Learning Days**

References: Policy [602 Organization of School Calendar and School Day](#); [School Delays, Closure, and Early Release](#)

Employee Group	Emergency Closing <i>Snow Day</i>	Late Start <i>Unscheduled</i>	Early Dismissal	E-Learning Day* <i>Student Day of Instruction</i>
<p>Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principals ● Community Ed Director ● Building and Grounds Director ● Business Manager 	<p>Employees required to report to work. <i>Report as soon as road and weather conditions allow for safe travel; follow guidance of supervisor; paid regular day's pay.</i></p> <p><i>Remote work may be approved by a supervisor if the essential duties of the position can be performed remotely.</i></p>	<p>Report to work at normal start time and work regular hours.</p>	<p>If sent home, paid balance of scheduled hours.</p>	<p>Employees required to report to work. <i>Report as soon as road and weather conditions allow for safe travel; follow guidance of supervisor; paid regular day's pay.</i></p> <p><i>Remote work may be approved by a supervisor if the essential duties of the position can be performed remotely.</i></p>
<p>Certified Staff</p> <p><i>(Contract Provision Article XIII; Section 2)</i></p>	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <p><i>Receive regular day's pay; may be required to work an alternative day if school day is subsequently rescheduled.</i></p>	<p>Adjust work schedule according to the change in the school start time.</p> <p>(e.g. two-hour late start of school, report to school two hours later).</p>	<p>If sent home, paid balance of scheduled hours.</p> <p>May be required to remain at school to supervise students and/or until all transportation routes are complete.</p>	<p>Employees required to work remotely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Communicate with students through Seesaw and Schoology, and post assignments, instructional activities & resources by 9:30 a.m. to guide students' learning</i> ● <i>E-learning days shall be asynchronous, although individual teachers may elect to offer</i>

				<p><i>synchronous learning opportunities;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Must be accessible online and by telephone during normal school hours to assist students and parents.</i> • <i>If not available during an e-learning day due to illness or a personal day, teacher should post a message to notify students and families of their absence</i>
Custodian	<p>Employees required to report to work.</p> <p><i>Remote training may be approved by a supervisor</i></p> <p><i>Employees who are unable to report to work on days on which school is canceled due to inclement weather may request payment for such days, to be charged to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i></p>	<p>Employees required to report to work. Pay for time worked.</p>	<p>If sent home, allowed to make up lost hours at a later date.</p>	<p>Employees required to report to work.</p> <p><i>Remote training may be approved by a supervisor</i></p> <p><i>Employees who are unable to report to work on days on which school is canceled due to inclement weather may request payment for such days, to be charged to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i></p>
Food Service	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complete the staff development/training assigned by the department director or</i> 	<p>Employees required to report to work. Pay for time worked.</p>	<p>Employees will be paid for time worked.</p>	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complete the staff development/training assigned by the department director or</i>

	<p><i>coordinator. To receive full-day pay, approximately half (or more) of an employee's regular time should be spent on training or remote work i.e., an 8-hour-a-day employee should complete at least 4 hours of training.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>May request to take to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i> 			<p><i>coordinator. To receive full-day pay, approximately half (or more) of an employee's regular time should be spent on training or remote work i.e., an 8-hour-a-day employee should complete at least 4 hours of training.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>May request to take to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i>
<p>Paraprofessionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Paraprofessionals (<i>Contract Provision Article XI; Section 5</i>) • Preschool Paraprofessionals 	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complete the staff development/training assigned by the department director or coordinator within 2 days. To receive full-day pay, approximately half (or more) of an employee's regular time should be spent on training or remote work i.e., an 8-hour-a-day employee should complete at least 4 hours of training.</i> • <i>May request to take to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i> 	<p>Adjust work schedule according to the change in the school start time.</p> <p>(e.g. two-hour late start of school, report to school two hours later).</p> <p>Employee will be paid balance of scheduled hours.</p>	<p>If sent home, paid balance of scheduled hours.</p> <p>May be required to remain at school to supervise students and/or until all transportation routes are complete.</p>	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complete the staff development/training assigned by the department director or coordinator within 2 days. To receive full-day pay, approximately half (or more) of an employee's regular time should be spent on training or remote work i.e., an 8-hour-a-day employee should complete at least 4 hours of training.</i> • <i>May request to take to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i>

Secretaries	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remote work or training may be approved by a supervisor. Four (4) hours of remote work will be equal to employees full day.</i> • <i>Employees who are unable to report to work on days on which school is canceled due to inclement weather may request payment for such days, to be charged to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i> 	Employees required to report to work. Pay for time worked.	<p>Employees will be paid for time worked.</p> <p><i>May be required to remain at school to supervise students and/or until all transportation routes are complete.</i></p>	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remote work or training may be approved by a supervisor. Four (4) hours of remote work will be equal to employees full day.</i> • <i>Employees who are unable to report to work on days on which school is canceled due to inclement weather may request payment for such days, to be charged to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i>
Transportation	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remote training or bus garage work may be approved by a supervisor to be completed within 2 days of e-learning date.</i> • <i>May request to take to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i> 	Adjust work schedule according to the change in the school start time so that students can be transported at the adjusted intervals.	Adjust schedule accordingly so that students can be transported at the adjusted intervals.	<p>Employees are not required to report to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remote training or bus garage work may be approved by a supervisor to be completed within 2 days of e-learning date.</i> • <i>May request to take to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If the school day is subsequently rescheduled, employees will perform their regular assignments without compensation</i> 			<i>If the school day is subsequently rescheduled, employees will perform their regular assignments without compensation</i>
Unaffiliated - 12 months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payroll Manager Administrative Assistant SAC Lead Supervisors 	Employees required to report to work. <i>Remote work or training may be approved by a supervisor. Four (4) hours of remote work will be equal to employee's full day.</i> <i>Employees who are unable to report to work on days on which school is canceled due to inclement weather may request payment for such days, to be charged to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i>	Employees required to report to work. Pay for time worked.	If sent home, allowed to make up lost hours at a later date.	Employees required to report to work. <i>Remote work or training may be approved by a supervisor. Four (4) hours of remote work will be equal to employees full day.</i> <i>Employees who are unable to report to work on days on which school is canceled due to inclement weather may request payment for such days, to be charged to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i>
Unaffiliated - Less than 12 months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation Manager Food Service Director COTA LPN Health Office Assistant Technology Assistant SAC workers 	Employees are not required to report to work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Remote work or training may be approved by a supervisor. Four (4) hours of remote work will be equal to employees full day.</i> <i>A make-up day can be</i> 	Employees required to report to work. Pay for time worked.	Employees will be paid for time worked.	Employees are not required to report to work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>ee below)</i>

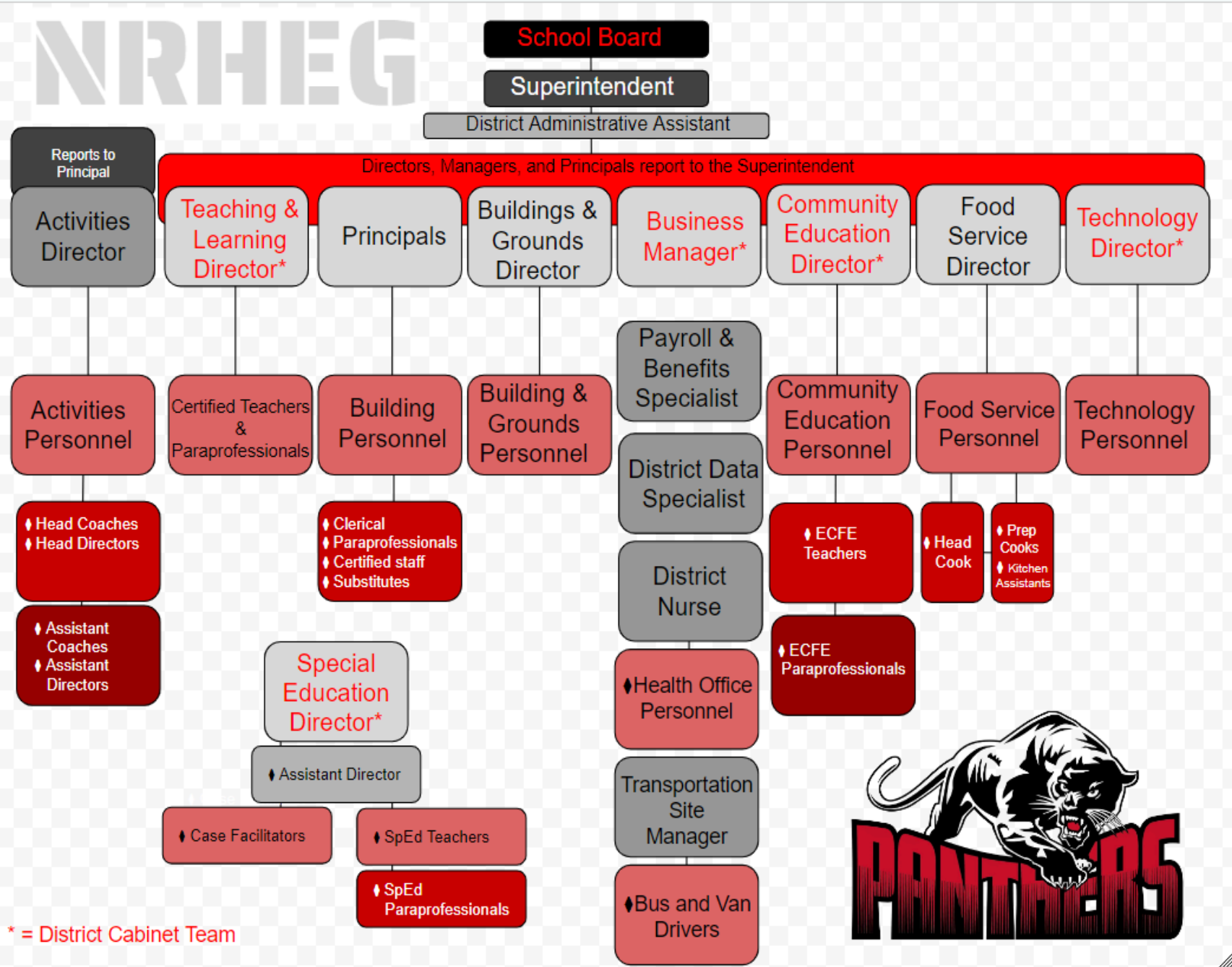
	<p><i>designated in the work calendar</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>May request to take to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable (See below)</i> 			
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Reporting requirements in the event that school is closed by the Superintendent, due to weather conditions or other emergencies, are provided in the master agreement for each union.

General Guidelines:

1. Teachers - work with students, and the day counts as a work day.
2. Hourly employees have four options:
 - a. Complete the staff development/training assigned by the department director or coordinator. To receive full-day pay, approximately half (or more) of an employee's regular time should be spent on training. i.e., an 8-hour-a-day employee should complete at least 4 hours of training. *Remote work or training may be approved by a supervisor. Four (4) hours of remote work will be equal to employees full day.*
 - b. *A make-up day can be designated in the work calendar*
 - c. *May request to take to vacation or personal leave, or ESST where applicable.*
 - d. Skip the training and use a PERSONAL DAY
 - e. Skip the training and take it as an UNPAID DAY
 - f. Skip the training and take it as a sick/ESST day—but the following criteria must be followed for a sick/ESST day.

*MS 181.9447, Subd. 1(4), (see page 7), allows use of ESST when the employee's place of business is closed “due to weather or other public emergency.” **The Minnesota Department of Labor has indicated the place of business transitions to an employee’s home on an e-learning day, therefore, the place of business is not closed.** However, if the employee has a “need to care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed due to weather or other public emergency,” they may be eligible to use ESST.*



* = District Cabinet Team

