# GRAND RAPIDS AREA SCHOOLS

## 2026-2027 Employee Handbook

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GRAND RAPIDS
AREA SCHOOLS
Resilience ✦ Readiness ✦ Excellence

# 2026-27 Employee Handbook

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**Superintendent:** Matt Grose

**Grand Rapids Area Schools**

650 SW 7th Ave
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-327-5704

**Website:** www.isd318.org

**If you have questions or if you need additional information, please contact:**

**Human Resource Department 218-327-5700**

- Select option 1 for the district office | Select option 3 for Payroll or Benefits and option 4 for other Human Resource matters

**Welcome!**

Welcome to Grand Rapids Area Schools.

The purpose of the handbook is to acquaint you with general Board of Education policies that govern and affect your employment and to outline the benefits available to you as an employee of the district.

Because this handbook is a general source of information, it is not intended to be, and should not be interpreted as, a contract. It is not an all-encompassing document and may not cover every possible situation or unusual circumstance. If a conflict exists between information in this handbook and Board policy or administrative procedures, the policies and procedures govern. It is the employee's responsibility to refer to the actual policies and/or administrative procedures for further information. Complete copies of those documents are available on the district web site or can be printed at the District Educational Services Building or in the Principal's or Supervisor's office. Any employee is free to review official policies and procedures and is expected to be familiar with those related to his/her job responsibilities.

**Future Policy Changes**

Although every effort will be made to update the handbook on a timely basis, Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education reserves the right, and has the discretion, to change any policies, procedures, benefits, and terms of employment without notice, consultation, or publication, except as may be required by contractual agreements and law. The district reserves the right, and has the discretion, to modify or change any portion of this handbook at any time.

**Equal Opportunity Employment**

Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The district does not discriminate based on age, color, disability, race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status, as required by law.

Reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities will be made as required by law.

If you have questions concerning District compliance with state and federal equal opportunity employment laws, contact the Human Resource department.

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## District Information

*** Denotes unit membership required benefit. At-will employment does not pertain to * sections.**

**Activities**
Employees are encouraged to support District activities by coaching, supervising, chaperoning, taking tickets, etc. The district generally provides a salary or stipend for helping with activities. Contact the Activities Department for more information. 218-327-5765.

**Additional Hours - Overtime**
Additional hours and/or overtime must be approved prior to the work being done. Extra duty assignment (EDA-1) forms can be found in your building office or online.

***Attendance and Absence Reporting**
Sections at the end of this handbook have more detailed information about Attendance and Absence Reporting procedures.

**Bargaining Units and General "At-Will" Employment**
Grand Rapids Area Schools has several bargaining units. They are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Educational Support Professionals (ESPs) | Directors |
| Education Minnesota 1314 (Teachers) | Confidential Administrative Asst. |
| Principals | School Bus Drivers |
| Service - AFSCME (Maint./Custodial/F&N/Technicians) | Administrative Prof. – AFSCME |
| Indian Education Advocates | |

In addition, School District #318 employs many "At-Will" employees. These include but are not limited to:

| | |
|---|---|
| Guest Teachers | Community Education Teachers and Workers |
| Student Workers | Coaches and Activities Workers |

Substitute Bus Drivers, ESPs, Nurses, Custodians, Food Service, and Secretaries

**At-Will Policy**
For those employees who are not governed by a contract, such as Substitute employees, Coaches and Activities Workers, and Community Education Teachers and Workers, employment is at-will. Nothing in this handbook is to be construed as a contract or promise of continued employment. At-will means that an employer can terminate an employee at any time for any reason (except an illegal one) or no reason. Likewise, an employee is free to terminate their job at any time for any or no reason.

**Bloodborne Pathogens**
Bloodborne pathogens are disease causing microorganisms that may be present in human blood or other body fluids. Grand Rapids Area Schools has an Exposure Control Plan and provides related training and an opportunity for all employees, especially those at risk, to receive a vaccination series to help prevent diseases caused by bloodborne pathogens.

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**Breaks**
Employees will be provided with rest and meal breaks as provided in their contract and/or Minnesota law. Rest breaks of at least 15 minutes will be provided within each four consecutive hours worked. Meal breaks of at least 30 minutes will be provided when working six or more

consecutive hours. If a break is less than 20 minutes, it must be counted as hours worked and paid. For other breaks to be unpaid, employees must be completely relieved of work duties. See MN Statutes 177.253 and 177.254, and Minnesota Rules 5200.0120 for more information.

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**Calendar**

School calendars are adopted by the School Board each spring for the following school year. School calendars show teacher days, student days, workshops, conferences, and holidays. Printed calendars are available at each building site or on the district website.

**Cell Phones**

The district has adopted Policy #589 regarding the use of cell phones and other mobile devices for students. To minimize distractions and model professionalism, employees should be aware of the district policy and follow these guidelines. Cell phones should be turned off or set to silent or vibrate in any circumstance where incoming calls may be disruptive. While at work employees are expected to exercise discretion in using personal cell phones. Excessive personal calls and other use of cell phones during the workday can interfere with productivity and be distracting to others. Employees are encouraged to make calls during nonwork time when possible and keep them brief when not possible.

**Change of Address, Name, and other Personal Information**

A change in address, name, phone or email should be communicated to the district using the forms available in Skyward or online in the Employee Information area of the website. Employees who have a name change must submit a new social security card in addition to the online form. Employees who participate in our health insurance or flexible spending program, and those employees who contribute to public pension funds, are reminded to contact those programs directly to change addresses. If you hold a teaching license, you must also update your name with PELSB.

| | |
|---|---|
| HealthPartners (Medical & Dental) | 1-800-883-2177 |
| HSA & Flexible Spending (WEX) | 1-833-225-5939 |
| TRA (Teachers' Retirement) | 1-800-657-3669 |
| PERA (Public Employees' Retirement Assoc.) | 1-800-652-9026 |
| Madison Life (Life, LTD, EAP) | 1-800-356-9601 |
| Professional Educator Licensing (PELSB) | 1-651-539-4200 |

*** Chaperoning a School Event Absences**

A chaperone related absence is considered a school related absence when a certified employee of Grand Rapids Area Schools is helping to facilitate the trip or program. School related absences for these events are limited to those who are going with preapproval and direction from the school or program. School related absences will be approved by the Human Resource Director in collaboration with the principal (or program director). Refer to district Policy #610 (Field Trips) for more information.

An absence is personal or vacation time when the certified Grand Rapids Area Schools employee is going as a parent or non-facilitator, and not due to their position in the school district.

**COBRA**

COBRA is a federal law that allows employees and their families the opportunity, in certain instances, for a temporary extension of health insurance coverage at group rates when coverage under the plan would otherwise end.

**Community Education**

The District Educational Services Center houses Community Education. Contact this department for current and upcoming class offerings and schedules, to register for classes, or with other related questions. Community Education: 218-327-5730.

**Communication Protocol**
Grand Rapids Area School's general rule concerning communication is to communicate with the person closest to the situation who is best able to address the issue quickly and effectively. Attempts to circumvent the communication process will be directed back to the process outlined below.

The communication procedure for issues and concerns for/with employees is as follows:

1. Direct communication employee to employee: this shows respect for the employee receiving feedback and also for the employee communicating the information.
2. Direct communication with the employee's direct supervisor (preferred) or one's own direct supervisor (allowed): this shows respect for the supervisor and also for the employee communicating the information.
3. Direct communication with Human Resources: if the matter is unresolved, Human Resources may coordinate a meeting between the employee(s) and supervisor(s).
4. Direct communication with the Superintendent: if the matter remains unresolved, the Superintendent may coordinate a meeting with the appropriate parties.

**Complaints**
Complaints by employees about other employees will be accepted in writing. Reports should be submitted to the supervisor of the employee or the Human Resource office. If the complaint is regarding a supervisor, it should be submitted to the employee's supervisor or Human Resources. Forms can be obtained from the school district website or by contacting the Human Resource office. Further details can be found in the School District Policy Manual which is available under About | Policy Manual on the District web site.

**Computers**
The District Technology Services Department provides district computer repair and maintenance. Computer hardware and software orders should be directed to your supervisor.

**Confidentiality**
The district maintains data relating to staff and students in accordance with current Data Privacy laws. Contact the Human Resource Department with questions relating to Personnel data, information is also available on the district website. All District employees are obligated to maintain student and other staff information as private.

Field Code Changed

For information concerning District procedures for the protection of the privacy of protected health information, please refer to the HIPAA Privacy Procedures Handbook maintained and available from the Benefits Office. It is also available on the Grand Rapids Area Schools website.

**Crisis Management Plan**
The school district will, to the extent possible, engage in ongoing emergency planning within the school district and with emergency responders and other relevant community organizations. The school district will ensure that relevant emergency responders in the community have access to their building-specific crisis management plans and will provide training to school district staff to enable them to act appropriately in the event of a crisis. Policy 806, Crisis Management Policy, is available on the school district website.

**Crowd Source / Internet Fundraising**
Staff members reviewing fundraising options occasionally research internet crowd source options. The district fundraising or gift guidelines apply to staff seeking funds from internet sources as these donations can only be made to the district – not to individual staff members. Please see policy # 511 (fundraising) or policy # 421 (gifts to employees). Advance approval must be given by the building or program administrator prior to seeking to raise funds in this manner. Requests should be sent to the Superintendent for review and approval.

Once administrator permission is obtained, the educational site "Donors Choose" is approved for such purposes. Donors Choose provides documentation and layers of accountability that protect the staff member and school district interests. All funding or property obtained through such means becomes the property of the school district. All donations are required to be accepted by the School Board in accordance with MN Statute.

Venues other than those listed here are not eligible to be utilized but may be reviewed/vetted by the Superintendent and Business Manager for future inclusion if deemed appropriate and in line with current MN Statute.

**Dental Insurance Plan**
Employees and retirees may purchase a dental insurance plan through the school district. Information is available on the school district website or by contacting the benefits office.

**Digital Content Code of Conduct**
The following code of conduct was developed to guide employee actions in digital formats. Grand Rapids Area Schools strongly believes in creating a learning and working environment that is positive and welcoming to all.

We encourage the use of social media and digital communications as a method of connecting and collaborating with our community. We also encourage employees to keep in mind that even outside of school hours, they are seen as employees of the school district. We are working together to achieve a positive, informed, communicative school community.

**Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, Digital Images & Video**
Personal Responsibilities

- Grand Rapids Area Schools employees are personally responsible for the hosted content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish on social media channels will be public for a long time— protect your privacy.
- When posting online, please remember that you are an employee of Grand Rapids Area Schools and representative of your colleagues, students, parents and the school community.
- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration that you use face-to-face.
- Do not post photos or movies of fellow employees without their permission. Do not use photos or movies taken at school without permission. Do not post photos or movies on a personal page that contain students if you do not have express parental consent.
- There are many websites that allow users to share personally created movies. You are responsible for all you do, say and post online including videos. Anything posted online should represent you in a professional manner, as others will see you as connected to Grand Rapids Area Schools. It disrupts learning when teachers, employees and staff post videos with questionable content.
- When posting online be sure not to post confidential student information.

**Facebook, X and Instagram**

Personal uses of social networking sites

- Grand Rapids Area Schools staff and employees are personally responsible for all comments/information and hosted content they publish online. Be mindful that things such as tweets and status updates will be visible and public for a long time.
- By posting comments, having online conversations, etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world, be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings, what you 'say' online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a 'private conversation' my still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum.
- Comments related to Grand Rapids Area Schools, its employees, staff and/events related to Grand Rapids Area Schools, should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.
- Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject where possible. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues are concerned.
- Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism.
- Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and an extension of your professional life and classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the wall, then it should be considered inappropriate to post online.
- Microblogging (X, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, etc.) comments made using such media are not protected by privacy settings. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media and refrain from any comment and/or #hashtags that could be deemed unprofessional. #(Hashtags) that tag students and provide personal financial gain are prohibited. Grand Rapids Area Schools students are not to be used as promotional material.
- All Grand Rapids Area Schools employees who choose to utilize Facebook, X or Instagram or any other social media platform to provide classroom information to students and parents must create a "teacher" page or classroom group. Posts must be exclusively about classroom or school activities.

**Fragrances**

Exposure to fragrances and scents can cause some students and/or staff to experience asthma or allergic reactions, including upper respiratory irritation, headaches, and other symptoms. All district employees and anyone using space in the district are discouraged from using scented personal products (such as perfume, cologne, aftershave, hairspray, and body lotion), air fresheners and essential oil devices. Employees are encouraged to use low odor or fragrance-free products. In addition, the district selects maintenance and cleaning products that are fragrance free or low odor and discourages the use of scented cleaning products.

**Direct Deposit**

All new employees will have their wages directly deposited into their bank account on payday. Instead of a paycheck, employees view their pay information by clicking on the "Skyward Login" link on the Grand Rapids Area Schools website.

**Dress Code**

Employees of the District are obligated to dress appropriately for the job while projecting a positive image for students, staff, parents, and other community stakeholders. The district follows business casual dress guidelines that allow employees to work comfortably while maintaining a professional image. Some buildings allow more casual, but appropriate dress on

Fridays. Contact your building administrator with questions. Examples of clothing that are not appropriate in the workplace: torn, dirty, frayed, revealing, or offensive. Building principals and supervisors will have discretion if there are questions on appropriate dress.

**Drugs and Alcohol**
Grand Rapids Area Schools addresses the use of alcohol and drugs by employees according to statute and District Policy. Penalties for violating District policy can be found in the School District Policy Manual which is available under About | Policy Manual on the District website.

**Email**
The District Technology Services Department provides email service throughout the district for business use. Contact this Department for installation, repair, training and other related questions. The preferred method of District communication will be through our email system.

Staff will receive district news, updates, and notifications of changes through email. Employees should monitor their email on a regular basis and respond to emails within a reasonable amount of time.

Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to district emails outside of their duty day, except in the case of an emergency. Those staff who have a summer break are asked to check emails on or around each pay date to ensure they are receiving timely information during the summer.

Further details on email use by district staff can be found in the School District Policy Manual.

**Emergency School Closings**
Occasionally schools are closed for emergency reasons such as inclement weather or mechanical problems. Employees should refer to their contracts to determine if they are required to report to work. Personal judgment should be used when personal safety issues warrant. Employees should contact their immediate supervisor with questions. Public notifications are broadcast on several local radio and TV stations and an Instant Alert system. It is important that employees notify the human resource office when they change phone numbers so the Instant Alert system can be kept updated.

See chart for information by unit.

| **Weather Related/Emergency School Closing Day** | Paid Day - Report for duty or use personal or vacation day | Paid Day - 'work from home' is in effect | Unpaid day - No report for duty - no 'work from home' expectation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 Month Administrators (Superintendent, Business Manager, Principals, Directors) | **X | | |
| Less than 12 Month Administrators (Principals, Directors) | | **X | |
| Building Staff (All Custodians, Electricians, Plumbers, etc.) | X | | |
| Confidential | X | | |
| Administrative Professionals (all) | | X | |
| Teachers | | X | |
| ESPs | | X | |
| Food Service Employees (all) | | X | |
| Bus Drivers | | X | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Other Hourly Employees not listed above (Community Ed, substitutes, etc.) | | | X |

| **Late Start or Early Release for Weather/Emergency** | Paid Day - Report for duty as close to normal schedule as possible or use personal or vacation time | Paid Day - Report for duty as close to normal schedule as possible |
|---|---|---|
| 12 Month Administrators (Superintendent, Business Manager., Principals, Directors) | **X | |
| Less than 12 Month Administrators (Principals, Directors) | | **X |
| Building Staff (All Custodians, Electricians, Plumbers, etc.) | X | |
| Confidential | X | |
| Administrative Professionals (all) | | X |
| Teachers | | X |
| ESPs | | X |
| Food Service Employees (all) | | X |
| Bus Drivers | X -with altered schedule | |
| All Other Hourly Employees not listed above (Community Ed, substitutes, etc.) | X | |

**Building Principals are required to secure the building during drop off times on snow days or late start days.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**
An EAP provides confidential, professional counseling to help employees identify, cope and develop solutions for the problems they or their families may be experiencing. The district makes this program available to all employees who are certified to work more than 10.5 hours per week. We contract with National Insurance Services. They can be reached at 866-451-5465. They also have a web site: www.niseap.com (Your login is NISEAP and your password is EAP)

Three counseling sessions are available to each employee every calendar year, at no cost. More information is available on the district website.

**Employee Conduct**
An employee who participates in or encourages activities that disrupt the educational process, whether on school property or at school-sponsored events and activities, may be subject to disciplinary action that may include termination.

**Facility Use**
All staff use of District facilities must be prearranged. On the website under Staff, you will find a Staff Facility Use Form.

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**Flexible Spending Program**
The district contracts with WEX to provide this tax-free benefit to our employees. By projecting dependent care expenses and those medical expenses not covered by insurance, employees can set aside an amount each payday that is deducted before State, Federal, and Social Security taxes are determined. Employees must be certified to work at least 10.5 hours per

week to participate in the flex plan. An annual enrollment takes place during the medical open enrollment period.

When projecting annual expenses, employees should be conservative. Except for those eligible for a medical rollover, any money that is deducted but not claimed is not returned. Employees who have an HSA have limited options for a flexible spending account, please review open enrollment information carefully to be sure you are eligible.

Health insurance premiums for our health plan are automatically flexed. However, health insurance premiums paid through any other plan (such as a spouse's) are not an eligible expense. Flexed expenses reduce your taxable income and may not be claimed as a deduction on your annual tax return. The customer service number for WEX is 1-833-225-5939.

**FMLA**

Employees who have worked at least 12 consecutive months and 1,250 hours in the previous year, are eligible for up to a total of 12 full workweeks of unpaid leave time during a 12-month period for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition. Non-scheduled workdays, including summer for school-term employees, are not included in the 12 weeks of leave allowed. During the FMLA leave, the employee may supplement unpaid leave with accrued and available paid leave per their bargaining contract. A "Serious Health Condition" is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care.

> **Military Caregiver Leave under FMLA**: If you are the spouse, parent, son, daughter, or next-of-kin of a covered service member, and you have worked at least 12 consecutive months totaling 1,250 hours or more, you may be entitled to military caregiver leave. Military caregiver leave allows you to take up to a total of 26 workweeks of unpaid leave during a single 12-month period to take care of your military relative if he or she has a qualifying serious injury or illness. A serious injury or illness is one that is incurred by a service member in the line of duty on active duty that may cause the service member to be medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank, or rating. A serious injury or illness also includes injuries or illnesses that existed before the service member's active duty and that were aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty.
>
> **Qualifying Exigency Leave Under FMLA:** If your spouse, parent, son or daughter is a military member who is deployed or has been notified of an impending deployment to a foreign country, you may be entitled to qualifying exigency leave. Qualifying exigency leave allows you to take up to a total of 12 workweeks of FMLA leave for qualifying exigencies, such as making different day care arrangements for the military member's children or attending official military ceremonies as your family member prepares to deploy.

FMLA leave requests are to be made by the Employee at least 30 days prior to the date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable.

Employees will be restored to the same position or one equivalent to it once FMLA leave has ended. Leave requests should be submitted using this form.

**Grant Procedures**
Teachers, schools, and departments will need approval before completing a grant application. Forms and information can be found on the district website under business office, forms & procedures.

**Harassment/Discrimination**
Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education intends that employees have a safe and orderly work environment in which to do their jobs. Therefore, the Board does not condone and will not tolerate harassment of employees or discrimination against employees.

Any employee who believes that he or she, or any other employee or student is being subjected to harassment or discrimination should bring the matter to the attention of his/her principal or immediate supervisor or to the District's Title IX Coordinator (Kasie Maeder, 218-327-5708). The district will investigate any such concerns promptly and confidentially, consistent with Board policy.

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No employee will be subject to any form of reprisal or retaliation for having made a good-faith complaint under Board policy. For complete information concerning the district's position prohibiting harassment or discrimination, assistance in reporting and responding to alleged incidents, and examples of prohibited behaviors, the employee should refer to the district's policies and related procedures or contact the Human Resource office.

**Headphones/Radio**
Listening to music or other forms of media using headphones, earbuds, or other sources presents a hazard for personnel operating moving equipment. Auditory cues in the environment can easily be missed due to the distraction. Headphones and other noise distractions will not be allowed for any employee operating equipment. Those not operating equipment can use a single ear bud or low volume radio with supervisor approval.

**Hiring**
A list of all District job openings is available at the District Educational Services Center and on the district website. If you are interested in becoming a part of our highly qualified staff, we invite you to apply online. Our online application offers the opportunity to upload additional information such as a cover letter, resume, references and transcripts. Paper or email copies of these materials will not be accepted.

**Illness/Injury/Workers' Compensation**
The district supports the practice of returning employees to work as soon as they can fulfill the requirements of their position following an absence due to an illness, injury or an on-the-job injury. Each situation will be reviewed on an individual basis because of circumstances unique to each individual and/or their position.

Safety information and forms are available on the district website.

Accident/Injury Reporting and Post-Injury Expectations:

Despite the efforts of our safety program, employee injuries may occur. If an employee incurs an injury, they must:

- Report the injury to an appropriate supervisor immediately, no matter how minor.
- Document the injury on the district's workers' compensation form "Employee On the Job Injury Report".
- Understand that even if medical treatment is not immediately necessary, timely injury reporting makes payment and speedy care more likely should it be needed later.
- Follow the district's workers' compensation procedures in selecting an approved physician or clinic for initial treatment unless emergency room care is required.
- Utilize the district's required forms when going to a treating physician and return the required signed forms back to the supervisor.
- Understand if there are any physician designated physical work restrictions, the supervisory staff may accommodate the restriction or provide temporarily reassigned work. This temporary transitional work may be outside of an employee's customary department, location, or shift per the business needs of the district, but will not exceed the treating provider's recommendations for restrictions. If the district is unable to accommodate restrictions, you will be notified.
- Understand that hours of transitional duty work scheduled/offered, but not fulfilled, may result in a negative impact on compensable benefits from the workers' compensation insurance company.
- Understand that any designated medical restrictions apply to both home and work activities.
- Keep regular contact with the supervisor if restrictions cannot be accommodated and they are away from work.
- Expect and respond timely to contact from a workers' compensation claims representative.
- Realize that an accident investigation will be initiated as a standard procedure.

**Internet**
The District Technology Services Department provides Internet service throughout the district. Contact this Department for installation, repair, training and other related questions. Further details on internet use by district staff can be found in the School District Policy Manual.

***Labor Management Committee**
The district has a Labor Management Committee. The role of the committee is to enhance positive communication between Management and Labor. Each bargaining unit has a representative on the committee that meets quarterly throughout the year. Individual employees are encouraged to submit items for discussion through their bargaining unit representative. Contact the Superintendent's Office for more information.

**Licenses**
Some employees of the district are required to be licensed. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep their license current. Copies of licenses must be submitted to the Human Resource Department as they are received. The district reserves the right to remove an employee from employment if their necessary license is not maintained.

***Life Insurance**
Refer to your unit's contract.

***Minnesota Extension:*** A State law that allows employees the opportunity, in certain instances, for a temporary extension of life insurance coverage at group rates when

coverage under the plan would otherwise end.

***Long-term Disability Insurance**
Employees unable to work for an extended period due to illness or injury may be eligible for Long-term Disability Insurance, an income replacement plan. Refer to your unit's contract.

**Maltreatment of Minors and Vulnerable Adults**
All employees of the district have an obligation to report maltreatment of minors and vulnerable adults if they have reason to believe someone is being neglected or physically or sexually abused. The employee will immediately report to the local welfare agency, an agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report, police department, or the county sheriff**.** The employee may also request help with reporting by contacting their immediate supervisor.

***Medical Insurance**
Grand Rapids Area Schools' medical plan is self-insured. We contract with HealthPartners to administer our health plan. The customer service number is 1-800-883-2177. Our plan number is 21666. You will need your membership identification number to identify yourself when you call HP with questions about claims or coverage.

Refer to your unit's contract for information on the amount of District contribution paid, if any, toward the monthly health insurance premium.

**Minnesota Paid Leave**
Beginning January 1, 2026, Minnesota has adopted a Paid Family and Medical Leave Law, under MN Statutes Chapter 268B. The district is required to join this program. The district will pay the costs pursuant to MN Statute 268B.14. Unless otherwise noted in bargaining contracts, beginning 1/1/26, the district will pay 50% of the annual premiums as required by law, and the employee will be charged the remaining 50% through a deduction on their paycheck.

**Nepotism / Employee Hiring and Supervision Guidelines**
The school district provides a workplace which promotes employment and advancement based on qualifications and merit. No employee or official will be directly involved in any decision regarding hiring, promotion, supervision, salary adjustments, or grievances made regarding a family member, significant other or individual with a close personal relationship. Any known or perceived conflict of interest should be reviewed with Human Resources in advance of involvement in these decisions. At least two lines of authority must separate employees from supervisors with an existing familial or close personal relationship.

**Pay Periods**
The payroll is distributed twice each month, on the 15th and at month-end. If those days fall on a weekend or a holiday, checks are distributed on the preceding business day. Unless otherwise specified in the employees' contract, salaried employees' pay is annualized and split over each pay period. Hourly employees are paid for hours worked and properly submitted based on the dates on the payroll calendar. Refer to your unit contract and the district payroll calendar for more information.

**Pensions**
State laws mandate when employees are covered by public pension funds. All licensed personnel (teachers, substitute teachers, principals) are required to participate in Teachers Retirement (TRA) on their first day of work. Other district employees are generally required to participate in the Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA). There are certain exceptions for full-time students, temporary employees and coaches.

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Beginning January 1, 2026, Minnesota has adopted a Paid Family and Medical Leave Law, under MN Statutes Chapter 268B. The district is required to join this program. The district will pay the costs pursuant to MN Statute 268B.14. Unless otherwise noted in bargaining contracts, beginning 1/1/26, the district will pay 50% of the annual premiums as required by law, and the employee will be charged the remaining 50% through a deduction on their paycheck. ¶

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| TRA | 1-800-657-3669 | www.minnesotatra.org |
| PERA | 1-800-652-9026 | www.mnpera.org |

***Performance Reviews / Evaluations**
The district follows a schedule for performance reviews. Evaluations are generally done by your immediate supervisor and upon completion will be shared with the employee. Some performance reviews/evaluations are kept in a personnel file.

**Personnel Files**
The district maintains data on all employees. Individual personnel files are maintained on all employees. Personnel data is maintained according to MN Statute Chapter 13. All employees have rights related to the data kept on them. Contact the Human Resource Department with questions relating to this data.

**Policies of the School District**
District policies are available for view /printing on the school district website at https://www.isd318.org/domain/236. Specific topic(s) may be found using the search feature of the web page. Employees should review district policies as needed. Hard copies of the policy manual are available for review in the Superintendent's office.

**Pre-employment Paperwork and Criminal Background Check**
Prior to beginning work for Grand Rapids Area Schools, each new employee must have completed a series of employment forms. These forms include but may not be limited to:

Minnesota Statute 123B.03 - Informed Consent for Criminal Background Check
Tennessen Warning
Form W-4 - Employee Withholding (Federal and State)
Form I-9 - Employment Eligibility Verification
Electronic Annual Notification Process
Personnel Questionnaire
Bloodborne Pathogens Form
Confidentiality Information

Applicants and employees must undergo records checks and testing as required by law.

**Resignations/Terminations**
Employees deciding to resign or retire from their positions should contact their immediate supervisor, or the Human Resource Department.

Resignation/retirement letters should be delivered to the HR Director within a reasonable period prior to the employee's last day of work. A resignation or retirement letter should include a minimum of employee's name, current date, last date of work, and employee's position. Additional information can be included if desired.

**School Board Meetings**
School Board Meeting dates are adopted each January by the Board. The School Board meeting dates and agendas are posted on the website under Administration, Board of Education. The School Board typically holds an open forum 30 minutes prior to each regularly scheduled meeting for public input.

**Solicitations**
Sales representatives, agents or other solicitors shall not solicit or contact students or employees during the school day unless authorized by the building principal or supervisor.

Employees shall not provide any outside group or individual a list of students or other

employees for solicitation or other purposes without prior authorization and approval of the Superintendent or designee.

**Tax Sheltered Plans (403(b) and 457)**
Grand Rapids Area Schools maintains tax sheltered plans for eligible employees of the district. The plan allows eligible employees to make pre-tax salary reduction contributions into investments selected by each employee from a list of authorized investment vendors available under the plan. These contributions grow tax deferred until withdrawn by employees from the plan. The district also offers Roth plans which provide for after tax contributions. These can be withdrawn tax free at retirement.

Common law employees of the district, except student teachers and student workers, are immediately eligible to participate in the plan. For administrative reasons, any eligible employee wishing to participate in the plan must contribute at least $10 per paycheck.

For more information on the plan, investment options and/or procedures on how you can enroll, contact the Benefits Office at 218-327-5806.

**Tax Withholding Changes**
Employees may change their Federal and State tax withholdings at any time by completing both the state and federal W-4 form. W-4 forms can be found in Skyward or on the School District website.

**Telephone System**
The District Technology Services Department provides telephone service throughout the district. Contact this Department for installation, repair, training and other related questions.

**Tobacco**
Grand Rapids Area Schools is a "Tobacco-Free" District. Use of tobacco by staff on District property is prohibited. Penalties for violating this policy can be found in the School District Policy Manual.

**Weapons**
All weapons or instruments that have the appearance of weapons are prohibited on District property. Staff can find details relating to this policy in the School District Policy Manual.

**Website**
The district has a website with a growing list of information. The website address is www.isd318.org.

## Employee Attendance and Absences

**The following sections do not pertain to at-will employees**

**Attendance**

**Introduction**
Hours worked by hourly employees will be tracked using an Electronic Timekeeping System. Hourly employees are required to clock in and out at their scheduled start/end time each day. Clocking in/out is not necessary for break or lunch times unless specifically directed to do so by the HR office. Employees who have electronic timesheets are required to submit their timesheets to their supervisor following the end of each week. Claim types that cannot be submitted via Skyward should be routed to payroll within 30 days.

**Official Time of Record**
The electronic timekeeping system is the official basis for recording hours worked for hourly employees of the School District.

**Daily Clock in/Out Requirement**
It is a job requirement that all hourly employees clock in at the beginning of a workday and clock out at the end of a workday at their place of work.

- Employees need to log in and out within their assigned scheduled times. It is a district expectation that employees may 'on occasion' clock in late and/or clock out early within the rounding allowance on the time clock system – but never on a regular basis. Individuals consistently clocking in after their scheduled start time or consistently clocking out prior to their scheduled end time will be considered in violation of acceptable clocking protocol and are subject to disciplinary action.
- Rounding rules will generally be 15 minutes per day, i.e. if an employee is clocked in for 7 hours and 7 minutes the system will round to 7 hours, if the employee is clocked in for 7 hours and 8 minutes the system will round to 7 hours 15 minutes.
- Employees are to log out and back in if they leave their work site for non-district business (dentist, non-district meeting, errand, etc.).
- Employees must log out if they are leaving (and not returning) to a site within the district prior to the end of their normal schedule
- Any accumulation of extra or overtime must be approved in advance of the actual time worked.

**Non-Compliance, Falsification, Tampering and Unauthorized Viewing**
The following activities are strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action:

- Any attempt to tamper with timekeeping hardware (i.e., computer clocks) or software
- Failure to follow appropriate procedures for clocking in/out
- Sharing of or possession of another employee's identification or login information
- Logging in or out for another employee (a.k.a., 'Buddy Punching')
- Anyone interfering with other employee's use of the electronic timekeeping system
- Unauthorized viewing of another employee's time

**Clock Problems**
If an employee is unable to log in or out, it is the employee's responsibility to immediately inform the building secretary, principal or immediate supervisor. In this situation, the building secretary will manually clock the employee in or out. The building secretary will then notify the HR office and Technology Department of any clock problems.

**Holidays**
Holidays are identified as non-workdays on the electronic system. Additional pay (if applicable per contract) will be generated for these days if worked.

**Lunches**
If applicable to your position, your lunch break will automatically be deducted. Employees do not have to clock in or out for lunch breaks. If an employee does not take their lunch on a given day, they must notify their building principal or director to request a time keeping adjustment. Skipping a scheduled lunch break must be approved by a supervisor, whether or not it results in extra time or overtime.

**Paid/Working Lunch**
A paid working lunch is a meal period during which an employee is required to perform work duties or remain available to perform work duties. Because the employee is not fully relieved of all work responsibilities, the meal period is considered hours worked and is compensated accordingly.

Examples of a paid working lunch may include, but are not limited to:

- Supervising students or program participants.
- Answering phones or greeting visitors.
- Monitoring work areas or responding to radios or other communications.
- Remaining available to respond to work-related needs or emergencies.
- Performing assigned job duties while eating.

Employees who are provided a paid working lunch are expected to remain on duty and perform assigned responsibilities as directed by their supervisor. Employees should make reasonable efforts to eat during this time as workload permits.

An unpaid meal period is provided only when an employee is completely relieved of all job duties for the duration of the meal period. Employees who are required to perform work during an otherwise unpaid meal period should notify their supervisor so the time can be compensated in accordance with District procedures and applicable law.
The district reserves the right to determine which positions or circumstances require a paid working lunch based on operational needs.

**Unreported Hours**
Hourly employees are not permitted to work from home except in rare instances that are pre-approved. Employees are required to log in before performing any work. Once an employee has logged in, he/she is responsible for starting work. Employees are not permitted to log out until the employee stops working.

Forgetting to clock in or out is not a legitimate reason for working off the clock. Employees that under report or fail to report hours worked are subject to disciplinary action.



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**Processing of Electronic Time Reports**
The payroll office will close the pay period in the electronic system according to the payroll schedule to ensure that time adjustments and leave taken are properly recorded. Employees with electronic time records are expected to submit their timesheet within two business days of the end of the week. They should first verify that the hours are accurate, and any absence time used is recorded. Once submitted to their supervisor, Timekeeping Administrators (Building Secretaries, Directors, and Principals) must resolve all timekeeping issues within three (3) business days of the end of each pay period. Timesheets that are not fully submitted to payroll will not be paid.

**Disputes Over Time Clocked in or Out**
The dispute will be properly documented by the Supervisor, signed by both the Supervisor and the employee and submitted to the Human Resource Director for further investigation and resolution.

**Overtime or Extra Time**
Overtime and/or extra time must always be authorized in advance by a supervisor.

**Principals and Directors**
Principals and Directors are to review the time data information for each employee each pay period. Principals or Directors must approve all timesheets for their location/department within three (3) business days after the end of each pay period.

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**Bona Fide Volunteers**
Bona fide volunteers are generally described as individuals who perform hours of service without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. If these conditions are met, an individual will not be subject to FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act).

Hourly (non-exempt) employees may not volunteer to perform their regular duties without compensation.

**Training**
Hands-on training will be provided on an 'as needed' basis.

**Definition of Non-Exempt Employee**
Hourly (non-exempt) employees are determined by FLSA, and they include positions such as educational professionals, secretaries, maintenance workers, custodial staff, food service workers, clerical staff, etc. Please contact the Human Resource office for questions about specific positions.

## Absence Reporting

**The following sections do not pertain to at-will employees**

All Grand Rapids Area Schools employees must request approval to be absent during any regular scheduled duty days/shifts using the Electronic Absence system. Teacher and Educational Support Professional Unit employees are required to enter absences on the automated sub calling system. (Only Bus Drivers are exempt currently from entering absence requests into an electronic system.)

Requests must be entered prior to their absence to be properly processed. The procedure follows:

1. Employee enters request to be absent prior to the occurrence. Teachers and ESP unit members are to enter absences in Red Rover, all other employees enter in Skyward.
2. Supervisor electronically approves/denies the request. (The employee will be notified once the supervisor has approved/denied the request.) Time off Administrators are expected to review employee time off requests daily.
3. Absence occurs, if approved.
4. Supervisor verifies absence after it occurs (start and end time, name of sub, code, etc.).
5. Information is uploaded into the payroll system for processing of substitute payments (when a sub has been employed to fill the vacancy).

Absences can be entered up to the end of the workday on the day of the actual absence. If an employee forgets to enter it prior to the day of the absence, he/she may go in at any time during the day of the absence to enter it. Employees will need to contact their supervisor and the HR office if they forget to enter an absence timely. All absences from duty must be accounted for. Each employee will take responsibility for reporting their own absence by following the proper procedure. Please report absences in the proper manner and time frame. Recurring failure to follow the absence procedure will be considered a deficiency.

See unpaid time off section for additional information.

**Minimum Absence Time**

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| Hourly employees: | one-hour minimum absence |
| Salaried employees (non-teachers): | one-hour minimum absence |
| Teachers: | half day minimum absence, unless filled internally or no sub needed, then in one-hour increments. |

**Sub Calling System**

The school District maintains an automated substitute calling system for some employee groups.

Absences may be entered by accessing Red Rover via the district website or by installing the Red Rover app on your mobile device. The district help desk is staffed from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. when school is in session and can be reached by calling 218-327-5727. Employees in the Teacher and ESP units are required to be registered in the system. Other units that have substitutes (Secretaries, Food Service, and Custodial) will have substitutes assigned by their respective departments. For detailed information contact your building secretary or the Human Resource Department.

**School Conferences Leave**

Up to 16 hours of unpaid leave is available per year for employees to attend school conferences or school-related activities of the employee's child provided the conferences or school-related activities cannot be scheduled during non-work hours.

**Emergency Leave Days**

Employees, in some units, may be granted an Emergency Leave Day each year. Emergency Days are granted in emergency situations only. Refer to your unit's contract for further information. Absences for emergency situations can be entered in the absence system with detailed notes.

**Funeral/Bereavement Leave Days**

Employees, in some units, may be granted Funeral/Bereavement Leave Days. Funeral Days are granted for preparation for and attendance at funerals/bereavement. A relationship with the

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deceased is generally necessary. The number of days granted generally ranges from 1-3 days, with a maximum of five. Refer to your unit's contract for further information. Days that do not meet the contractual provisions of bereavement/funeral will typically fall under sick/ESST leave.

**Holidays - Paid**
Twelve (12) month employees, who are bargaining unit members, are granted paid holidays. Days granted are listed in your unit's contract.

**Jury Duty**
Employees summoned to jury duty should notify the payroll department as soon as possible by completing and returning a jury duty election form which contains specific instructions for employees called for jury duty. This form is also available on the district website.

**Personal Leave Days**
Employees, in some units, may be granted Personal Leave Days. Advance notice is necessary. Refer to your unit's contract for further information.

**Sick Leave Days and Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST)**
Employees who are bargaining unit members may be granted Earned Sick and Safe Leave Days (referred to as ESST or Sick interchangeably). Sick Days are granted for personal illness/injury or to care for the illness/injury of the employee's immediate family. Qualified relationships and usage reasons can be found in MN Statute 181.9446-181.9447. Leave can also be used for the time it takes to travel to and from a qualifying reason. Unused sick leave may be carried over to the next year. Refer to your unit's contract for further information.

The district follows Minnesota's Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) law for those employees who do not have bargaining contracts outlining sick leave benefits. A notice with more information is located on the district website.

**Time off to Vote**
Employees will be granted paid time off to vote in an election for U.S. office or State senator or representative if it falls within the scheduled work time.

**Unpaid Time off**
Absenteeism beyond the contractual personal, vacation, or sick leave days provided by the district creates unnecessary educational disruption for the students. Grand Rapids Area Schools places a high value on each position. Thus, the expectation for employees is to be in attendance for all scheduled days unless using provided sick, personal, or vacation days per their intended use.

Sick, personal, and vacation absences beyond the employee's available accrued balance will generally be unexcused and subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Exceptions to unexcused absences include leaves of absences allowed through the employee's unit contract, federal, state, or local laws.

Employees will be unable to enter absences in the system beyond their available leave. Absences beyond the individuals available accrued balances must be communicated to both the employee's direct supervisor and the Human Resource Department as soon as they are known.

Unpaid sick absences may require a doctor's verification. Unpaid personal or vacation absences may be approved in rare circumstances by the employee's supervisor and Human Resources (annual requests will not be approved).

Unpaid days off may be subject to the employee forfeiting the districts prorated portion of medical insurance for the scheduled day(s) missed. For example, an employee scheduled to work 167 days who misses one day would be responsible for 1/167 of the district's annual portion of the premium.

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**Vacation Days**

Twelve (12) month employees, who are bargaining unit members, are granted Vacation Days. Total days granted, carryover, and limitations or restrictions are listed in your unit's contract. Refer to your unit's contract for further information.

**Law or Health Related Implications:** The Employee Handbook is subject to change considering health conditions and concerns or pursuant to changes in federal, state, or local law, regulation, rule, or guidance. The School District will communicate changes as they arise. Where the Employee Handbook is inconsistent with federal, state, or local law, the School District and its staff, students, and families, must comply with the applicable law.