Volunteer Handbook

Office of Family and Community Engagement
110 Fulton Street, Room 210
Mankato, MN 56001
507-387-5501 or volunteer@isd77.org

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Make a Difference in a Child's Life....
Support Education and Volunteer Today!

Welcome and thank you for your interest in volunteering with Mankato Area Public Schools. This handbook is intended to give you the information you need to get started as a MAPS volunteer and to help you have a great experience doing it!

Mankato Area Public Schools Mission Statement:
Excellence, Equity, Empowerment.
Every Student, Every Day.

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Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

The Family and Community Engagement office is dedicated to building a community partnership to foster volunteer opportunities within Mankato Area Public Schools to promote, support and strengthen the school district's mission of
Excellence, Equity, Empowerment. Every Student, Every Day.

Why Volunteer?

Impact of Volunteers

Volunteers play a very important role in Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS). Volunteers help extend the resources of the school district by supporting teachers and staff. Volunteers increase adult to student ratios in the classroom. Volunteers help to enrich academic achievement and self-esteem of students by making them feel important by facilitating one-on-one opportunities, extra instruction and providing mentoring opportunities.

Benefits of Volunteering

People volunteer for various reasons. Volunteering in MAPS can benefit the volunteer in many ways including personal fulfillment, skill building, community enhancement, increasing personal networks, work experience, overcoming challenges, increasing responsibility, may help lead to new job opportunities, as well as having a great time. Students benefit from volunteer work in many ways including more one-on-one time with teachers and mentors, bigger support system at school, positive role models, increased self-esteem, increased academic achievement, community support/involvement and much more!

Program Background

History

The Volunteer Program began in August 2011, and is a part of the Family and Community Engagement office. FACE was started as an initiative of the Community Education department of Mankato Area Public Schools and was designed to connect volunteers with opportunities in MAPS. FACE recruits, screens, trains, places, monitors and supports volunteers.

Purpose
The purpose of this program is designed to connect reliable volunteers with essential classroom and support placements which are mutually beneficial to the students, staff and volunteers. This program is also a way to directly support the district's Response to Intervention (RTI) efforts by supporting not only children who are falling behind, but also by challenging gifted and talented students who need the extra attention to keep pushing ahead.

Programs and Placements Supported by FACE
Many programs throughout MAPS utilize volunteers placed through FACE. These programs and placements have an extensive variety of students, learning abilities and purposes.

- Mainstream Classrooms
- After School Programs
- English Language Learners
- Early Childhood
- Adopt a Classroom Model
- AVID

Intake Procedure

Volunteer Application
All volunteers must fill out the volunteer application online located on our website (www.isd77.org) under the Experience link, and once there, click on volunteer. You can also utilize the web address listed below. A hard copy can be obtained from the volunteer specialist upon request.

Volunteer application web address:
https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?AP=1733348687

Background Check
All MAPS volunteers need to have a background check conducted. This does include an online national sex offender check. Community volunteers can fill out the background check information at the volunteer interview or you can request a copy to be sent to you from the volunteer specialist. These background checks are conducted through the MN Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. **There is a $16.50 fee.**

Minnesota State University, Mankato students can fill out the MSU background check release form. These are conducted through the Field of Experience office at MSU specifically for MSU students for no fee. Forms can be obtained at the interview or by request from the volunteer specialist.

Mandated Reporting
As a volunteer who works with school staff and children, you are in a key position to

help protect children from harm. Every volunteer within Mankato Area Public Schools is a mandated reporter. This is specifically covered under Policy #414 – Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse. All staff and volunteers are required to review this policy and be familiar with its contents.

As a Mandated Reporter, all staff members and volunteers have a legal obligation to make a report to Child Protection if they know or have reason to believe a child is being neglected or abused or has been neglected or abused in the preceding three years. Volunteers can bring their concerns or findings directly to their classroom teacher, staff member or the volunteer office. Failure to report suspected abuse of neglect is a criminal misdemeanor under state law and violates school district policy.

Volunteer Interview
All volunteers need to schedule an interview with the Engagement Specialist. At the interview, you and the specialist will cover your interests, skills and schedule to help match you up with an appropriate volunteer assignment that works with your schedule and that you will enjoy.

District Handbook
All volunteers are required to abide by all policies and procedures contained in the district handbook located online at www.isd77.org or can be accessed by hardcopy in the Engagement office upon request.

Volunteer Placement
After all of the intake procedures are complete, the volunteer specialist will match you up with an appropriate placement taking into consideration your interests, skills, talents and schedule in combination with the needs of school staff and students. Please keep in mind that the volunteer specialist is always there to assist with questions, concerns and volunteer support.

Volunteer Duties Examples
There are many types of placements and programs throughout the school district that utilize volunteer help. Some examples of duties within these placement types and programs include:

- Monitor and support students during teacher directed, whole class instruction.
- Monitor and support students during independent work or cooperative learning activities.
- Provide follow-up instruction individually or in small groups after teacher directed instruction.

- Volunteers may also support students' instructional programs through the preparation of learning materials and the fulfillment of other clerical tasks.

Volunteer Placement Examples
There are many placements through the FACE office. Each placement will have varied tasks and responsibilities depending on the classroom or event. There are specialized placements within these categories including specific age and grade level, abilities and programming.

- Classroom Grandparents
- Weekly Classroom Volunteers
- Classroom Speakers
- Special Events Volunteers
- Clerical Support

Volunteer Responsibilities

There are specific responsibilities every volunteer must maintain. Most importantly, we expect that all volunteers will act professionally and maintain communication with the volunteer office and school staff so that everyone can experience a successful volunteer partnership.

Training
General volunteer training will be completed with the FACE office before beginning volunteer services. Much training will be done in the classroom. Additional training may be required upon placement at the discretion of the teacher and the volunteer office. Volunteers are responsible for completing this training and applying that knowledge to volunteer experience.

Professionalism
All volunteers are expected to act in a professional manner and look the part as well. You are in a school setting, so please dress appropriately. Examples of this are no low necklines, no short skirts or shorts, no low-hanging pants, no hats and no revealing clothes. Nice looking jeans are acceptable in most cases. Cell phones should not be taken into the schools, but if you must, make sure the ringer is turned to silent or turned off.

Confidentiality
All volunteers must understand the confidentiality agreement you signed when applying as a MAPS volunteer. Volunteers should be aware of what confidential information is and keep student records and your experiences with students confidential. If you need to discuss a student with a teacher, make sure to do so in a private setting. Most

appropriate is in the classroom during quiet or down times, not in the hallways where other staff or students may overhear. No photos without written consent from the teachers and students (a photo release form can be obtained from the volunteer office.) If you need to write a paper for an educational class based on your volunteer experience, do not use the names of the students. Initials or an alias is advised. All volunteers must also abide by all applicable MAPS' policies and procedures that can be accessed on the district website at www.isd77.org/page/4234 or by hard copy in the Engagement office.

Cancellation

Please email the volunteer office at volunteer@isd77.org and copy the cooperating teacher if you have an unforeseen cancellation due to an illness or emergency. Please try to make the cancellation at least 24 hours in advance. You can also call 507-387-5501 to report an absence by phone. Once you are on the volunteer schedule, the teachers plan for you to be there and include you in the lesson plans. It is difficult for them if you cancel at the last minute. The students also get used to having you in the classroom on certain days and get very disappointed when you are not there. The extra attention and help a volunteer can give is very beneficial and important to the students, and many students look forward to seeing the volunteers on a weekly basis.

No Show Policy

Volunteers who do not show up for a scheduled volunteer assignment with no notice beforehand of the absence, may be subject to removal from the volunteer program. This is a strict policy of FACE.

Volunteer Resignation or Removal

If for any reason volunteers do not show up, have repeat tardiness, or have violated any other rule, they may be subject to immediate removal. Volunteer removal is rare. However, when a volunteer is removed, they are dismissed immediately. To resign from volunteer responsibilities, volunteers are requested to give a two-week notice.

School District Procedures

Sign-In Procedures

All volunteers should go directly to the school office when starting your volunteer day and sign in on the volunteer login page which is located on the office computer. This protects our students by creating an accurate record of who is in the building at any given time. You also need to either pick up a visitor sticker or wear the name tag provided by the volunteer office. This will allow you to be easily recognized by all staff as a person welcome in the school building.

Signing in & out at the School and Name tags

A name tag will be provided for you to wear in the school identifying you as a school volunteer. Please wear this each day that you volunteer. If you forget to bring it with you at any point, please get a visitor's sticker from the school office. It is very important to keep an accurate count of all volunteer hours in the district. When you enter the school office, you will log in to our Volgistics system on the office computer by using the number assigned to you by the Volunteer Placement Specialist. If you need assistance, please ask the school secretary or the Engagement office for help. Please make sure all volunteer hours get reported to the volunteer office. If you miss a punch in or out, let the Engagement office know and we will update your file. Thank you in advance for helping us keep accurate records.

Emergency Procedures

Volunteers should be well aware of all emergency procedures at their placement site. These procedures can be found in the school office or by asking the partnering teacher. Volunteers are responsible for knowing these procedures. If volunteers have any questions or concerns, volunteers should bring those up to the partnering teacher or staff member, or to the Engagement office. If there is an emergency while you are at the school, please know how to assist the teacher with the situation. However, please note that volunteers are not responsible in these situations, but aid to the teacher from another adult is very helpful in emergency situations. Below are general procedures that are common among all district schools:

Lockdown:

When you hear someone come on the PA system to announce a lockdown, please enter the closest room possible with a school staff member present and follow their directions. Everyone should stay away from any windows and keep the door locked and closed. Do not open the door for any reason. An all-clear message will come over the PA at the end of each drill and school personnel will know when it is okay to open a door if it is not a drill. Please refrain from using your cell phone during a lockdown.

Tornado:

Each school has a specialized tornado drill procedure. Follow the teacher's instruction, and help to make sure all the kids stay together. A staff member will announce when it is okay to go back to classrooms.

Fire:

Each classroom will have a pre-determined route to leave the building. Follow the classroom teacher's lead. Once outside, assist in counting heads to be sure all the

children are present. A staff member will announce when it is okay to re-enter the building.

Weather Related School Closings

If school is closed, dismissed early or has started late due to inclement weather, all volunteer assignments are canceled for that day. Please watch or listen to local TV or radio broadcasts for emergency closing announcements or call the Mankato Area Public Schools Hotline at 507-387-6046.

Scheduled Early Release Days

There is one early release day each month (typically the second Wednesday of the month.) Please talk to the volunteer office and the cooperating teacher regarding early release days if you volunteer on Wednesdays in the last two hours of the school day.

Helpful Hints!

Be Realistic…

...About the hours you can commit to volunteering and the total hours you are interested in fulfilling.

Be Dependable…

...Show up on time, every time. Be a volunteer that the teachers can rely on to complete a variety of tasks. Have good communication with your cooperating teacher and/or the Family and Community Engagement office. Do your best at everything!

Be Honest…

...Let the supervisor or the volunteer specialist know if it is ever too much or overwhelming. Let your supervisor know if you are not able to complete a task given to you.

Be Positive and Enthusiastic…

...Bringing positivity to your volunteer experience will make it better for you and the students. You will enjoy your time more and the teachers will appreciate your enthusiasm.

Go for it!

...Just throw yourself into the experience 100%. Do your best. Enjoy your time and get a meaningful experience out of every day!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Mankato Area Public Schools! Your time and support make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students. Students appreciate your encouragement, teachers value your help, and together we create a stronger school community. We are grateful for your commitment and excited to have you as part of our volunteer team.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What if I can't make it to my placement?

We understand that things come up. As a general rule, you should tell us as soon as you know you will be absent. Email both the Engagement office (volunteer@isd77.org) and your teacher as soon as possible. If you have an unexcused absence, it may be grounds for dismissal. Remember: You are important. We need to know when you'll be around and the students get disappointed when you cannot show up.

2. How do I know when school is closed?

To find pre-scheduled days off, you can check out the online calendar for the given school year at the Mankato Area Public Schools website here: http://www.isd77.org/page/3985.

To check for weather cancellations, you can call the following number: 507-387-6046

If you are confused or have any questions, please contact the Engagement office at 507-387-5501.

3. What happens after the interview?

After you complete your interview, the volunteer specialist will communicate with teachers to find a placement that matches your schedule, skills and interest. When the final decision is made, the specialist will then email or call you with all the details of your placement, including teacher name, school, parking procedures, schedule, etc. If you have questions beyond what is provided in the follow-up email, be sure to ask the volunteer specialist.

4. What do I do when I arrive at the school?

In some schools in Mankato, you may need to press an intercom system in order to enter the building. When they ask who you are, announce that you are a volunteer. Once you are in the building, always be sure to go to the main office first. There should be signage directing you there; if not, ask faculty or staff. In the office, you should sign in on the office computer using your Volgistics number provided to you from the Volunteer Placement Specialist. Ask the school secretary or the Engagement office if you need help or have questions on this system. You also need to either wear the provided name tag or get a visitor's sticker to put on. You should do this every time you come to the school.

5. What do I do on my first day?

On your first day, take time to understand the culture of the classroom. What are the rules? How does the teacher get the students' attention? What is the schedule like? Allow yourself time to observe and find your place. Follow the teacher's instructions to

know what your tasks will be. If you still have questions and/or concerns, be sure to ask the teacher for some time to discuss them. Teachers are busy but will make time for you; just be sure you ask, if you need some.

6. How should I dress?
You will be working within a professional setting, so dress accordingly. Please do not wear short skirts, low-cut shirts, low-hanging pants, etc. It is always better to over-dress than under-dress. If you are in an elementary setting, it's important to consider that you may be moving around a lot and sitting in small chairs and/or on the ground. Try to wear clothes suitable for sitting cross-legged.

7. What if my teacher asks me to do something I'm uncomfortable doing?
We recognize and appreciate that you are donating your time to our community, and we want to be sure you are comfortable. If you are able, please communicate to your teacher that you are uncomfortable doing the task. If you are not comfortable talking to the teacher about it, please contact the Engagement office. We take pride in being connected to our volunteers, so do not ever hesitate in contacting the Engagement office.

8. Who do I contact if I have a concern?
Your first line of defense should be communicating with your teacher if it is regarding your classroom experience. If you are uncomfortable doing so, the volunteer specialist is available as a support for you. If you have any other questions regarding the volunteer program, contact the Engagement office.

Bridges Community School 320 Garfield Ave. North Mankato MN 56001 507-387-2800	**Kennedy Elementary School** 2600 East Main St. Mankato, MN 56001 507-387-2122
Central High School 110 Fulton St. Mankato, MN 56001 507-387-3047	**Lincoln Community School** 110 Fulton St. Mankato, MN 56001 507-387-5501
Dakota Meadows Middle School 1900 Howard Dr.	**MAPS Center for Learning** 15 Maps Dr.

North Mankato, MN 56003 507-387-5077	Mankato, MN 56001 507-625-4620
Eagle Lake Elementary School 500 LeSueur Ave. Eagle Lake, MN 56024 507-257-3530	**Monroe Elementary School** 441 Monroe Ave. North Mankato , MN 56003 507-387-7889
East High School 2600 Hoffman Rd. Mankato, MN 56001 507-345-4287	**Prairie Winds Middle School** 1200 Prairie Winds Dr. Mankato, MN 56001 507-345-6625
Franklin Elementary School 1000 North Broad St. Mankato, MN 56001 507-345-4287	**Roosevelt Elementary School** 300 West 6th St. Mankato, MN 56001 507-345-4585
Hoover Elementary School 1524 Hoover Dr. North Mankato, MN 56003 507-388-5202	**Rosa Parks Elementary** 1001 Heron Dr. Mankato, MN 56001 507-387-7672
Jefferson Elementary School 100 James Ave. Mankato, MN 56001 507-388-5480	**Washington Elementary School** 110 Anderson Dr. Mankato, MN 56001 507-345-3059
	West High School 1351 South Riverfront Dr. Mankato, MN 56001 507-387-3461