



EKALAKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EKALAKA ELEMENTARY DISTRICT #15 • CARTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Classified Staff Handbook

2022-2023

Revised : July 2022

WELCOME TO EKALAKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

The material covered within this staff handbook is intended as a method of communicating to employees regarding general district information, rules, and regulations and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy or administrative regulation. Material contained herein may, therefore, be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation, or changes in state or federal law.

Any information contained in this staff handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination, from time to time, without notice. No information in this document shall be viewed as an offer, expressed or implied, or as a guarantee of any employment of any duration.

Equal employment opportunity and treatment shall be practiced by Ekalaka Public Schools regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, and disability, if the employee, with or without reasonable accommodation, is able to perform the essential functions of the position.

The following have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements, including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, and other civil rights or discrimination issues, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and may be contacted at the high school business office for additional information and/or compliance issues:

Charles Cook, Superintendent

MISSION STATEMENT

The Board of Trustees, the school staff and the Ekalaka community are committed to establishing a learning environment that ensures all learners an equal opportunity for an educational program that will produce learners who are responsible and accountable, who value lifelong learning, and who are capable of succeeding in a changing world.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Trustees are guided by the conviction that every student has the right to the best education this community can provide. Responsibility for this rests with all citizens, parents, school staff, and students, with the ultimate responsibility for direction and decision making assumed by the Board.

The Board will exert leadership in creating, maintaining, and improving the school for the children's educational needs. The focal point of concern in our school system is the student. Organization, staffing, programming, teaching, and funding should all be developed primarily and basically to enhance appropriate opportunities for students to learn and develop – personally, academically and socially.

ORGANIZATION

Ekalaka Public Schools (EPS) in Ekalaka, MT, is composed of two schools: Ekalaka Elementary School District #15 & Carter County High School.

In order to achieve their primary goal of providing each child with the necessary skills and attitudes to become effective citizens, the Board shall exercise the full authority granted to it by the laws of the state. Their legal powers, duties and responsibilities are derived from the Montana Constitution and the State statutes and regulations. School Laws of Montana and the administrative rules of the Board of Public Education and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction delineate the legal powers, duties and responsibilities of the Board.

EKALAKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Legislature of the State of Montana delegates to the Board responsibility for the conduct and governance of district schools. Board members, as elected by residents of this district, are as follows:

Mike Ashbrook, Chair, High School District #3 & Elementary District #15
Stefan Livingston, Vice Chair, High School District #3 & Elementary District #15
Helen King, High School District #1
Lynn Williams, High School District #3 & Elementary District #15
Samantha Wright, School District #3 & Elementary District #15
Lisa Borchgrevink, High School District #3 & Elementary District #15
Thebea Thomas, High School District #2

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

To contact the school please dial: (406) 630-1523
To contact the Business office dial 630-1521
To contact the Superintendent, dial 630-1517
To contact the Technology/Transportation office, dial 630-1511

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Charles Cook, Superintendent
Brian Purnell, Principal
Lora Tauck, Business Manager/Clerk

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ATTENDANCE

Working Hours/Breaks/Leave

Absences

It is extremely important that you notify your supervisor as soon as possible of any unanticipated absences so that, if necessary, alternate arrangements can be made. An absent employee must report his/her absence to a supervisor (or other designated person) before the start of the employee's workday or as soon as practical given the nature of the absence. For anticipated absences, leave requests should be completed as early as possible to allow for scheduling coverage if necessary. Leave should be requested using the school approved Absence Request Form. Typically, authorized leave time may not be made up at alternate times outside your approved work schedule. Leave without pay may not be taken in lieu of accrued sick and vacation leave.

Breaks – Policy #5221

The District may make available daily morning and afternoon rest periods of fifteen (15) minutes to all full-time, classified employees. Hourly personnel may take one (1) fifteen (15) minute rest period for each four (4) hours worked in a day. Breaks normally are to be taken approximately mid-morning and mid-afternoon and should be scheduled in accordance with the flow of work and with approval of the employee's supervisor. Breaks must be reported in the timekeeping system.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – Policy #5328

The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees in certain instances. Employees are eligible if they have worked for the District for at least one (1) year and for one thousand two hundred fifty (1,250) hours over the previous twelve (12) months, and if there have been at least fifty (50) District employees employed during twenty (20) or more workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year. Employees must request leave and be determined to be eligible to receive FMLA leave. Employees will be required to use appropriate paid leave while on FMLA leave. Workers Compensation absences will be designated FMLA Leave.

Holidays - Policy #5333

All Classified employees are paid for the hours normally worked on these holidays in accordance with MCA 20-1-305: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. When one of the above holidays falls on a Sunday, the following Monday will not be a holiday. When one of the above holidays falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday will not be a holiday. Due to a break in service during the work year, i.e. summer break, seasonal and/or part-time employees are entitled only to those holidays which occur during the weeks they are scheduled to work.

Payroll Periods

The payroll period runs from the 6th of the month to the 5th of the following month and pay day is on the 15th of each month. Should this date fall on a weekend or holiday, payday will be on the last previous business day that is not a weekend or holiday.

Sick Leave - Policy #5321P

Classified employees shall be granted sick leave benefits in accordance with MCA 2-18-618. For classified employees, 'sick leave' means a leave of absence, with pay, for a sickness suffered by an employee or an employee's immediate family. Immediate Family shall be defined as spouse, siblings, parents, children, spouse's siblings, spouse's parents and any other family member that has been living with the employee for a documented extended period of time.

Classified employees are not entitled to be paid for sick leave until they have been continuously employed by the District for ninety (90) days.

A classified employee who terminates employment with the District is entitled to a payment equal to one-fourth (1/4) of the accumulated sick leave at the employee's hourly rate. Employees are only eligible for this payment after being continuously employed by the District for ninety (90) days.

Travel Time

Classified employees are eligible for compensation for the time they spend traveling. The compensation an employee receives depends on the kind of travel and whether the travel time takes place within normal work hours.

Any portion of authorized travel time that takes place within an employee's normally scheduled working hours on any day of the week, including Saturday and Sunday, is treated as work hours. Travel time within normal work hours will be paid at the employee's regular hourly rate and will be factored into overtime calculations.

Any portion of authorized travel time (with the exception of driving time) that takes place outside of normal work hours is considered to be outside travel time.

When a nonexempt employee is required to travel as a passenger in an automobile, plane or any other mode of transportation outside of their normal hours, this time is not considered time worked.

All authorized travel time spent driving an automobile (as the driver, not as a passenger) is treated as hours worked, regardless of whether the travel takes place within normal work hours or outside normal work hours. An employee will receive their regular hourly rate for all travel time spent as the driver of an automobile and this time will be factored into overtime calculations.

Employees are responsible for accurately tracking, calculating and reporting travel time on a district approved timesheet. Meal periods should be deducted from all travel time.

Vacation – Policy #5334 & 5334P

Classified employees shall accrue annual vacation leave benefits in accordance with MCA 2-18-611,612,614 through 617 and 2-18-621. Nothing in this policy guarantees approval of the granting of specific days as vacation leave. Each request will be judged by the District in accordance with staffing needs. Classified Employees who have worked for the District less than six (6) calendar months will accrue vacation benefits, but cannot use them until after six (6) calendar months. Use of vacation must be requested in advance on the District approved leave form.

Rate Earned Schedule for Vacation Leave

Years of Employment	Credit Per Month	Annual Days
1 day through 10 years	.058 times the # of hours worked	15 days
11 through 15 years	.069 times the # of hours worked	18 days
16 through 20 years	.081 times the # of hours worked	21 days
Over 20 years	.092 times the # of hours worked	24 days

A classified employee who terminates employment with the District is entitled to a payment of unused vacation leave at the employee's hourly rate. Employees are only eligible for this payment after being continuously employed by the District for six (6) calendar months. Seasonal employees will receive payment for their accrued annual leave to date in June's payroll.

Work Time

The hours of work vary from department to department according to work volume. Your supervisor will explain your work week and schedule to you and answer any specific questions. Hourly wage employees are expected to be on the job at the specified time as established by their schedule, complete their shift, and leave at the time specified by said schedule. Employees are not to work before, beyond or outside their normal working hours and are not to work overtime without prior authorization. Under Montana law and the Fair Labor Standards Act, a classified employee may not volunteer to work without pay in an assignment similar to the employee's regular work.

Generally, time worked is to be reported through the District approved electronic timekeeping system. If it is not possible to use the electronic system, time will be reported on an approved District timesheet.

Overtime is defined as time worked over 40 hours in one week. A week is defined as seven consecutive days covering Sunday through Saturday. **All overtime must be pre-approved by the Superintendent.**

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Employees are strongly discouraged from using their personal cell phone during the work day. When necessary, employees may use their personal cell phones and similar communication devices only during assigned break times. In no event shall an employee's use of a cell phone interfere with the employee's job obligations and responsibilities.

COMMUNICATION - Policy #5450

Please check your mailbox at least once during your shift. Additional District information may be placed in your mailbox. Email is a very effective method of communication. School email should be used for school related/professional reasons only. Staff should remember that they are responsible for the email you send and receive and the contents therein. Any email sent or received at school is a public document that can be scrutinized at any time. If you are assigned an email address, please check that address as well.

CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

Since our work environment is a school, you will be in contact with students of all ages. You are to conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. Your appearance should be appropriate for the job, but should also be neat and clean.

Interact with students in a positive and friendly manner, being respectful of their needs as you would expect them to be respectful of yours. The mission of non-certified staff in a school setting is to support the teaching staff so the teachers may provide the best possible education for students; and to support the students so they may learn in the most conducive environment for learning.

EMPLOYMENT

Complaint Resolution/Problem-Solving - Policy #5240

As circumstances allow, the District will attempt to provide the best working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion or question is answered quickly and accurately by District supervisors or administration. Employees are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints first

with their immediate supervisor with the objective of resolving the matter promptly and informally. If it has not been or cannot be resolved informally, an employee may file a signed and dated written complaint as outlined in Policy #1700-Uniform Complaint Procedure.

Contract

Classified employees will be employed under a written contract for a specified term with a beginning and ending date, within the meaning of MCA 39-2-012, after the employee has satisfied the requisite probationary period of 90 days. Should the employee satisfy the probationary period, such employee shall have no expectation of continued employment beyond the current contract term. The District reserves the right to change employment conditions affecting an employee's duties, assignment, supervision or grade.

The Board will determine the salary schedule for classified personnel.

Dress Code

All Staff are encouraged to pay particular attention to their dress and appearance. Please dress in a manner that is appropriate for your position and the work that you do. At all times employees will consider safety and needs of the position when considering appropriate dress.

Drug & Alcohol Testing for School Bus and Commercial Vehicle Drivers-Policy #5228 & 5228P

The District will adhere to federal law and regulations requiring a drug and alcohol testing program for school bus & commercial vehicle drivers, which includes random alcohol and controlled substance testing.

Drug Free Workplace – Policy #5226

The use of illicit drugs and unlawful possession and use of alcohol is wrong and harmful. It is the policy of Ekalaka Public Schools that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance by an employee in the workplace is prohibited. Compliance with the standards of conduct set forth in this policy is mandatory for all staff.

Ekalaka Public Schools have a responsibility to students, employees and the general public to ensure a safe and efficient work environment conducive to providing a quality education for all students. To satisfy this responsibility, the school shall make a good faith effort to ensure a work environment which is free from the effects of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. Accordingly, it is the policy of the District as follows:

1. The following definitions shall apply for purposes of this policy:
 - a. **Alcohol** shall mean and include ethanol and any beverage that may be legally sold and consumed in the State of Montana having an alcohol content in excess of 3% by volume.
 - b. **Drug** shall mean any substance, other than alcohol, capable of altering an individual's mood, perception, pain level, or judgment.
 - c. **Illegal Drug** shall mean any drug or controlled substance the sale or consumption of which is restricted or controlled by the State of Montana or the federal government but shall not include a prescription drug for which the possessor has a valid prescription.
 - d. **Under the influence** of alcohol or illegal drugs shall mean that the person's faculties or abilities are impaired by consumption of alcohol or drugs. A person

with an alcohol concentration in excess of .04% shall be presumed to be under the influence of alcohol.

- e. **Odor of alcohol** shall mean the commonly perceived odor of ethanol in sufficient concentration upon the person's body, breath or clothing to be readily detectable by smell to an ordinary person in close proximity to such an individual.

Prohibited Conduct:

No employee during the duty day or at the time of other school assigned responsibilities shall:

1. Have in his/her personal possession, nor consume any alcohol or illegal drug.
2. Have an identifiable odor of alcohol upon their person or clothing;
3. Be under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug;
4. Use, sell, distribute or give away any alcohol or dangerous drug; or
5. Knowingly allow any student or students under his/her supervision to possess or consume alcohol or an illegal drug.

The above prohibitions also apply to those occasions during which an employee is supervising or chaperoning students or groups of students.

Administration and Enforcement:

1. The primary responsibility for administering this policy shall be with the Superintendent or designee of the facility at which the employee is employed or performing duties.
2. The District shall conduct an awareness of its drug-free workplace policy for all employees.
3. If the District has reasonable cause to suspect that an employee is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs in violation of this policy or has an identifiable odor of alcohol upon their person, breath, or clothing, the District may require the employee to do any of the following (except that submission to urine or blood testing shall be limited to those incidences where the District has reason to believe the employee's faculties are impaired on the job as a result of alcoholic consumption or illegal drug use.);
 - a. Immediately submit to a breath analysis upon a certified Breathalyzer operated by certified Breathalyzer operators.
 - b. An employee registering an alcohol concentration greater than .04% on a certified breathalyzer may:
 - i. Immediately submit to a repeat of the test on the same breathalyzer;
 - ii. Immediately obtain, at the expense of the district, an independent test of his/her blood or urine at a local hospital or medical clinic. Such a test must occur within four (4) hours of the original test and must state its results in terms of alcohol concentration at the time of day that the Breathalyzer test was initially conducted.
 - c. Immediately submit to a blood or urine test in conformance with the provisions of 49 CFR; part 40, as now existing, or hereafter amended, which are hereby adopted by the District as its testing blood and urine testing procedure. Any employee subjected to testing of blood or urine shall have a copy of 49 CFR, part 40 made available to them. In addition:
 - i. A copy of all blood or urine test results shall be provided to the employee;
 - ii. Any employee submitted to a blood or urine test at the request of the District will be provided the opportunity, at the expense of the District, to obtain a confirmatory test of the blood or urine by an independent laboratory selected by the employee;
 - iii. The employee will be given the opportunity to rebut or explain results of any blood or urine test;
 - iv. Adverse action will not be taken against a person whose blood or urine is tested pursuant to this policy if the person tested presents a reasonable explanation or medical opinion indicating the results of the test were not caused by alcohol consumption or illegal drug use.
 1. Reasonable cause under this section may be established by, but is not limited to:

- a. Direct observation;
 - b. Reliable reports of observations from others;
 - c. Evidence obtained from an arrest or criminal conviction;
 - d. Verified positive test results; or
 - e. An employee's voluntary admission.
2. An employee in violation of the Districts drug and alcohol policy shall be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Disciplinary action may include required participation in an approved drug abuse assistance and rehabilitation program.
 3. Any employee refusing to submit to testing in accordance with the procedures specified herein, when reasonable cause exists for requesting such testing, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Reports of Convictions:

All employees must notify the District's administration of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in a workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction. Any employee so convicted will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The employee may be required to participate successfully in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

Assistance and Rehabilitation:

- A. The District places importance on assisting employees who have drug and alcohol abuse problems through its Employee Assistance Program. Private counseling, Mental Health Counseling, Treatment Centers and various support groups are available for rehabilitative services for the employee. The district's health insurance may cover some of the cost for these services.
- B. The district recognizes that chemical dependency is a highly complex illness that often can be treated successfully. The purpose of this policy is to assure that any employee suffering from chemical dependency will receive the same careful consideration as employees with other illnesses.
- C. Chemical dependency problems are defined as illnesses in which the employee's consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or use of drugs interferes with his or her job performance and/or health.
- D. Although chemical dependency is recognized as an illness, such dependency shall not constitute an excuse for violation of the District's drug and alcohol policy.
- E. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to create any right of disability for chemical dependency in excess of that, if any, provided in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Administrative Procedures and Policy Review:

Widespread communication of this drug-free workplace policy is essential to its successful implementation. All employees shall receive a copy of this policy annually.

In order to remain responsive to the current needs for drug use education and prevention, this policy shall undergo periodic reviews to assess the consistency and fairness of the disciplinary sanctions imposed and assistance offered to staff. Each year the school administration shall compile information from the incident reports and records of the referrals made and disciplinary sanctions imposed to present at the June meeting of the school board.

This drug-free workplace policy shall be reviewed at least every three years by a committee of staff, parents, law enforcement officers and board members.

Evaluation – Policy #5222

Classified Staff will be formally evaluated at least once each academic year.

Guests while working

Guests, including spouse, children or friends, are not to accompany you when you are clocked in for the school district. They are not employees and therefore should not be assisting you in your duties. Property/liability insurance distinctly frowns on non-employees helping employees of the district. Non-employees are **not** covered under Workmen's Compensation.

Harassment – Policy #5015

Harassment of staff members is strictly prohibited on district property, including non-district property while a staff member is at any district-sponsored, district-approved, or district-related activity or function where the staff member is engaged in district business.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, disability, and sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. The staff member's submission to the conduct or communication is made a term or condition of employment;
2. The staff member's submission to, or rejection of, the conduct or communication is the basis for decisions affecting employment and assignment;
3. The conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance;
4. The conduct or communication has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Other types of harassment may include, but not be limited to, jokes, stories, pictures, or objects that are offensive, tend to alarm, annoy, abuse, or demean certain protected individuals and groups.

A staff member whose behavior is found to be in violation of Board policy may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

Any staff member who is subject to, or knows of, such harassment is directed to notify the Superintendent immediately. If the complaint is not satisfactorily settled, the staff member may file a complaint directly with the Montana Human Rights Commission or with the U.S. Department of Labor, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Such complaints may also be filed with the appropriate enforcement agency, in lieu of the district's complaint process, at any time, as provided by law.

There will be no retaliation by the district against any person who, in good faith, reports harassment.

Idle gossip is detrimental to the work environment and could lead to harassment charges.

Insurance

The Board provides unemployment insurance, worker's compensation and liability insurance for all employees. In addition, the Board provides group health insurance to eligible employees. Classified employees who are employed less than half (1/2) time (that is, who are regularly scheduled to work less than twenty (20) hours per week) will not be eligible for group health, dental and life insurance.

Any permanent classified employee who works 20 hours or more is eligible for group health insurance. Employer contributions toward the group health insurance premium is as follows:

Group Health Insurance		Academic Year	12 month yearly
Full Time	32+	9500	10000
Part-time	20+	7125	7500

Classified employees are responsible for the cost of the premium above what the District contributes through payroll deduction.

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions for all employees have been formulated. As an accredited public school system, we adhere to state and federal laws, administrative rules and state accreditation standards governing school personnel.

Personnel Files

The system maintains a personnel file for each employee. You have the right to inspect your file at any reasonable time.

School Lunch Program

The District is part of the National Lunch Program. Adult lunch cost will be \$4.00.

Tobacco-Free Environment

In order to protect the health of students, staff, and the general public, provide a healthy working environment, and promote good health for students, tobacco use is prohibited on all district property, in district-owned vehicles and in all public school buildings.

Tobacco use is defined as the carrying or smoking of any kind of lighted pipe, cigar, cigarette, or any other smoking equipment or material or the chewing or sniffing of a tobacco product. Tobacco products may not be visible.

PURCHASING

Purchasing Procedures – Policy #7320

Under law, the Board has sole authority and responsibility for all purchasing within the district; however, the mechanical functions of procurement will be delegated to the administration. Any obligation of district funds without utilization of a purchase order shall become the financial responsibility of the person having obligated the monies. Employees are to fill out requisitions and receive approval in the form of a copy of the purchase order in advance of purchase.

SAFETY/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Accidents

All accidents or injuries involving students or staff, no matter how minor, are to be reported to the building office. Accidents involving students require an 'accident report' be filled out. Forms are

available in the office and should be filled out in a timely fashion. Accidents involving staff members will be reported to Workers' Compensation.

Bus Safety

At no time will a bus be left unattended by a driver when the bus is running and children are on board.

Fire/Disaster

Please acquaint yourself with building exits so that you are aware of the closest exit in the event of a fire/disaster. The District conducts disaster drills according to Montana law. You are expected to comply with building evacuation procedures during drills.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather or other emergencies sometimes make it necessary to cancel school or to cancel bus routes. Decisions about route cancellations are to be made by the driver after consultation with the Superintendent and/or Transportation Director, when possible. Decisions to close the school for emergency or inclement weather reasons will be made by the Superintendent, or the person designated "in charge" in his/her absence, in consultation with the Transportation Director. The administration will try to contact all staff members when a cancellation occurs. If there is a school schedule change, the announcement will be made on the school website, Facebook posting, radio channels KFLN 960AM, 100.5FM (Baker) and KKRY 92.3FM. Telephone calls will be made to the extent possible. Electronic based automatic communication may be used for quick contact of parents and staff through phone calls or emails/texts using a technology such as shoutpoint.

SCHOOL FACILITY & EQUIPMENT USAGE

Building/District Office Hours

The office is accessible to staff during the course of the school year between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. according to the academic calendar that is set.

Computers/Internet Usage-Policy 5450

The District has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional, informational, and business purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to school business purposes only. Staff should have no expectation of privacy in any materials that are stored, transmitted, or received via the EPS electronic network or EPS computers. EPS reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store, at any time and without prior notice, any and all usage of computers, systems, networks and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage.

Key Procedure

Keys are issued to staff by the Superintendent or designee. In order to protect property, students, and staff and to ensure the building is adequately secured when no authorized personnel are present, all staff are expected to follow the following key-control procedures:

1. The duplication of keys is prohibited;
2. Keys are not to be left unattended. Avoid having keys on desks, tables, in mailboxes, unattended coat pockets, etc.
3. Keys may not be loaned to students or to individuals not employed by the district. Under no circumstance should staff provide keys to students to "run errands", "unlock/lock" doors, etc.
4. Lost or stolen keys must be reported to the Superintendent within 24 hours of discovery of the loss or theft so that measures may be taken to protect district property. Three days will be allowed for the finding or recovery of keys before any charges is assessed;

5. Upon completion of a lost-or-stolen-key report form, presentation of the broken or damaged key(s), and submission of assessed fees, replacement keys will be issued within 72 hours;
6. Charges for lost or stolen keys will be made to the staff member to whom the key(s) have been issued.
7. All keys are to be checked in at the end of the school year. Staff with summer duties necessitating building access may make arrangements with the Superintendent to keep their keys as appropriate.

Telephone Use

Please keep in mind that the telephones are business phones and should not be tied up for personal calls (local or long distance). The school district will pay for long distance calls which are made for school purposes

Vehicle Use

Any staff member or volunteer must have a copy of a valid driver's license on file with the district office and must consent to a background check of their driving record before they may operate a school vehicle. School bus drivers must report ALL moving traffic violations to the Director of Transportation, including violations received in private vehicles and/or on personal time.

TRAVEL PROCEDURES

STAFF TRAVEL

1. TRAVEL REQUEST

- a. A request for travel must be submitted to the Superintendent on a "Travel Request" form.
- b. Once the request has been approved & signed by the Superintendent, it will be forwarded to the Business office.
- c. A "Financial Report" must be completed within 5 working days of return date.

2. TRAVEL ADVANCE

- a. Travel advances can only be issued after a "Travel Request" form has been approved
- b. Request must be received at least five (5) working days before the travel is to occur. Requests not received within this time frame will need to be claimed as a reimbursement to the employee.
- c. Travel advances are issued to individual employees. For example, if three employees are traveling together, one employee may not request an advance for 3 lunches each day of travel.

3. PER DIEM

The district has adopted per diems as the method of reimbursing staff for travel. Per diem is the allowance for lodging (excludes taxes), meals and incidental expenses (M&IE). Per diem will be computed based on time the event begins/ends, plus a reasonable travel time. Time spent for personal errands will not extend travel time to allow for additional meals and/or lodging.

***MEALS & INCIDENTAL EXPENSES**

- (a) The maximum daily allowance for meals is \$30.00, which is calculated as follows: Breakfast = \$7.00; Lunch=\$10.00 and \$13.00 for supper.
- (b) Employees are eligible for breakfast, lunch and supper per diem if departure time is by 6:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., respectively.
- (c) Only one of the three meal allowances will be provided if the travel is performed with the employee's normal working hours.
- (d) Meals included in the registration fee will be deducted from per diem.

***LODGING**

The standard rate for lodging in Montana is currently \$96.00. The school will try to secure the state rate for lodging whenever possible. Non-standard areas are established for locations whose lodging rates are higher than standard CONUS (Continental United States) rates.

(a) Under normal circumstances, the business office will arrange for lodging to be either direct billed to the district or charged to a district issued procurement card (P-card). If the office is not given sufficient time to set up this billing, the employee will be reimbursed at CONUS rates.

(b) All claims for lodging expense reimbursement allowed under this section must be documented by an appropriate receipt. Lodging must be reimbursed at actual cost, not to exceed the prescribed maximum rate per day for the location involved plus taxes on the allowable cost. If lodging is not available at the CONUS rates, the Superintendent must pre-authorize the additional cost, otherwise CONUS rates will be reimbursed, regardless of actual cost.

(c) If the event gets over at 5:00 p.m. or later and there is 250 miles or greater travel distance, the district will provide for the night the meeting concludes.

(d) Employees are expected to share rooms, with a 2 person/room maximum. The Superintendent may allow for deviation from this rule, under special circumstances.

***MILEAGE**

Employees are expected to take advantage of a district owned vehicle, if possible. When the district owned vehicle is used, if sufficient time is given either the cost of fuel can be charged to a p-card or employees may estimate the cost of fuel and 80% will be advanced to them. Receipts must be attached to the financial report.

When an employee chooses to use a privately owned vehicle even though a district vehicle is available, the employee may be reimbursed only at the rate of 48.15% of the mileage rate allowed by the United States Internal Revenue Service for the current year.

When a privately owned motor vehicle is used because a district-owned vehicle is not available or because the use is in the best interest of the district, then a rate equal to the mileage allotment allowed by the United States Internal Revenue Service for the current year must be paid for the first 1,000 miles and 3 cents less per mile for all additional miles traveled within a given calendar month.

Wherever mileage is allowed to any employee, the same shall be computed according to the shortest traveled route, when such shortest route is passable.

***REGISTRATION**

Under normal circumstances, registration fees will be prepaid. If the business office has not been given sufficient time to prepare a warrant for the registration, the employee will be reimbursed the actual expense.

4. CLAIM FOR EXPENSES.

All claims for reimbursement must be turned in to the business office no more than 5 working days after the travel has occurred.

All conflict or questions (such as method of travel, per diem & mileage calculations, room sharing, driver, etc.) will be handled by the Superintendent, who will have the final determination.