



# **Reading Public Schools**

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

## **Employee Handbook**

*Published August, 2016*

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## **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

This Employee Handbook has been written to provide information and guidance to all employees of Reading Public Schools, though it does not represent an exhaustive list of each of Reading Public Schools' employment practices. The language used in the Employee Handbook should not be construed as creating a contract, express or implied, between the Reading Public School District and any of its employees, or a guarantee or employment for any specific duration.

The policies, procedures and benefits contained in this Employee Handbook supersede all previous policies, procedures and benefits of the Reading Public Schools, except as provided by collective bargaining agreement or individual contract. Reading Public Schools, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any provisions of the handbook at any time. Employees will be advised of any changes in published procedures and policies. Should any provision contained in this Employee Handbook be found to be unenforceable and invalid, such a finding does not invalidate the entire Employee Handbook.

Please note that no supervisor, manager, or representative of the Reading Public Schools, other than the Superintendent, has the authority to enter into any agreement with an employee for employment for any specified period of time or to make promises or commitments relative to employment with Reading Public Schools.

Employees covered under collective bargaining agreements or individual contracts should consult those agreements for information regarding certain working conditions that may override the provisions within this handbook. This handbook provides no additional rights or benefits to employees whose terms and conditions of employment are subject to a union collective bargaining agreement or individual contract. Absent a written agreement to the contrary, your employment is as an employee at will and as such can be terminated either by Reading Public Schools or you at any time, with or without cause or notice.

The highlights of benefits contained in this handbook are not intended to take the place of more detailed benefit plan documents. Descriptions in the plan documents will override the information contained in this handbook in the event that information presented in the handbook is inconsistent with information in the plan documents.

If an employee has questions concerning this handbook or the policies of Reading Public Schools, please contact an immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Administrator. Reading Public Schools will gladly assist any employee who is unable to understand its policies. If an employee does not request assistance, it will be assumed that he or she fully understands the policies in this handbook.

It is not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise in the workplace, or to provide answers to every possible question. Should a situation arise that is outside the norm or if an employee is in doubt about how to respond to a particular situation, the employee should seek guidance from his/her building principal or direct supervisor.

# READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS OVERVIEW

## *Mission and Vision Statements*

### **Mission and Vision**

The Reading Public Schools strives to ensure that all students will have common, challenging, meaningful, learning experiences in the academics, health and wellness, the arts, community service, co-curricular activities, and athletics. We will lead and manage our school community to reflect the values and culture of the Reading Community, and guide and support our students to develop the appropriate skills, strategies, creativity, and knowledge necessary to be productive, informed, independent citizens in a global society.

It is the vision of the Reading Public Schools to continue fulfilling the promise of our mission and, in so doing, to be a model of educational excellence in preparing students for the 21st century. We will continue to instill a joy of learning and inspire, engage and support our youth to become the innovative leaders of tomorrow. This will be accomplished by focusing on a few key strategic initiatives that lead to a meaningful and relevant curriculum, innovative instructional practices, strong analysis and thoughtful dialogue about quantitative and qualitative evidence, a collaborative and team approach to learning and teaching, and a safe and nurturing learning environment. Education will truly be the shared responsibility of both the schools and the community, with families playing active roles in the schools and being full partners in ensuring the success of their children. In the interest of the entire Reading community, the school district and town government shall work cooperatively and collaboratively. As educators and members of our community, we believe that implementing this vision is our ethical responsibility to the children of the Town of Reading.

### **Curriculum, Instruction, Technology, and Assessment...**

Our district shall have a pre-K through 12 curriculum that is aligned, well-articulated, and based upon the essential standards and skills that our students need to be productive, informed, independent, contributing citizens in a democratic society. This research-based curriculum will be challenging for all students and focus on depth of learning, rather than breadth of coverage. Each grade level will have specific, age-appropriate, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills integrated into the curriculum, which will include: *creativity and innovation skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, communication and collaboration skills, information literacy, media literacy, and technological literacy*. In addition, our curriculum will use real-world problems to afford students the opportunity to develop essential life and career skills, such as *flexibility and adaptability, initiative, self-direction, productivity and accountability, cross-cultural skills, social skills, life-long learning, leadership and responsibility, and personal wellness*.

Students will have opportunities to engage in activities aimed at fostering a life-long love of reading and literature. Civics and global awareness will also be interwoven throughout our schools' curriculum, allowing students to develop an understanding of their own roles as members of local, state, national, and global societies.

Instruction in all classes will be tailored to the diverse needs of students and focus on high levels of student engagement in the learning process. Teachers will use a variety of research-based instructional methods, such as flexible grouping, hands-on inquiry-based learning, and differentiated instruction to make each lesson both engaging and challenging. In addition, technology will be thoroughly integrated as a tool for teaching and learning, allowing students to access and assess an ever-expanding volume of knowledge and giving them the opportunities to expand their boundaries of learning beyond the walls of the classroom. In this way, students at every grade level will be acquiring the technology skills necessary for the 21st century, and they will be given opportunities to connect, collaborate, and network with others. For instance, students and teachers will use blogs, podcasts, wikis, video production, and future applications to create assignments that are connected to meaningful, real-world issues. All schools will be completely wireless, and all students (beginning in grade 6) will use personal technology devices, electronic portfolios, and district email addresses. Students will use technology as a tool for critical learning, communication, and collaboration—both inside and outside the classroom. Staff will use technology for instruction, communication, grading, and collaboration; and our school leaders and administrative staff will utilize technology to manage the financial, human resource, and facilities departments.

Data from both formal and informal assessments shall drive the instructional practices in our district. To gauge what students truly know, can do, and understand, a comprehensive system of student assessment will be used to afford students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned through such means as formative and summative assessments, online assessments, project-based assignments, and culminating exhibitions. Technology will also be used to track student

progress, and the district and schools will use standards-based evaluations, such as the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation process and the Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Blueprint for Success to ensure continual reflection and improvement toward the highest standards of teaching, learning, and leadership.

### **Leadership, Personnel, and Learning Environment...**

District and school leaders shall be student-centered, collaborative, and steadfastly committed to the mission and vision of the Reading Public Schools. The School Committee, together with district and school leaders, shall provide the necessary resources and support to accomplish our vision. District finances will be sufficient to properly fund school and district improvement efforts consistent with the vision. District and school leaders shall manage the district in a fiscally-responsible manner, keeping the community continually informed of financial needs. In addition, the district will continue to identify and secure alternative sources of funding to augment local financing. With this culture of teamwork to accomplish goals, we will demonstrate our commitment to shared leadership and collaboration with all members of our school community.

The faculty and staff will be diverse and team-oriented, and will work collaboratively to promote the mission, vision, and goals of the Reading Public Schools. All personnel will be highly-skilled, student-centered, motivated, lifelong learners. We shall have a comprehensive human resource management system which emphasizes thoughtful hiring practices and encourages diversity, support for new teachers, meaningful professional development, and an evaluation process which fosters continuous professional growth. As a result, a culture will exist where all school district personnel have the opportunity to feel supported, valued, and report high levels of job satisfaction.

In our district, it shall also be of paramount importance that all members of our learning community feel safe and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Diversity shall be embraced, and mutual caring, respect, and empathy will be present throughout the community. Each student's educational experience will be personalized by members of the school who will know the student well, who will understand the student's abilities and challenges, and who will assist the student in achieving both personal growth and academic success. Before-school programs, after-school programs, community education, online courses, and summer enrichment academies will provide for our students engaging opportunities to expand their learning. It will be clearly understood and valued by all that learning occurs beyond the walls of the classroom.

The district's school buildings shall always be well maintained, clean, comfortable, and safe environments for learning. In addition, the buildings will be energy efficient. Each individual's commitment to energy and resource conservation will be strikingly evident. Our school buildings will be equipped to provide a 21st century learning environment for our students, and they will also be well-utilized centers of community activities.

### **Families and Community...**

Education will truly be the shared responsibility of both the schools and the community, with families playing active roles in the schools and being full partners in ensuring the success of their children. Respectful communication between the home and school will be welcomed, encouraged, and expected. Together, we shall all share the importance of holding students to high standards and expectations for both their academic achievement and their social and emotional development.

In the interest of the entire Reading community, the school district and town government shall work cooperatively and collaboratively. To stay current in financial and educational policy issues, the school district will also maintain open lines of communication with both elected officials and educational leaders at the local, state, and national levels. In addition, the school district will maintain active partnerships with businesses, universities, and civic organizations.

As educators and members of our community, we believe that implementing this vision is our ethical responsibility to the children of the Town of Reading. And in so doing, we shall truly be fulfilling the promise of our mission.

## ***School Committee and Administration***

### **School Committee**

The School Committee is the elected body that establishes goals and policies for the Reading Public Schools, appoints the Superintendent and approves the budget. There are six members of the school committee including the Chair and Vice-Chair. Each member is elected by the voters of Reading for three year terms. In addition, there are two Student Representatives. The School Committee holds regular meetings approximately twice a month on Monday evenings throughout the school year. Meetings are generally held in the Superintendent's Conference Room at 82 Oakland Road.

Elaine Webb, Chair  
Linda Snow Dockser, Vice Chair  
Nick Boivin  
Jeanne Borawski  
Charles Robinson  
Sherri Vanden Akker

### **Central Office Administration**

John F. Doherty, Superintendent of Schools  
Christine Kelley, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching  
Gail Dowd, Chief Financial Officer  
Jennifer Bove, Human Resources Administrator  
Carolyn Wilson, Director of Student Services

### **School Administration**

Kathleen Boynton, Principal, Reading Memorial High School  
Michael McSweeney, Assistant Principal, Reading Memorial High School  
Jessica Theriault, Assistant Principal, Reading Memorial High School  
Thomas Zaya, Assistant Principal for Athletics and Student Activities  
Sarah Marchant, Principal, Coolidge Middle School  
Brienne Karow, Assistant Principal, Coolidge Middle School  
Richele Shankland, Interim Principal, Parker Middle School  
Brendan Norton, Assistant Principal, Parker Middle School  
Beth Leavitt, Principal, Alice M. Barrows Elementary School  
Julia Hendrix, Principal, Birch Meadow Elementary School  
LisaMarie Ippolito, Principal, Joshua Eaton Elementary School  
Sarah Leveque, Principal, J. Warren Killam Elementary School  
Joanne King, Principal, Wood End Elementary School  
Kelley Bostwick, Director, RISE Preschool

### **Our Schools**

There are eight schools in the district. Alice M. Barrows Elementary, K-5; Birch Meadow Elementary, K-5; J. Warren Killam Elementary, K-5; Joshua Eaton Elementary, K-5; Wood End Elementary, K-5; Arthur W. Coolidge Middle, 6-8; Walter S. Parker Middle, 6-8; and Reading Memorial High, 9-12. Reading Public Schools also has an integrated preschool program, RISE Pre-Kindergarten program, with classrooms located at Reading Memorial High School and Wood End Elementary School.



## ***District Partnerships***

### **Town of Reading**

The municipal government of the Town of Reading is the district's most important partner. Of course we share in the tax revenues that represent the voters' commitment to a quality of life that values education, public service, and community engagement. We also share many resources and collaborate to efficiently manage the operations of the community.

### **Reading Parent-Teacher Organizations**

Each of our schools is fortunate to have a PTO comprised of parent volunteers who support teachers in each building. This support includes parent education, teacher appreciation events, mobilization of classroom and school level volunteers, and funding for technology, enrichment, and other special programs.

### **Reading Booster Organizations**

Reading Public Schools are supported by a significant number of parent booster organizations comprised of parent volunteers who raise, contribute, and dispense funds for the benefit of specific extracurricular activities including athletics teams, academic teams, and fine and performing arts.

### **Reading Educational Foundation**

The Reading Educational Foundation is a volunteer organization of Reading residents working in partnership with the Superintendent of Schools and Reading Public Schools. Their mission is to support innovation and excellence within the school district by raising and providing private money to fund initiatives that are beyond the reach of public funds.

### **METCO**

Since 1966, the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunities (METCO) has brought students of color from Boston to 32 suburban high schools. The purpose is to reduce the racial isolation of suburban communities as well as to provide urban students of color access to quality education. Reading has participated since 1967 and currently enrolls approximately 75 students district-wide.

### **Collaborative Organizations**

Reading is one of ten member districts of the SEEM Collaborative and one of eighteen member districts of the North Shore Education Collaborative. Through these collaborative organizations, Reading Public Schools is able to partner with other districts in the area to provide special education as well as professional development and other services to our students and staff at a lower cost than a single district alone could secure the same services. Reading Public Schools is also a member of The Education Collaborative (TEC). To reduce costs, Reading Public Schools utilizes the TEC collaborative bid process for school and custodial supplies. Through this collaborative purchasing arrangement, Reading Public Schools is able to purchase items at a reduced cost.

## ***Communication Resources within Reading Public Schools***

### **Website**

The Reading Public Schools' website is constantly updated with news and announcements about what is happening through the system. Checking the website should be a part of an employee's daily routine.

Website: <http://www.reading.k12.ma.us>

### **The Journey Newsletter**

The Superintendent prepares a weekly newsletter, *The Journey*, for Reading Public School staff members. Employees should review the newsletter for information regarding current happenings in the Reading Public Schools community.

### **Pathways Blog**

The Superintendent prepares a weekly blog, *Pathways*, for Reading Public School staff, students, parents and community members. Employees are encouraged to visit the blog for information regarding current happenings in the Reading Public Schools community.

### **E-Mail and the Public Records Law**

At the time of hire, new employees will be given a Reading Public Schools email address. Employees are expected to abide by the Staff Computer/Network/Internet/Telephone User Agreement, which is located in the Appendix section of this employee handbook.

Please note that the e-mail system is provided for business purposes related to the Reading Public Schools only. All e-mail messages as well as the general computer system are the property of Reading Public Schools. Reading Public Schools reserves the right to review any e-mail messages that are sent and/or received. Employees may not send, forward, download, save or print any e-mails, including any attachments, which are unprofessional, offensive or otherwise inappropriate. Employees should be aware that any e-mail generated may be considered a public record and subject to the Massachusetts Public Record Law, M.G.L. Chapter 66, as well as disclosure under federal law.

### **School-Issued Laptops and iPads**

All employees who receive laptops and/or iPads are required to sign the Staff Computer/Network/Internet/Telephone User Agreement. All efforts should be made to safeguard equipment. Please be aware that any software on the laptop that is not approved by Reading Public Schools or properly licensed is subject to removal. Please refer to the Staff Computer/Network/Internet/Telephone User Agreement for additional information.

### **School-Issued Cell Phones**

School-issued cell phones are to be used for business purposes only. Accessing or downloading of fee-based materials, etc. is prohibited.

### **Blackboard Connect**

ConnectED is an automated telephone, email, and text messaging system whereby district staff members and parents can be notified of emergency situations, school cancellations, school events and important issues impacting our schools. You may update the contact information the district has on file for you by submitting an updated form to the Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction. For more information on the Connect Ed system, please visit <http://www.blackboard.com/Platforms/Connect/Overview.aspx>.

## ***Reading Public Schools Academic Schedule***

### **School Hours**

The regular hours for the Reading Public Schools are as follows:

#### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Kindergarten	8:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (morning kindergarten) 12:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. (afternoon kindergarten) 8:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (Wednesday morning kindergarten) (Wednesday – no afternoon kindergarten)
Grades 1-5	8:10 a.m. Teachers' day begins 8:15 a.m. First bell – students enter building 8:25 a.m. Instruction begins (late bell rings) 2:45 p.m. Students' dismissed (Wednesday dismissal at 12:45 p.m.) 3:10 p.m. Teachers' day ends

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

Grades 6-8	7:35 a.m. Teachers' day begins 7:50 a.m. Students' day begins 2:30 p.m. Students' day ends 2:35 p.m. Teachers' day ends
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#### **READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL**

Grades 9-12	7:20 a.m. Teachers' day begins 7:30 a.m. Homeroom 2:11 p.m. Period 7 ends 2:20 p.m. Teachers' day ends
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## **School Calendar**

On an annual basis, the Reading School Committee approves the annual school calendar which is available on the Reading Public Schools website (<http://www.reading.k12.ma.us>). The school calendar details school year days including early release days, professional development days, and other important days during the school year.

## **School Cancellations and Delays**

The Superintendent will exercise one of the following options when weather conditions dictate a change in the normal opening of the school day:

1. Cancellation of School
2. Delayed opening of schools: 1-hour, 1 ½-hour or 2-hour option
  - If a 1-hour delay is announced, AM RISE preschool and AM kindergarten will be cancelled
  - If a 1 ½-hour delay is announced, AM RISE preschool and AM kindergarten will be cancelled
  - If a 2-hour delay is called, AM RISE preschool and AM kindergarten will be cancelled
  - Bus pick-up times will be delayed accordingly. Example: If school is delayed by 1 hour, buses will pick up the students 1 hour later than the usual pick-up time.
  - Each school will have appropriate procedures governing class scheduling when a delayed opening is announced.

Announcements of no school or delayed opening will be communicated by the following methods:

1. Radio stations: WBZ 1030AM; WRKO 680AM
2. Television stations: Channels WBZ4, WCVB5, WHDH7, WXFT Fox 25 & RCTV
3. Posting on the Reading Public Schools web page
4. Staff members are notified via the ConnectED emergency notification system.

## **Snow Days**

Employees (administrators, administrative assistants, custodians, and non-unit staff) that work twelve months are expected to report to work when school is called off due to weather conditions. If travel or related problems prevent attendance, staff members are expected to notify their supervisors as soon as possible. In general, 12-month employees should arrive as close to the start of work as possible, but the Superintendent may announce a delay of one hour or more for all workers. In the event of a delay, employees who report to work at the time announced will be paid for the full day. The Superintendent may also, at his or her discretion, decide to close the school offices, in which case those individuals will be paid for the day. Employees who elect not to report to work as scheduled may take a vacation day. It should be noted that employees who choose not to report to work and wish to use vacation time will be required to use a full vacation day, even in the event of a delayed opening or early dismissal.

Employees who work a school year contact (teachers, aides, tutors, lunch monitors, cafeteria, drivers, and school year administrative assistants) work when school is in session. Therefore, these staff members would make up the day at the end of the year and are paid for their contracted number of days.

## **GENERAL EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

### ***Commitment to Non-Discrimination***

#### **Equal Opportunity Employment**

Reading Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of Reading Public Schools to prohibit discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation, benefits, job training or any other terms and conditions of employment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran or military status, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetics, homelessness, or any other basis protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. All employees, volunteers, and students shall not demonstrate any discrimination in any activity associated with Reading Public Schools.

For additional information, please refer to the Reading School Committee Nondiscrimination Policy (File: AC) and Reading School Committee Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (File: ACA).

#### **Disability & Reasonable Accommodation**

Reading Public Schools is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We are also committed to ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. We conduct all our employment practices and activities on a non-discriminatory basis. In addition, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws protecting qualified individuals with disabilities, Reading Public Schools will reasonably accommodate those individuals who require a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of their jobs unless doing so would create an undue hardship on Reading Public Schools. Reasonable accommodation varies from case to case and is evaluated on an individual basis.

Any qualified applicant or employee with a disability who requires an accommodation in order to apply for a position or perform the essential functions of their job should contact their supervisor or Human Resources to request an accommodation. In most cases, the District will need medical documentation of the disability and of possible accommodations. The District may also need regular discussions with the employee regarding the continuing need for accommodations and the effectiveness of the accommodations provided. The District may ask to speak to the employee's health care provider to help assess the proposed accommodations and to ensure that the employee can safely perform the essential functions of the job with the accommodations. The District may also ask the employee to submit to an independent medical or other appropriate examination, at the District's expense, to help it assess the employee's needs.

For additional information, please refer to the Reading School Committee Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability Policy (File: ACE).

#### **Prohibition Against Harassment and Discrimination**

The Reading Public School System shall maintain a learning and working environment free from discrimination and harassment. In both the education and employment environments of the Reading Public Schools, various laws prohibit discrimination and harassment. In an education context, law prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of disability, national origin, race, color, religion, sex or sexual orientation. In an employment context, law also prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of age. All such harassment and discrimination is unlawful and will not be tolerated in the Reading Public School system. Please refer to the Reading Public Schools Harassment and Discrimination Policy (File: ACAB/ACAC) for information regarding the definition of harassment and discrimination as well the procedures for reporting instances of suspected discrimination or harassment.

#### **Bullying Prevention**

The Reading Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student or employee shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying. Please refer to the Reading Public Schools Bullying Prevention Policy (File: JICFB) for information regarding the definition of bullying as well the procedures for reporting instances of bullying.

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

Technologies in the Reading Public Schools are tools to support the teaching and learning process and should be used primarily for business purposes. Staff members are expected to adhere to the highest standards of conduct when utilizing the district computer network resources, electronic mail, telephone, voice mail and the Internet. Each staff member is expected to take individual responsibility for his or her appropriate use of the Internet and follow all conditions and rules of technology use as presented by the Reading Public Schools.

Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. This means network administrators and the administration may review files and communication to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should assume that files stored on the district servers and communications made via District systems or computers will always be public and available for anyone.

Please refer to the Reading Public Schools Computer Network/Internal User Agreement for additional information regarding the appropriate uses for technology, phone, email, internet, and voice mail in the district as well as the consequences for failure to adhere to those guidelines.

## **Social Networking Guidelines**

The Reading Public Schools recognizes the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between Staff and students. However, due to the nature of social networking sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one's own professional life and personal life will be blurred. Our staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise. Should an educator "friend" a student on Facebook, subscribe to a student's "twitter" account, regularly engage in email "chat" with a student, exchange text messages with students or engage in other electronic communication, the school district is concerned, and the educator should be concerned, that such activities may undermine the educator's authority to maintain discipline, encourage inappropriate behaviors and compromise the educator's ability to remain truly objective with his or her students.

Please refer to the Reading Public Schools Social Networking Guidelines for additional information regarding the expectations for staff members' use of social networks such as Facebook, Linked-In, Twitter, personal email accounts, text message features of cell phones, use of blogs, and other electronic or technological based communication systems.

## **Reading Public Schools Employee Standard of Conduct**

All Reading Public Schools employees are expected to demonstrate a professional, cooperative, knowledgeable and courteous demeanor in all interactions with students and parents. Work attire should reflect the professional responsibilities of an employee's position, exhibiting concern for safety, hygiene, neatness, cleanliness and projecting positive role models for students enrolled within the Reading Public Schools. The use of profane language in communications with students or parents or in the classroom is prohibited..

At a minimum, it is expected that all Reading Public Schools employees will follow general and specific work and employment guidelines, carry out instructions and direction appropriately issued by supervisors or administrators and perform job responsibilities in a satisfactory manner. Reading Public Schools employees are expected to be regular in attendance, arriving on time and adhering to designated starting and ending times for work, breaks, lunch, prep periods, etc. Excessive personal calls, or use of supplies, services for equipment for personal reasons are not allowed.

For additional information, please refer to the Reading School Committee Staff Conduct Policy (File: GBEB).

## **MGL 268 A Conflict of Interest Law as Amended by c. 20, Acts of 2009**

The Reading Public Schools will follow M.G.L. Chapter 268A the "Conflict of Interest Law and Disclosure". The School District may or may not be operated for the benefit of an affiliated or unaffiliated organization or an individual in his or her own private capacity or individuals related to the Reading Public Schools or members of its management, unless the private benefit is considered merely incidental and not to conflict with M.G.L. Chapter 268A. This private benefit preclusion will extend to the following:

- a. Sale or exchange, or leasing, or property between the district and an affiliated or unaffiliated organization or a private or related individual.
- b. Lending of money or other extension of credit between an agency and an affiliated or unaffiliated organization or a private or related individual.
- c. Furnishing of goods, services, or facilities between the district and an affiliated or unaffiliated organization or a private or related individual except for the rental of district facilities as specified in the Reading School Committee Policy Manual.
- d. Payment of compensation, unless authorized by the Reading School Committee, by the district to an affiliated or unaffiliated organization or a private or related individual.
- e. Transfer to, use by, or for the benefit of a private or related individual of the income or assets of the Reading Public School unless specifically voted by the Reading School Committee.

Thus, the reading Public Schools will be guided by the principle of arms-length standards with all affiliated or unaffiliated organizations or with a private or related individual(s). Related party transactions shall include transactions between the School District and members of the Reading School Committee, administration, employees, related individuals and affiliated companies. Related individuals within the scope of this definition include spouses, parents, children, spouses of children, grandchildren, siblings, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law of a School Committee member or school district employee.

### Ethics Training

The Conflict of Interest Law contains mandatory ethics training requirements for all public employees. Every two years, all current state, county and municipal employees, including special employees, must be provided with a summary of the conflict of interest law, as posted on the State Ethics Commission's website. Every Reading Public Schools employee must sign a written acknowledgment that he or she has received the summary.

In addition, every two years all current state, county and municipal employees must complete an ethics training program on the Commission's website. New employees must complete the online training within 30 days of the date on which they commence employment, and every two years thereafter. Reading Public Schools employees will be required to provide a certificate of completion of the training to the appropriate employer and the certificate shall be retained by the employer for six years.

### Staff Gifts

It is essential that Reading Public Schools employees avoid taking official actions which are influenced by potential gain or benefit, or may be perceived as such. Therefore, accepting gifts or gratuities from individuals or organization who do business with the Reading Public Schools or the Town of Reading is strictly prohibited.

It is not uncommon for teachers and other school staff members to receive gifts from students and their families. However, public school employees are subject to specific parameters for accepting such gifts by the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission. The State Ethics Commission provides the following guidance for public employees, which can also be found at <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/gifts-to-public-school-teachers-and-staff.html>.

### *Personal Gifts*

In general, public employees (including teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, etc.) may not accept any gift worth \$50 or more that is given because of the position that he or she holds.

Public employees may accept gifts that are worth less than \$50, but they are required to disclose in writing that they have done so if, based on the specific circumstances, a reasonable person would think that the public employee might unduly show favor to the giver or the giver's child, or be influenced by the giver.

### *Gifts to the Classroom or School*

The law regulates gifts to public employees, not gifts to public agencies. Therefore, parents and/or students may give gifts to a particular public school, or a particular classroom, and the \$50 limit does not apply. A gift given to a teacher to use solely in the classroom or to buy classroom supplies is not considered a gift to the teacher personally, and is, therefore, not subject to the \$50 limit on personal gifts to teachers. Parents may give gifts to the classroom or the school in accordance with the rules of the school district. A teacher who receives such a gift must keep receipts documenting that the money was used for classroom supplies.

### *Class Gifts*

The Ethics Commission recently created an exemption to permit “class gifts” to teachers. A teacher may accept a gift from public school students and/or their parents and guardians, with an aggregate value of up to \$150, if the gift is identified only as being from the class, and the identity of the givers and the individual amounts given are not identified to the recipient. Given that the donor(s) are unknown to the public employee, gifts received pursuant to this exemption are not required to be disclosed.

A teacher may accept a class gift and also individual gifts from persons who did not contribute to the class gift. Therefore, if an individual gift is offered, before accepting it, the teacher must confirm that the giver did not contribute to the class gift. Unlike class gifts, which are not required to be disclosed, personal gifts must be declined or disclosed as described above.

These guidelines are meant to ensure that students and their families can continue giving gifts while protecting school employees from the appearance of undue favor or influence. Additional information regarding the Massachusetts conflict of interest law and gift regulations can be accessed at <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/laws-and-regulations/conflict-of-interest-information/info-section-3/930-cmr-500-gift-regulations.html> and the Reading School Committee Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff Policy (File: GBEBEC). Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

### Whistleblower Protection

Reading Public Schools complies with M.G.L. Chapter 149 c 185. Accordingly, it will not take retaliatory action against any employee who:

- a) Reports violations of laws or risks to public health, safety or environment;
- b) Refuses to participate in activities, policies or practices which the employee believes to be a violation of law or risk to public health, safety or environment; or
- c) Who engages in any other activity protected by that law.

### **Employee Participation in Political Activity**

The Federal Hatch Act, and State Ethics Commission, as well as the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF), restricts the political activities of public employees. During work hours, Reading Public Schools employees may not work or be assigned to work for or on behalf of a political candidate or activity, or participate in other political activity such as lobbying, collecting funds, making speeches, assisting at meetings, doorbell ringing or distributing political pamphlets. Under no circumstances may any Reading Public School employee participate or allow his or her name to be used in any form of fundraising for a political candidate or activity, other than in making a personal donation. All Reading Public Schools employees shall comply with the Hatch Act, OCPF and State Ethics Commission requirements, where applicable. Furthermore, no Reading Public Schools employee shall use Reading Public Schools resources such a property or equipment for political activities at any time.

The following are examples of prohibited activities include the following:

- a. Contributions by an employee that are reimburse through expense accounts or in other ways.
- b. Purchase by the school district of tickets for political fundraising events.



- c. Contributions in kind, such as lending employees to political parties or using the assets of the Reading Public Schools in political campaigns.

### **Employment-Related Issues and Concerns**

Reading Public Schools is committed to sound employee relations and encourages resolution of job-related problems through open communication and information resolution whenever possible. If an employee has any employment-related issues or concerns, he or she may raise such with his or her direct supervisor, Assistant Principal or Principal who will determine what steps may be necessary and appropriate to address the employee's concerns. The employee may also raise any matters of concern directly with the Human Resources Administrator.

### **Dress Code**

It is expected that all employees will maintain a high standard of personal and professional appearance. Reading Public Schools seeks to maintain a professional environment. All employees should use discretion in selecting attire that is appropriate for the desired school environment.

Employees holding certain positions, such as custodians and food service personnel, may be required to wear uniforms during work hours. Please refer to the appropriate collective bargaining agreement for additional information.

### **District and Personal Property**

#### Personal Property

The Reading Public Schools does not accept any responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property. Employees who bring personal property to school do so at their own risk and should take steps to safeguard their belongings at all times.

#### District Property

- a. Theft, loss, or damage to school property is to be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor, building principal, and/or Superintendent.
- b. When using equipment and vehicles belonging to Reading Public Schools, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance and follow all operating instructions, safety standards and guidelines.
- c. Employees are required to notify their supervisor, Principal, and/or Superintendent if any equipment, machine, tool, or vehicle appears to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair, in order to prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees, students, or the public.
- d. If an employee is involved in a vehicular accident in a vehicle belonging to the District, the employee must immediately report the accident to his/her supervisor, principal, and/or Superintendent immediately and complete all required forms.
- e. Prior approval from the Superintendent is required for removal of school property from the building.

#### Use of School Assets

No employee or member of the general public may use any of the School property, equipment, material or supplies for personal use without prior approval of the Superintendent of his/her designee.

### ***Procurement and Expense Reimbursement Guidelines***

The Reading Public Schools procures only those items and services that are required to perform and mission and/or fill a bona fide need. Procurements are made use best value contracting, which includes assessing the best value considering quality, performance, and price.

M.G.L. Chapter 30B shall govern all procurements of supplies and services, unless specifically exempted or covered by other state and federal laws.

The Director of Business and Finance shall function as Chief Procurement Officer for the District, upon official designation by the Chief Procurement Office for the Town of Reading.

The district adheres to the following objectives:

- a. Procurement will be completely impartial based strictly on the merits of the supplier and contractor proposals and applicable related considerations such as delivery, quantity, etc.
- b. Make all purchases in the best interests of the district and its funding sources.
- c. Obtain quality suppliers/services needed for delivery at the time and place required.
- d. Buy from responsible sources of supply.
- e. Obtain maximum value for all expenditures.
- f. Deal fairly and impartially with all vendors.
- g. Maintain dependable sources of supply.
- h. Be above suspicion of unethical behavior at all times; avoid any conflict of interest, related parties or even the appearance of a conflict of interest in the school district supplier relationships.

#### Purchase Orders

Requisition requests will be reviewed by the ASF Administration for compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 20B requirements and funds sufficiency.

The appropriate building Principal and/or Administrator and the Director of Business and Finance must approve requisitions/purchase orders.

The district will execute a Purchase Order for each purchase, in advance of an order being placed with a vendor to purchase goods or services. This requirement does not apply to student activity expenditures.

#### Signing Contracts or Entering into Agreements on Behalf of the District

No employee shall represent themselves as an agent for the district and enter into or sign any contracts, agreements, or grant applications on behalf of the district. Only the Superintendent and Director of Business and Finance may act as agents on behalf of the district.

#### Mileage for Use of Personal Vehicle

As a general rule, the District does not reimburse for travel with few exceptions. Employees are reimbursed at the standard mileage rate per mile as determined by Reading Board of Selectmen for use of their own vehicle for business related travel or at the rate per mile negotiated through the collective bargaining process. In addition, parking fees and tolls paid are reimbursable if supported by receipts.

Requests for mileage reimbursements must be approved in advance using the Travel Reimbursement Pre-Approval Form. Mileage expenses will only be reimbursed for travel outside the school district unless otherwise designated in your respective collective bargaining agreement.

All employees requesting such mileage reimbursement are required to furnish an expense reimbursement form containing the destination of each trip, its purpose, and the miles driven. Receipts for any parking fees or tolls paid must be attached to the expense reimbursement form.

Reimbursement requests must be made within the fiscal year during which the expenses were incurred. Failure to submit reimbursement requests prior to the close of a given fiscal year will result in no reimbursement.

Mileage incurred on behalf of the Reading Public Schools (not commuting mileage) is reimbursed on a monthly basis. The Accounting Assistant in the Central Office can provide assistance with questions.

## ***Hiring Practices, Licensure Requirements, Recordkeeping, and Conditions of Work***

### **Staff Hiring**

The Reading Public Schools will endeavor to attract, secure, and retain the most qualified personnel for all positions. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent and the Administration to determine the personnel needs of the district and to recruit suitable candidates for employment. All applications for employment shall be submitted through the online job posting application, SchoolSpring.com and on the district hiring portal at <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx>. The Superintendent has final authority for approving all recommendations for hire.

An offer of employment will be subject to applicable licensure and/or certification as well as acceptable CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information), fingerprint-based background check, and pre-placement physical and drug screen results. A candidate for hire will not be permitted to begin work prior to meeting with the Human Resources Administrator and completing all necessary paperwork. Depending on the nature of your position within the District, official education transcripts may be required. All candidates for teaching positions will be required to submit official transcripts.

### **Employee Orientation**

Each new teacher is expected to participate in the Reading Teacher Institute's induction program. This year-long experience helps teachers acclimate themselves to their first year in the Reading Public Schools. As part of this program, new teachers will attend a four-day orientation session in late August which will focus on making the first weeks of school successful. On-site supervisors provide ongoing support at the building level.

### **Teacher Licensure**

All Teachers are required to hold a license issued by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in order to be eligible to teach in Massachusetts Public Schools. The Educator Licensing and Recruitment (ELAR) system allows current and prospective Massachusetts educators to complete most licensure related transactions on the internet at <http://www.doe.mass.edu>. Within ELAR, individuals may apply for or renew licenses, check licensure status, edit personal information, and more.

### **Type of Licenses**

**Provisional** - valid for 5 years of employment; for individuals who not have completed an Approved Educator Preparation Program. Requires a Bachelor's Degree; passing score(s) on Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL); and additional coursework for some licenses.

**Temporary** - valid for 1 calendar year; for experienced teachers from another state. Requires 3 years of teaching under a valid out-of-state license; and possession of a valid educator license/certificate from another state/jurisdiction that is comparable to at least an Initial license in Massachusetts.

**Initial** - valid for 5 years of employment (may be extended one time for 5 additional years of employment). Requires a Bachelor's Degree; passing score(s) on MTEL; and completion of an Educator Preparation Program.

**Professional** - valid for 5 calendar years. Requires 3 years of employment under an Initial License; completion of a Teacher Induction Program; and 50 hours of mentoring beyond the induction program.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain appropriate licensure with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education regarding his/her teaching assignment. Evidence of current appropriate licensure must be on file with the Superintendent in order to maintain employment with Reading Public Schools.

### **Student Teachers**

All student teacher assignments must be approved the Building Principal. It is the responsibility of the cooperating teacher to monitor the work of the student teacher. No student teacher may independently lead a classroom without prior approval of the principal. Student teachers must pass a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) and fingerprint-based background check prior to beginning his/her assignment in the district.

## **Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and Statewide Fingerprint Identification Services (SAFIS) Policy**

The Reading Public Schools requires all candidates recommended for hire, volunteers, vendors, and contractors who may come into contact with students to submit to a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check. The Reading Public School district is required to conduct CORI checks of employees, vendors, contractors, and volunteers at least once every three years.

All school-related personnel with the potential for unsupervised contact with children are required to submit to a fingerprint-based national background check prior to beginning employment. Student teachers must also submit to a fingerprint-based background check. At the discretion of Reading Public Schools, school volunteers, vendors, and contractors with the potential for unsupervised contract with children may need to submit to fingerprint-based background checks. The individual employee or prospective employee is responsible for the cost of the national criminal background check. An unsatisfactory fingerprint criminal background check may result in termination of employment.

All offers of employment and continued employment are contingent upon satisfactory results of a CORI as well as a fingerprint-based background check. An unsatisfactory fingerprint criminal background check may result in termination of employment. If the Reading Public Schools Administration is inclined to make an adverse employment decision based on the results of a CORI check or a fingerprint-based background check, the applicant/employee will be notified. The applicant or employee shall be provided with a copy of the criminal record and the organization's criminal background check policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position or license, and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the CORI or fingerprint-based background check record. Employees who are involved in criminal proceedings that may affect employment should immediately notify the Human Resources Department.

For additional information, please refer to the Reading School Committee Criminal Background Check Policy (File: ADDA).

### **Personnel Records**

A personnel folder for each present and former employee will be maintained in the Human Resources Department. The Superintendent/designee will be the official custodian for personnel files and will have overall responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files within the provisions of the law. Each employee may review the contents of his/her own personnel file by submitting a written request to do so. Records cannot be removed from the Human Resources Department; however, employees who wish to obtain copies of documents contained in their personnel file may submit a written request to the Human Resources Administrator for a copy of the file.

Employees are free to submit their own written statement in response to any material placed in their personnel files. Medical records, e.g. related to medical leave of absence/FMLA leave, Workers Compensation, and Disability, will be kept in a separate confidential file.

To ensure that your personnel file is up-to-date at all times, please notify the Human Resources Department of any changes in name, home telephone number, home address, marital status, number of dependents, beneficiary designations, scholastic achievements or emergency contact information.

### **At-Will Employment**

Employment with the Reading Public Schools is at will. This means that your employment can be terminated with or without cause and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either the District or yourself, except as otherwise provided by collective bargaining agreement, individual employment contract or statute.

### **Resignation**

The Superintendent is authorized to accept resignations from employees of the schools on behalf of the School Committee, and shall report said resignations to the School Committee at its next regular meeting. Employees are requested to notify the building administrator and the Human Resource Administrator of their intent to terminate their

employment relationship with Reading Public Schools at as early a date as possible and in accordance with the appropriate negotiated agreement.

### **Exit Interviews**

Exit interviews are encouraged when employees leave employment with Reading Public Schools as the system may benefit from your honest and candid impressions and suggestions. Formal exit interviews with the Human Resource Administrator and/or Superintendent are available upon request. Keys, educational materials, badges and equipment shall be returned to the building Principal.

### ***Safety Policies and Procedures***

#### **Reading Public Schools Safety and Health**

The safety and health of Reading Public Schools employees and students is of paramount importance. Accordingly, it is the policy of Reading Public schools that employees and students in are provided with safe surroundings. It is the obligation of each employee to observe established safety rules. For individual safety, and the safety of fellow workers, unsafe working conditions should be promptly reported to the employee's respective supervisor.

#### **Identification Badges**

As a vital part of our security program, a Reading Public Schools identification badge with your name, building, position and photo will be issued to you as you begin employment. You are required to wear your identification badge, in clear view, at all times while in district. Upon termination of employment, you must return your identification badge to the Human Resources Administrator.

#### **Work-Related Illness/Injury**

Any employee who is injured while on the job should report the injury immediately to his/her supervisor, school principal or school nurse. The administrator will complete the Supervisor's Report of Accident form and submit it to the Human Resources Administrator. Employees who are injured on the job who need medical treatment are strongly encouraged to seek medical treatment at Quadrant Health Strategies but may choose to seek treatment at their own healthcare provider. Employees who require medical attention should seek it immediately. If treatment is obtained for a work-related injury during the employee's normal work hours on the day the accident occurs, the employee will be paid for a full workday.

Employees may contact the HR Administrator to request reimbursement for travel to Quadrant Health Strategies or other medical provider for the treatment of workplace injuries. The employee should provide the Human Resources Administrator with any medical documentation relating to the injury. Employees injured on the job may be required to submit to an evaluation by the Town Physician at Quadrant Health Strategies, Inc. before returning to work in order to ensure that the employee can safely perform his/her duties.

#### **Requirement to Report Torts**

Employees are required to immediately report any act or omission that results in or leads to an injury or loss of property or personal injury suffered in the performance of their job duties. Notification should be made, in writing, to your immediate supervisor, building principal and/or Superintendent.

#### **Procedure for Reporting of Child Abuse & Neglect**

Under Massachusetts Law, a mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse, or from neglect, shall immediately report such condition to the Department of Children and Families ("DCF"). Mandated reporters include public and private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or adjustment counselors, psychologists, attendance officers, social workers, day care providers, health care professionals, court and public safety officials.

In the Reading Public Schools, mandated reporters may either report directly to DCF or they may notify the superintendent or the school principal who will then be responsible for making the oral and written report to DCF. The mandated reporter must make the report orally to DCF immediately, and then make a written report to DCF within 48 hours. Reports can be telephoned to the local DCF area office. Please note that any mandated reporter who fails to file the required oral and written reports can be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000.00. Under the law, mandated reporters are protected from liability in any civil or criminal action, and from any discriminatory or retaliatory actions.

Reading Public Schools also strongly encourages all other school employees who are not “mandated reporters” to inform a Principal if they suspect a child has been abused or neglected. In addition, there is a statewide DCF Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Line, 1-800-KIDS-508. After 5:00 p.m. and on weekends, calls should go to the Child-at-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200.

### **Tobacco Use on School Property**

The Reading School Committee is dedicated to establishing and maintaining a healthy, safe, comfortable and productive educational, work and recreation place for its students, staff, and visitors to its facilities. The Committee therefore endorses the concept of a tobacco-free environment in school department buildings and on its grounds for students, staff, and other users of school facilities.

Further, the use of tobacco on school grounds is prohibited by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 36 of the Acts of 1993.

Accordingly, the use of any tobacco product by anyone is prohibited anywhere within any Reading Public Schools’ building, on school grounds, and in vehicles which are subject to the custody and control of Reading public Schools.

### **Drug-Free Workplace**

The Reading Public Schools will maintain a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of controlled substances or alcohol is prohibited while on duty or on school department property. Any violations of this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment. Federal law, known as the Drug-Free Workplace Act, requires the Reading Public Schools to certify that it maintains a drug-free workplace as a condition of receiving federal grants and contracts.

Any Reading Public Schools employee convicted or found guilty of a criminal offense involving a controlled substance is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, regardless of whether the offense was on school property or during working hours.

In addition, under Massachusetts Law, any person or persons manufacturing or distributing drugs while in or on, or within 1,000 feet of, any public, private or vocational school, whether or not such schools are in session, are subject to a minimum mandatory prison term of two years.

### **Substance Abuse**

Reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol or smelling of alcohol is strictly prohibited by the Reading Public School System and will result in immediate corrective action up to and including termination. The Reading Public School System has the responsibility to protect its employees and students from the serious risks of substance abuse. The use of drugs or alcohol affects job performance and creates an unsafe environment for employees and students.

The term "drug" includes alcohol, illegal substances, over-the-counter medications, and controlled substances that may alter an employee's behavior or judgment.

Violation of the substance abuse policy includes reporting to work under the influence, or the use, possession, manufacture, purchase, transfer, or sale of a controlled or illegal substance on work/school premises. Upon reasonable suspicion that an employee may be under the influence, an investigation will be conducted, which may include a drug or alcohol test.

## **Weapons/Fireworks**

Possession of a firearm or other dangerous weapon in any building or on the grounds of any elementary or secondary school is a punishable crime. Violation of the firearm law may result not only in civil action but also out of school suspension. Any student/employee who is in possession of any weapon or device, which could be injurious to others, is subject to suspension/dismissal. Section 37 of the Education Reform Act prohibits possession of a dangerous weapon on school premises. Reports are to be transmitted to the local police and Department of Social Services, and students involved shall be referred to counseling. For purposes of this rule a “weapon” or “device” is defined as any object that is intended to or could very possibly inflict bodily harm.

## **Fire Drill Procedures**

Every school has a fire drill procedure. All employees will familiarize themselves and students with the fire drill procedure for their school or area. Please contact your building principal or immediate supervisor for additional information.

## **Threats**

Any time an individual or group of individuals threaten to harm an individual or the Reading Public Schools, it will be the standard operating procedure of the Reading Public Schools for the principal to contact the Superintendent, who will work directly with the principal to assess and then take appropriate next steps. When necessary, the Superintendent will seek input from external sources to assess the threat and to determine when the threat has been removed and the school or individual is safe.

## **Student Safety – ALICE Protocol**

The Reading Public Schools uses the ALICE protocol to help teachers and administrators keep students safe during a “critical incident” situation involving a potential threat either on or near a school campus. A potential threat could include an armed or unarmed intruder, bomb threat off campus, or intruder at nearby location. All staff will be trained in their responsibilities during an ALICE event. Please contact your building principal or immediate supervisor for additional information.

## ***Compensation Practices***

### **Salaries-Salary Schedule Provisions**

Initial salaries are established at the time of hiring, consistent with any contractual scales or salary guidelines that exist for the position. Refer to your negotiated contract.

### **Payroll**

All school employees are paid on a bi-weekly basis. The number of payroll periods is subject to contractual language. Payroll checks are sent to employee's corresponding building when school is in session. All checks will be mailed when school buildings are closed for vacations, holidays, and inclement weather.

### **Direct Deposit**

Employees are encouraged to elect Direct Deposit for their payroll checks. Direct Deposit allows the town to credit your net pay to your account. Direct Deposit saves time, eliminates lost, stolen or forged checks, and ensures timely deposits. The initiation of Direct Deposit takes two payroll cycles after receipt of an employee's authorization form and cancelled check. You will receive a Direct Deposit Statement verifying the amount of the deposit prior to each payday. To change banks or accounts, you will need to submit a new cancelled check.

### **Payroll Deductions**

All payroll deductions are itemized on employees' paycheck stubs or Advice of Deposit forms. Mandatory payroll deductions are made, depending upon the number of exemptions claimed, for federal and state income taxes, and for retirement contributions. Employees may also authorize payroll deductions for health and life insurance and other voluntary elected deductions.

Employees who qualify for membership in either the Reading Town Retirement or the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System (MTRS) are required to contribute a percentage of salary to the appropriate plan which will be deduction from each pay period.

Employees who are employed in a union position may also have union dues (or an agency fee) deducted from their pay. Failure to agree to pay these fees can lead to loss of employment. Union dues authorization cards are obtained from union representatives.

More information can be obtained by contacting the Union President or Treasurer of each respective union, or the Human Resources Administrator of Reading Public Schools, 781-670-2882.

### **Garnishments, Liens, Trustee Processes**

Subject to the provisions of applicable federal and state law, Reading Public Schools may be obliged to retain, and pay over to a third party, a portion of the employee's earnings.



## **OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

### ***Benefits Available To Regular Full-Time and Part-Time Employees Working 20+ Hours Per Week***

The following provides a brief description of the current insurance and other benefits offered by the District. From time to time, these may change. Details of insurance plans described in the Handbook are contained in booklets written by the insurance carriers and are called Summary Plan Descriptions (“SPDs”). The insurance carrier determines coverage of specific situations and benefits. Employees should read the SPD for each plan carefully.

#### **Medical and Dental Insurance Benefit Eligibility**

Employees working at least 20 hours per week may be eligible to participate in the Town’s group health insurance programs. Medical and dental insurance premiums may be deducted from the employee’s paychecks on a pre-tax basis. Employees must enroll in medical/dental insurance within 30 days from the date of hire and coverage is effective thirty (30) days after hire. If an employee does not enroll within the initial 30 day period, he/she will not be eligible to enroll until the following Open Enrollment Period in April/May, to be effective July 1. An employee must furnish a copy of his/her marriage certificate and child(ren)’s birth certificates, if applicable, to accompany the health insurance enrollment. Employees should contact the Town Hall to enroll in benefits.

#### **Medical Insurance**

Two medical insurance programs are available through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts: PPO Blue Options v.4 or Network Blue Options v.4. The Town pays 71% of the premium and the employee pays 29%. Please refer to the Appendix section of this handbook for the current medical insurance contribution rates.

#### **Dental Insurance**

A dental plan is available through Altus Dental. The employee pays 100% of the premium. Payroll deductions for the dental insurance may be taken pre-tax. Please refer to the Appendix section of this handbook for the current dental insurance contribution rates.

#### **Life Insurance**

Term life insurance is available through Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company. The Town will pay 50% of the monthly premium for the basic \$5000 life insurance policy. Additional term life insurance and dependent life coverage is available with the employee paying the whole premium. Life insurance premiums may be deducted on a pre-tax basis if desired. Employees must enroll within 30 days from the date of hire and coverage is effective thirty (30) days after hire. Please refer to the Appendix section of this handbook for the life insurance contribution rates.

#### **Flexible Spending Accounts**

This program, administered by Cafeteria Plan Advisors, Inc., allows employees to set aside a certain amount of income on a pre-tax basis to pay for dependent care (day care and elder care) and out-of-pocket medical expenses. The Federal Government limits employee contributions to a Dependent Care Account to \$5,000. The Town limits employee contributions to a Medical Reimbursement Account to \$2,650. Employees must enroll within 30 days from the date of hire and coverage is effective thirty (30) days after hire. If an employee does not enroll within the initial 30 day period, he/she will not be eligible to enroll until the following Open Enrollment Period in November, to be effective January 1.

### ***Benefits Available to MTA Members***

#### **Disability Insurance**

Members of the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) may purchase Short and Long Term Disability Income Protection through the MTA. The Town does not make any contribution to the premium, but a payroll deduction can be made and sent to the company to pay the premium. Disability insurance premiums may be deducted on a pre-tax basis if desired. Please contact the MTA to learn more about eligibility and benefits.

## ***Benefits Available to All Regular Employees***

### **Deferred Compensation Plans**

A pre-tax 403(b) Tax Sheltered Annuity may be set up with one of the seven providers designated by the Town. A pre-tax 457 retirement savings plan is available through ICMA Retirement Corporation. An employee may enroll at any time in one of the two deferred compensation plans based on his/her job classification.

### **Credit Union**

Savings accounts and loans are available through the Credit Union. Payroll deductions may be deposited to a savings account or to pay a loan.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

It is the responsibility of each employee to seek help before a condition has an adverse impact on his/her employment. The Town of Reading provides a no-cost Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA). The EAP entitles you and your household members to confidential counseling and assistance on personal or work-related issues such as family & marital problems, drug & alcohol abuse, stress management, financial difficulties, health problems and emotional stress.

MIIA  
Confidential Work/Life Services  
24 hours/day – 7 days/week  
1-800-451-1834

### ***Retirement Plans***

Staff members who intend to retire are encouraged to indicate their plans to the Superintendent at as early a date as possible and in accordance with the appropriate negotiated agreement.

The retirement benefit selection determines if either you or your survivors will receive all or a portion of your contributions and interest in the form of a refund, retirement allowance or survivor benefit.

Employees will be enrolled in one of the following retirement plans based on your job classification. The contribution rate is determined by the date when the member first enrolls in the public retirement system.

### **Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System (MTRS)**

Membership in the Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System is mandatory for permanent, full-time employees and part-time employees working 18 or more hours per week. For a new employee hired after July 1, 2001, payroll deductions are at 11% of payroll unless the employee is transferring from another system at a different percent. Employees contributing to MTRS will not have a deduction for social security. The employee will have a Medicare tax of 1.45% deducted from payroll and could be Medicare eligible at age 65, if he/she meets the requirements of the Social Security Administration.

You are eligible to join the MTRS if you are employed as a teacher or administrator in a Massachusetts public school outside the City of Boston or in any charter school in Massachusetts and:

- you are covered by a contractual agreement regarding your employment;
- you are employed on at least a half-time basis;
- you are certified by the Department of Education; and,
- your contractual agreement requires that you be certified by the Department of Education as a condition of your employment.

Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System  
One Charles Park, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02142-1206

## **Reading Retirement System**

For employees working 1,690 hours per year, which is considered full-time by the Reading Retirement Board, membership in the Massachusetts contributory retirement system is mandatory. Payroll deductions are at 9% of payroll unless the employee is transferring from another system. An additional 2% is deducted for earnings over \$30,000. Employees contributing to the Reading Retirement System will not have a deduction for social security. All employees will be subject to the 1.45% Medicare tax and could be Medicare eligible at age 65 if they meet the requirements of the Social Security Administration.

For employees working less than 1,690 hours per year, including teachers working less than 18 hours per week, the Town has adopted a 457 Plan under the Internal Revenue Codes. This means that 7.5% of your gross salary will be deferred and invested in an account in your name at ICMA Retirement Corporation. Employees will not have a social security deduction. All employees are subject to the 1.45% Medicare tax and could be Medicare eligible at age 65 if he/she meets the requirements of the Social Security Administration

Reading Retirement System  
2 Haven Street, Unit 307  
Reading, MA 01867

## ***Medicare Eligibility and Retiree Health Benefits***

For employees who are enrolled in Medicare but are still currently working and enrolled in an employer-sponsored health plan, the employer-sponsored health insurance plan is the primary payer and Medicare is the secondary payer. Medicare becomes the primary insurance only upon retirement. Retired employees who become eligible for Medicare may participate in one of the Town's supplemental plans. More information may be obtained by contacting the Office of Human Resources at Town Hall.

## ***COBRA Continuation of Health Insurance***

Under this federal law, employees and their covered dependents may have certain rights to continued group health insurance coverage, for 18 months, if they lose their eligibility due to: termination of employment; or reduction in work hours. Enrolled dependents may also have the right under COBRA to continued coverage for 36 months if their eligibility is terminated due to: loss of status as a dependent, the employee's eligibility for Medicare; divorce or legal separation from the employee; or death of the employee. The cost of COBRA coverage is 102% of the total premium, and is to be paid in full by the eligible employee, spouse or dependent.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### ***Overview***

Professional development in Reading Public Schools is available in a variety of venues and formats. The primary purpose is to provide continuous opportunities for increasing professional competencies and knowledge. It is intended to facilitate productive collegial exchange and communication within teams and across grade levels and schools. Reading Public Schools strives to maintain an educational environment that is stimulating and responsive to educational advancement in the larger community. The overall district plans seek to coordinate individual initiatives with long-term goals.

### ***Conferences and Seminars***

With prior approval, Reading Public Schools staff can apply to attend conferences and seminars that support the development of skills and knowledge within their area of professional work. Any staff member requesting to attend a conference or workshop should initiate such a request with his or her supervisor or building principal. The goals of such workshops and conferences should relate to the vision of Reading Public Schools. After obtaining approval, staff should work with their building secretary to request a Purchase Order and assistance with the registration process. Please refer to your collective bargaining agreement or individual contract for additional information.

### ***Tuition Reimbursement Process***

Reading Public Schools encourages all employees to pursue higher educational programs leading to advanced degrees or certifications. To this end, tuition reimbursement benefits have been negotiated for certain employee groups. Please refer to your collective bargaining agreement or individual contract for additional information regarding this benefit.

To initiate a request for tuition reimbursement for college courses or professional development programs, the employee must first complete the Approval Request for Tuition Reimbursement-First Form and send it to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Learning & Teaching along with appropriate indicating the cost of tuition and any required fees. Courses for Non-Professional Staff must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor and specifically related to the employee's current duties and/or job assignment. When the employee's Approval Request for Tuition Reimbursement-First Form is approved, the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Learning & Teaching will return a signed copy to the employee for his/her records.

After completion of the course, the employee will complete the Reimbursement Request for Tuition Reimbursement-Second Form and submit it to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Learning & Teaching along with proof of payment, an official grade report and/or official transcript, and a copy of the previously approved Approval Request for Tuition Reimbursement-First Form. Upon approval, the employee will be issued a check for reimbursement of tuition and any other eligible expenses.

### ***Tuition-Free College/University Vouchers***

Occasionally, vouchers are available for teachers to take graduate courses at area colleges and universities free of charge. Please refer to the Article VII of the Agreement between Reading School Committee and Reading Teachers Association for additional information regarding the use of vouchers.

### ***In-House Professional Development***

A range of in-house professional development opportunities are also available at both the building and system-wide levels. Faculty meetings, school-based meetings, release time, professional development days, and various team meeting

structures are all forums where the support of collegial learning communities are fostered and opportunities for skill building and expanding one's knowledge base are fostered. The system also releases teachers to onsite workshop days for curriculum training and other professional development needs based on system-wide goals. Reading has developed a "Professional Learning Community" (PLC) framework of sustained focus on important initiatives. Using a data-driven model, teams collaborate in PLC's to spend thirty (30) hours of work on an approved topic that impacts student learning at the classroom level.

### ***Tracking Professional Development Points (PDPs)***

Any Reading Public Schools staff member who participates in a professional development activity will receive a PDP certificate through the organization that presents the workshop or conference. Staff members are responsible for keeping track of PDPs and certificates.

### ***Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP)***

The DESE requires all educators who hold a license at the professional level to prepare an IPDP for each five-year renewal cycle. The proposed activities in your plan must be consistent with and aligned to school and district goals and designed to improve student learning. It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain his/her IPDP in his/her files. The IPDP regulations require educators to review their individual plans with their supervisors at least every two years to review goals and amend the plan if needed. Please note, if you are audited by the DESE during a five-year renewal cycle you will be asked to present your IPDP along with copies of your PDP certificates.

## **TIME OFF PRACTICES**

### ***Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)***

Reading Public Schools complies with the Family & Medical Leave Act. This law provides the following:

#### **Basic Leave Entitlement**

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- The birth or adoption of a child or the placement of a foster child with the employee, or to care for the employee's child during the first 12 months after birth or placement.
- To care for the "serious health condition" of an employee's spouse, child, or parent. For purposes of this policy, a "serious health condition" is an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities. Subject to certain conditions, the "continuing treatment" requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three (3) consecutive calendar days combined with at least two (2) visits to a health care provider; or one (1) visit and a regimen of continuing treatment; or incapacity due to pregnancy; or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of "continuing treatment."
- The "serious health condition" of an employee that causes the employee to be unable to perform the functions of his or her position, including incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or child birth.
- Any "qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on covered duty in the Armed Forces or National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation. A "qualifying exigency" includes: (1) short notice deployment (limited to seven calendar days from the date notified of deployment); (2) military events and related activities; (3) childcare and school activities; (4) financial and legal arrangement; (5) counseling; (6) rest and recuperation (limited to five days of FMLA leave); (7) post-deployment activities; and (8) additional activities, only as mutually agreed to by the employee and Reading Public Schools.

#### **Special Leave Entitlement Relating to an Employee's Family Member in the Armed Forces**

A spouse, son, daughter, parent, or "next of kin" may request up to 26 workweeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member. A covered service member is: (a) a current member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; in outpatient status; or on the temporary disability retired list; or (b) a veteran who: (i) has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty (or existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty) for which the veteran is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy and (ii) was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

#### **Eligibility Requirements**

Employees are eligible for FMLA leave if they have worked for a covered employer for at least 12 months and have completed at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of leave. An eligible employee may request an FMLA leave of up to 12 weeks on a "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date of any FMLA leave usage.

#### **Benefits and Protections**

During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

### **Definition of Serious Health Condition**

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

### **Use of Leave**

Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary to care for a seriously ill family member or a covered service member, because of the employee's own serious health condition, or due to a qualifying exigency. Employees needing intermittent leave for planned medical treatment must make reasonable efforts to schedule the leave so as not to unduly disrupt the Reading Public Schools' operations. Intermittent time off is not available to care for a newborn following birth/adoption/foster placement. Such time off must be taken all at once within twelve months of the birth/adoption/foster placement.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with Reading Public Schools' normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

### **Reading Public Schools' Responsibilities**

Employees requesting leave will be advised whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, Reading Public Schools will provide notice of any additional information the employee needs to provide, as well as the employee's rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible for the leave, Reading Public Schools will inform the employee and provide a reason for his/her ineligibility.

The employee will also be informed if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave that will be counted against the employee's leave entitlement, if possible. If it is determined that the leave is not FMLA-protected, Reading Public Schools will notify the employee of this fact, as well. An employee's failure to comply with Reading Public Schools' FMLA leave procedures can be grounds for delaying or denying an employee's request for FMLA-qualifying leave.

### **Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave**

Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. In order to use paid benefit time during an approved FMLA leave, employees must comply with Reading Public Schools' normal paid leave policies. In most circumstances, earned and accrued sick, personal and vacation time must be used during an approved FMLA leave prior to taking any unpaid leave.

**Benefits and Protections**

During an approved FMLA leave, the employee's position will be held open to the extent required by the FMLA, and Reading Public Schools will maintain the employee's health coverage under any group health plan (if there is such coverage) on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon returning from FMLA leave, employees will be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any available employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of the leave.



## ***Other Reading Public Schools Employee Leave Practices***

### **Small Necessities Leave Act**

Reading Public Schools employees who have been employed by Reading Public Schools for at least 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months may take up to a total of 24 hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period. This leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule. If the leave is foreseeable, the Reading Public School employee must put the request in writing to his/her supervisor at least seven (7) days prior. If the leave is not foreseeable, written notice as soon as practicable is required. The request for leave is in addition to the leave provided under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act, to engage in such activities as:

Participating in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of the employee's children, such as parent-teacher conferences; or

Accompanying children to routine medical or dental appointments; or

Accompanying elderly relatives to routine medical or dental appointments or appointments for other professional services related to the elder's care.

### **Domestic Violence Leave Act**

Reading Public School employees who are victims of abusive behavior, or who have a family member who is a victim, may take up to fifteen (15) days of domestic violence leave from work in any 12 month period (July 1 through June 30). "Abusive behavior" is any behavior constituting "domestic violence," stalking, sexual assault or kidnapping. "Domestic violence" is "abuse" directed against an employee or his or her family member by a current or former spouse; a relative by blood or marriage; a person with whom the employee or the family member shares a child; a current or former cohabitant of the employee or the employee's family member; or a person with whom the employee or family member had a dating or engagement relationship. "Abuse" encompasses a wide range of conduct, such as causing or attempting to cause physical harm, forced sexual activity, mental abuse, and restraint of liberty. An employee is not entitled to the leave if he or she is the alleged perpetrator of the abusive behavior.

Some examples of permissible reasons for domestic violence leave include the need to seek medical treatment, counseling, victim services or legal assistance; to secure housing; to appear in court or obtain a protective order; to meet with law enforcement officials; and to attend child custody proceedings.

Employees are required to exhaust all accrued leave (personal, sick, vacation, etc.) prior to requesting or taking domestic violence leave. Domestic violence leave is unpaid. Please refer to your relative collective bargaining agreement for information pertaining to your benefits for leave under the Domestic Violence Leave Act.

Except in cases of imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee, advanced notice of domestic violence leave and appropriate documentation shall be required. In cases of imminent danger, the employee is required to notify his/her supervisor of his/her absence within three (3) work days that the leave was taken or is being taken and provide documentation as identified in this policy. Notification may be communicated to the employer by the employee, a family member of the employee or the employee's counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior.

In the case of an unscheduled absence that is taken due to domestic violence, the employee has a thirty (30) day period after the absence to produce required documentation. An employee shall satisfy this documentation requirement by providing anyone of the following documents to the employer:

- (1) a protective order, order of equitable relief or other documentation issued by a court of competent jurisdiction as a result of abusive behavior against the employee or employee's family member;

- (2) a document under the letterhead of the court, provider or public agency which the employee attended for the purposes of acquiring assistance as it relates to the employee or family member;
- (3) A police report or statement of a victim or witness provided to police documenting the abusive behavior;
- (4) documentation that the perpetrator of the abusive behavior has admitted to sufficient facts to support a finding of guilt; or has been convicted of, or has been adjudicated a juvenile delinquent by reason of any offense constituting abusive behavior;
- (5) medical documentation of treatment as a result of the abusive behavior;
- (6) a sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, provided by a counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior;
- (7) a sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, from the employee attesting that the employee has been a victim of or is a family member of a victim of abusive behavior.

The employee will not be required to show evidence of an arrest, conviction or other law enforcement documentation for such abusive behavior. No employment action will be taken within these time periods pending receipt of appropriate documentation. If an employee is unable to produce documentation, the absence will be considered unauthorized and will be addressed outside of this policy. Such documentation will be kept strictly confidential and will not be placed in the employee's personnel file.

The Reading Public Schools will not discharge or in any other manner discriminate against an employee for exercising the employee's rights under law. The taking of domestic violence leave shall not result in the loss of any employment benefit accrued prior to the date of such leave. Upon the employee's return from such leave, he/she shall be entitled to restoration to the employee's original job or to an equivalent position.

### **Parental Leave under the Massachusetts Parental Leave Law**

Requests for leave under the Massachusetts Parental Leave Law must be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Administrator, indicating the date the employee wishes to begin leave and expected date of return. Regular full-time employees are eligible for an unpaid parental leave upon completion of the initial probationary period, if any, set by the terms of his/her employment; or, if there is no such probationary period, has completed at least 90 days of consecutive employment. Employees are requested to notify the building administrator and the Human Resource Administrator of their intent to take parental leave at as early a date as possible and in accordance with the appropriate negotiated agreement. Employees may be required to provide proof of birth or adoption.

Eligible employees are entitled to a leave of up to eight (8) weeks for the birth of his or her child, adopting a child under age 18 or adopting a person under age 23 who is mentally or physically disabled. This leave may run concurrently with any other leave where permitted by state and federal law. Parents both employed by Reading Public Schools are entitled to a combined total of eight weeks of leave. The Massachusetts Parental Leave Law requires that employees be provided the option to use paid leave for any portion of the parental leave that satisfies the employer's paid leave policies. Employees may not be required to use his/her accrued paid leave during the parental leave, even if the employer requires its employees to use accrued paid leave for other types of absences that satisfy the employer's policies.

Employees will be expected to return to work on the date indicated on their leave of absence request. If an employee wishes to seek an extension of his/her previously granted parental leave of absence, he/she must send a written request to

the Superintendent two weeks prior to the expiration of their leave or by the date specified in the appropriate negotiated agreement.

While on parental leave, employees may be required to pay the employee portion of their health insurance premium. After the expiration of the eight weeks of parental leave, employees may be required to pay the full health insurance premium.

Reading Public Schools will restore the employee to the same or equivalent position provided the employee returns to work at the conclusion of the eight-week parental leave. If the employee intends to take parental leave in excess of eight weeks, the employee will be restored to the same or equivalent position unless the Reading Public Schools notifies the employee in writing prior to the commencement of the parental leave and prior to any subsequent extension of that leave that taking more than eight weeks of leave may result in the denial of reinstatement or the loss of other rights or benefits under the statute. If an employee should fail to return to work on the scheduled date of return from parental leave, it will be deemed as a voluntary resignation from Reading Public Schools.

### **Military Leave**

Reading Public Schools provides military leaves of absence to all regular and part-time employees in compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act (“USERRA”) and all other applicable federal and state laws.

### **Jury Duty**

If an employee is called for jury duty, Reading Public Schools will grant him/her a leave of absence in accordance with applicable law. The employee must inform the Human Resources Department within three (3) days of his/her receipt of notice to appear for jury duty, so that proper coverage can be arranged. If an employee is called to serve on a jury at a time that would unreasonably interfere with normal school operations, Reading Public Schools may suggest to the employee to request that his or her jury service be rescheduled for a later date.

Upon completion of jury duty, a verification of attendance form from the court must be provided to the office of Human Resources. If the employee is excused from jury duty for the day, or is excused early, he or she should report to work when practical to do so.

Reading Public Schools will pay the employee his/her regular pay for the first three (3) days of jury service. If required to serve for more than three (3) business days, the employee will receive whatever compensation the court provides for such service.

For further information, refer to the appropriate negotiated contract or contact the Human Resources Administrator.

### **Miscellaneous Leave Practices**

For information concerning Reading Public Schools’ practices regarding holidays, vacation leave, sick leave, personal days, administrative leave, bereavement leave, leave request procedures, sick leave banks, and any other applicable leave practices, refer to the provisions of the employee’s relevant collective bargaining agreement or contact the Human Resources Department.

## **AESOP Absence Management & Substitute Placement System**

### **Applicability**

- An AESOP account will be created for all teachers, long-term substitutes, guidance counselors, social workers, and paraprofessionals. Employees will be provided with their AESOP login information and a user guide.
- Because AESOP is an absence tracking system as well as a substitute procurement system, all absences must be entered into the AESOP system, even if no substitute teacher is required.

### **Procedure**

- The employee should log into the AESOP website at [www.frontlinek12.com/AESOP](http://www.frontlinek12.com/AESOP) or call 800-942-3767 to report an absence. Employees who are aware they will need to be absent are encouraged to enter the absence into AESOP as far in advance of the absence as possible to increase the likelihood that a substitute may be obtained. If the absence is unforeseen, the teacher is required to enter the absence in AESOP or call their building secretary by 6:00 am.
- An employee taking a personal day will still need to follow the appropriate procedure for requesting a personal day as well as entering the absence into AESOP.
- A teacher who is aware he/she is going to be absent should leave detailed lesson plans, seating charts, rosters, etc. in a visible location on his/her desk. The lesson plans should consist of assignments that can be easily monitored by the substitute. Plans may also be faxed or e-mailed to the school.
- All teachers will be required to put two sets of emergency lesson plans in their substitute folders at the start of school. These plans will be used in case a lesson plan is not provided ahead of time. The emergency lesson plans should be generic enough to be used in a variety of situations. The substitute folder should also contain any other pertinent information that the substitute may need such as seating charts, etc.



## **APPENDIX**

READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS CALENDAR 2018-2019

2018-2019 HEALTH ISURANCE CONTRIBUTION RATES

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

COMPUTER NETWORK/INTERNAL USER AGREEMENT

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD INFORMATION (CORI) FORM

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY

PERSONAL DAY REQUEST FORM

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FORMS

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT FORM

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT OF ACCIDENT FORM

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT REPORT FORM

CONNECTED EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

SCHEDULE OF PAY PERIODS – ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019

BENEFITS SUMMARIES