



Cottonwood Elementary School Staff Handbook

2022-2023

**Cottonwood Elementary School
2022-23 Staff Handbook
Table of Contents**

		Page
A.	Hill County Superintendent, Roles and Responsibilities	2
B.	Certified Staff, Roles and Responsibilities	3
C.	Personnel Files	3-4
D.	Documents to be Filed with County Superintendent	4
E.	General Responsibilities	4-5
G.	Teacher Proficiency	5-8
H.	Records Retention	8
I.	Special Instructors	8
J.	Child Abuse	8
K.	Instruction	8-9
L.	Accreditation	9-10
M.	Test Data	10
N.	Student Records	10
O.	Student Assessment	10-11
P.	Federal Funds	11
Q.	Special Education (IDEA)	11
R.	Gifted and Talented	11
S.	Staff Development	12
T.	Hill County Fair Projects	12
U.	Classroom Climate and Student Behavior Management	12
V.	Student Behavior	13
W.	Title IX, Section 504	13-14
X.	Technology Plan	14
Y.	Textbooks	14
Z.	Supplemental Materials	14
AA.	Teacher Evaluation and Philosophy	14-15
BB.	Teacher's Bill of Rights	15-16
CC.	Leave Time	16-17
DD.	Policy Manual	17
EE.	Open House	17
FF.	Required Reporting	17-18
GG.	Students and Their Care	18
HH.	Free and Reduced Lunches	18
II.	Library Requirements and Counseling Services	18
JJ.	Textbook and Curricula Orders	19
KK.	Report Day	19
LL.	Contracting for Extra Services	19-20
MM.	Pay Lane Change and Advancement	20
NN.	Paraprofessionals, Role and Responsibilities	20-21
OO.	Asbestos Notification to All Staff	21
PP.	Staff Handbook Signature Form	22
RR.	Cottowood School District, Emergency Paid Sick Leave	23-25
SS.	Family Medical Leave Act	26-27

HILL COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT ROLE/RESPONSIBILITIES

A County Superintendent is required by statute to assist trustees with school supervision (20-3-207) for any district that does not employ a district superintendent or principal. This responsibility includes:

- (1) Visits must be made to each district at least once during the school year while pupil instruction is conducted to observe the instructional methods, ability of the teacher, progress and discipline of the pupils and general conditions of the school.
- (2) Make special visits to the schools on request of the trustees;
- (3) Advise and direct teachers about instruction, pupil discipline and other duties of the teacher.
- (4) Assist with the selection of textbooks and other supplementary materials.
- (5) Provides any additional assistance Trustees need including but not limited to:
 1. Policy development
 2. Student Attendance Agreements
 3. Teacher Evaluation
 4. Transportation
 5. Handbooks

In addition to these prescribed duties, the Hill County Superintendent serves as the Authorized Representative for all federal programs including Title I and Title II, E-Rate, Test Coordination, and Data Collection.

The County Superintendent is an elected official and bound by the laws of the State of Montana.

CERTIFIED STAFF ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A teacher's role in a small elementary district is complex and sometimes confusing. However, regardless of the obligated duties, it is one that is based on trust, loyalty and truth. Just as employees expect to be treated fairly, warrants issued on time and benefits assured, Trustees have the right to anticipate strict adherence to their policies and expectations.

Each teacher is assigned to a position which is under direct supervision of the County Superintendent to whom they are responsible to for all aspects of their professional behavior. The teacher's primary duty is instructional. There are also specific minor job tasks and obligations requiring time and attention.

By Board policy, teachers are expected to report for work at least ½ hour before the beginning of the school day and remain ½ hour after classes are dismissed. Parents must be immediately informed about the time schedule especially when parents are transporting students.

If you are sick and are not at school, a **sick leave** form must be filled out as soon as you return to work and submitted to the Supervisor or the District Clerk.

Requests for **personal leave** must be submitted to the Board of Trustees at least five (5) days before leave is scheduled.

Requests to use classes attended during the summer for MEA/MSSA Staff Development days must be submitted to the Board **before classes are taken**.

Supply requests, field trips, etc. must be sent to the District Clerk at least six (6) days before the next regular board meeting; contain objectives and benchmarks that can be met; and cost.

Special events often are brought to teachers' attention as well as the County Superintendent's. It is necessary to discuss possibilities for bringing those special events to the school with other teachers in the system and me before bringing a request to Trustees. Trustees will ask if this has been done before funds will be approved.

It is important to retain copies of all information, reports, etc., signed by you, the teacher. It is also important and necessary to communicate excessive absences or days tardy to the superintendent. Check materials, textbooks and supplies against enrollment. If there needs to be more purchased, promptly call the District Clerk.

Personnel Files

Personnel files will be kept for each certified staff member in the Superintendent's office. Each District Clerk also maintains a file. These records are confidential. Upon request staff members have access to either file and may copy any document in either file. It is suggested that staff set up a home file.

The file at the County Superintendent's office will contain a copy of current contract, college transcripts, staff training and evaluations, performance evaluations and any other information pertaining to each individual.

District Clerk's file will contain a copy of each contract, information relating to payroll, copies of leave requests, travel and/or purchase reimbursements and any other information pertaining to financial matters.

Documents to be Filed with the County Superintendent

Documents to be Filed: Specific documents that must be on file in the Superintendent's office by the 15th of September are:

1. Copy of the current contract;
2. Signed statement the policy manual has been read and understood;
3. Signed statement the staff handbook has been read and understood;
4. Daily class schedule;
5. Copy of Register's first page;
6. Official college transcript
7. Professional Responsibilities and Goals Form

Teaching Certificates must be registered with the County Superintendent's Office on or before October 30th. This applies to newly hired certified staff and those who renewed Certificates during the summer. If Certificates are not registered by that date, Clerks are instructed to withhold paychecks until this requirement is met. Teachers are encouraged to frame certificate and hang in classroom.

Once items 2, 3, 4, are on file, documents do not need to be resubmitted during a teacher's tenure in the District. However, if additional college credits have been earned since employment started, an updated transcript will need to be filed. Should the Board approve additional policies during the course of the year, teachers will be expected to read and sign off on those policies as well.

In addition, all teachers must:

1. Complete and file an evaluation of all training attended during the year.
2. Complete and file period reports and discipline reports within **one week** after each nine-week period ends. Please refer to the enclosed calendar.
3. Retain in home file the original CEU credit forms received during staff development sessions. These will be needed when renewing certificates.

Forms used to submit leave requests, evaluate training, document parent/teacher conferences are found in the District Policy manual or may be obtained from the District Clerk.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide for, direct and evaluate instructional experiences for each student enrolled in the classroom.
- Report to parents' specific information relative to the student's progress and adjustment.

- Document pupil attendance, period reports, registers, permanent record reports and any other pupil accounting as delegated by the County Superintendent of schools.
- Be involved in a process of self-evaluation and improvement.
- Properly care for and use school property as prescribed by policy

Responsibilities to Students:

- Assess student needs so that an effective instructional program can be designed.
- Plan an instructional program based on district's educational objectives.
- Monitor student progress in the attainment of instructional objectives and communicate progress to appropriate individuals.
- Periodically review, evaluate and, if necessary, revise instructional programs to ensure each student is given an opportunity to achieve objectives.
- Create a positive classroom environment that is conducive to effective instruction.
- At all times, students must be addressed with a calm controlled voice tone that conveys respect; not touched in anger, or hostility.
- All information pertaining to students is confidential and may only be shared with parents and administrator.

Obligations to the Board of Trustees:

- Adhere to all conditions of the contract until contract terminates.
 - Report for work ½ hour before school begins and remain ½ hour after the school day is over
 - Complete all reports as required as soon as they become due.
 - Give Trustees the same trust and loyalty expected
 - Be knowledgeable about and adhere to existing district policies and procedures governing district operation and contractual obligations.
 - Truth and honesty must prevail.

Obligations to Administrator:

- Confidentiality
- Trust and loyalty
- Keep fully informed: Do not expect changes can be made unless this happens.

Obligations to Parents:

- Confidentiality
- Keep fully informed: Do not expect changes can be made unless this happens
- Safeguard their child
- Provide their child with an academic program that will allow for mental, emotional and physical growth

TEACHER PROFICIENCY

Assessing Student Needs: The needs of the students must be determined before an effective instructional program can be designed.

- Identify prerequisite skills and knowledge.
 - Teacher is knowledgeable about district goals and objectives in the content areas of educational program.
 - Teacher identifies prerequisite skills and knowledge in these content areas.

- Determine student's proficiencies and deficiencies.
 - Record student performance
 - Gather relevant assessment information from other sources;
 - Reviews types and uses for various administered tests;
 - Administer tests
 - Reads and interprets test data
 - Use informal techniques to assess needs, i.e., work samples, oral questions, group discussions, teacher-made tests;
 - Develop individual education plan by formulating instructional objectives based on assessment data.
 - Discuss plan with student and/or parents.

Develop and Implement Instructional Plan and Strategies:

Select research-based instructional materials and activities appropriate to identified needs and objectives which will provide direct practice to develop identified skills and knowledge.

- Effective implementation of materials and activities;
- Materials and activities provide direct practice on specified skills and knowledge;
- Direct instruction takes place before drill and practice in skill areas
- Teacher provides alternative ways for meeting instructional objective;
- Effectively manage classroom time, space and provide rationale for use.

Maintain student behavior appropriate for establishment of learning climate:

- Manage student behavior in a positive constructive manner that keeps students involved in each learning task.
- Consistent enforcement of explicit rules for classroom safety and order.
- Establish an atmosphere for order and clear direction as opposed to confusion and disorder.
- Maintain an atmosphere of concern that is devoid of tension as opposed to one of rejection, insults, sarcasm, stress or dominance.
- Students receive instruction about expectations when students move from activity to activity, work to recess, entering classroom, group discussion, and when other instructors present lessons.

Monitor and Communicate Student Progress:

Once the instructional program has been designed and implemented, it is necessary to monitor and communicate student progress. Competencies in this area are:

- Maintain a system for monitoring student progress in all appropriate areas.
 - Regularly collect and record data regarding student performance.
 - Inform parents and students of appropriate evaluation criteria.
- Communicate student progress data to appropriate individuals through the utilization of:
 - Notes, individual conferences
 - Encouragement through words or actions

- Communicate student's progress in relation to their ability and expectations such as:
 - ❖ Performance level, i.e., reading level
 - ❖ Quality and quantity of work
 - ❖ Interpersonal relationships
 - ❖ Effort and Cooperation

Evaluate Instructional Program: Instructional program is to be periodically reviewed, evaluated, and, if necessary, revised in order to ensure students are given maximum opportunity to achieve instructional objectives through the use of:

- Assessment data, cooperating staff, student feedback
- Identification of areas for change
- Implement changes in objectives and/or instructional materials on the basis of evaluation data.
- Teacher is open and responsive to suggestions for improving instructional program as opposed to defensive and argumentative.
- Seeks support services and/or information from parents, other teachers.

Develop A Positive Relationship with Students: Students function best in a pleasant and supportive learning environment. Therefore, creating a positive emotional climate in the classroom is a necessary element for effective instruction. The competencies in this area are:

- Establishing a rapport with the students;
 - Use encouragement rather than ridicule
 - Allots time during school for advising, listening, helping.
 - Learn when to back off when students start closing down.
 - Involve students when developing classroom rules.
 - Use verbal praise or a touch to reward desirable behavior.
 - Retain friendly relationship but not try to be a friend.
 - Keep student-teacher conflicts to a minimum.
 - Model positive interpersonal skills.
 - Show respect for the difference in others' opinions.
- Deal effectively with interpersonal conflicts that occur between students or between teacher and student.
 - Maintain self-control
 - Intervene, when appropriate, in student conflict
 - Act rather than react—have a plan, understood by students for resolving conflicts;
 - Use proximity control, verbal reprimand, or other non-verbal language.
 - Resolve conflicts constructively.
 - Encourage student problem-solving behavior
 - Teach students to develop consideration for other's problems.
 - Students/parents must receive information about:
 1. grading practices
 2. homework expectations

3. attendance requirements
4. tardiness
5. playground rules and playground safety practices
6. availability of lunch and/or snacks
7. student suspension and/or expulsion
8. phone calls
9. bringing personal toys, games, etc. to school
10. rules for bringing knives or other sharp instruments to school
11. consequences for positive and negative behavior
12. computer use
13. withdrawal from school

RECORDS RETENTION

Whenever a student withdraws from school, an entry shall be made in the Register and in student's cumulative file showing:

1. Date of withdrawal
2. Reason
3. Transfer School
4. Transfer of records form

Under no condition are records to be directly released to parents. However, parents may preview the file, have copies made at their expense.

Student cumulative file which is to be forwarded to another District must be sent first to the Hill County Superintendent's office and sent from there to the receiving District.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTORS

Itinerant instructors have been hired to teach music, library and provide counseling services.

CHILD ABUSE

Teachers and other school officials and employees who work during regular school hours who have reasonable cause to suspect as a result of information received in their professional or official capacity, that a child is abused or neglected must report the matter promptly to the Department of Public Health and Human Services, Child & Family Services Division's ***MONTANA'S STATEWIDE TOLL-FREE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE. 1-866-820-5437***

Anyone reporting any such incident is immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, unless that person was grossly negligent or acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose or provided information knowing the information to be false.

INSTRUCTION

Planning: The State Board of Public Instruction has adopted minimum instruction standards and benchmarks that Districts are required to reach at the primary and intermediate levels. Teachers are expected to cross reference lesson plans with appropriate standards and/or benchmarks

Teachers are required to integrate American Indian Studies and Technology into instruction. All of these requirements are to be taught consistently throughout the year and across the board. That does not mean daily or even weekly inclusion-- just on a regular basis. It is important to identify the day and subject area in weekly lesson plans in which these requirements will be met.

The web site for the Office of Public Instruction www.opi.mt.gov provides content standards for all subject areas as well as lesson plans, and information about Native American Studies

Teachers may decide and use a lesson plan format that best meets their needs. Some prefer using the computer or printed manuals. A few lesson plan manuals and grade books are available at the office. However, it is essential to have lesson plans available whenever the Superintendent visits the school or if Trustees want to review them so if the computer is the favored choice, hard copies must be printed.

The Board of Public Education has set the following minimum standards for the school day:

- a) *Part-time Kindergarten*: 360 aggregate annual hours of pupil instruction;
- b) *Full-time Kindergarten*: 720 aggregate hours of instruction
- c) *Primary, K, 1, 2, 3*: 720 aggregate hours of pupil instruction
- d) *Intermediate, 4, 5, 6, 7 8*: 1,080 aggregate hours of pupil instruction

The Board of Trustees has the authority to define the school hours and annual calendar. Under special circumstances, the number of hours in any one school day may be reduced at the discretion of the trustees if the total number of pupil instruction hours meets minimum requirements.

Lunch and recess time may not be counted toward meeting the aggregate number of instruction hours.

There are no longer time allotments for each subject. Districts, through their teaching staff, are only accountable for meeting the benchmarks in each standard.

ACCREDITATION

As of July 1, 2013 the Montana Board of Public Education implemented a revised school accreditation process. This new process combines Assurance Standards with Student Performance Standards and results in a final accreditation status for the year. Included in these standards are licensure requirements, required hours of professional development, aggregate hours, Basic Education Program, and other required reports. Most of this information is reported in **TEAMS**, a report completed by the County Superintendent with help from the clerk.

Teachers help write the Continuous School Improvement Plan or **CSIP** each fall as much of the information included in this report is best known by actual teaching staff.

Accreditation is reviewed annually and schools that fail to meet minimum requirements are placed into improvement status within state guidelines.

TEST DATA

Data used for the CSIP report includes test results from the Smarter Balanced Achievement Tests. The test window is in the spring beginning in the middle of February and ending in late April. The State mandates testing 3rd through 8th grades. The State pays for the mandated tests—individual Districts pay for off-grade testing.

Data derived from MAP testing, teacher observations and textbook tests may also be included in the report but it is essential, that if it is, a log must be kept to document progress.

STUDENT RECORDS

Each student must have a guidance or curriculum file. These folders contain all pertinent academic and health information. Whenever a student transfers to another district, the file is also transferred. Parents have the right to review the contents of the file at any time but may not take the file out of the school and must remain with the teacher or another staff member when reviewing documents. However, the parent is entitled to a copy of any document at their expense. These **files must not** be given to the parent to deliver to the next school. It is essential to keep all documents containing information harmful to the student or to the relationship between the parent and the district out of this file. Keeping a second file could cause problems if a matter should ever be taken to court. However, a teacher is entitled and encouraged to keep a log about each day's activities.

Before admitting any new student, parents must provide the district with a copy of a current immunization report. Throughout a student's life, this report must be updated. Check with the Health Department to find out when immunization updates are due.

The results of all standardized tests, homework assignments, teacher/text test scores, a record of heights and weight, taken once a year, and/or any other academic documents or other information that will enable another school or teacher to determine a child's academic progress must be included. Teachers must fill out an end-of-year report in permanent record files. Teachers are also asked to list textbooks and or resources used during the current year. This form is to be added to the cumulative file at the end of each academic year.

It is important to review the file before transferring to another district to insure there is no information or documentation that will NOT contribute to a student's ability to function in another school.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

NAEP – National Assessment of Educational Progress: All students will be assessed in reading, science and mathematics in grades 4 and 8. Testing is limited to those Districts receiving Title I funds. As with the Measured Progress Tests, parents need to be notified about the results. Teachers are not required to administer the NAEP. OPI sends

representatives to the schools. This assessment takes about 90 minutes. Teachers are only obligated to make students and space available as an outside contractor will proctor the tests.

FEDERAL FUNDS

The federal government, through the Title program and REAP (Rural Education Initiative), provides dollars to pay for supplemental services and materials. It is expected that these funds will be spent to provide the “extras” to enable Districts to meet AYP. Funds may be spent for any activity approved by the rules and regulations of any Title Fund. These are as follows:

- Title I:* Services and/or resources for students who are from low economic areas and are two or more years below grade level. Receipt of funds is determined by population census and having at least 10 students.
- Title II:* Funds are to be used for staff development activities designed to upgrade Instructional skills in the areas of reading and math.
- Title III:* These are funds set aside for students who have English as a second Language.
- REAP:* May be used for any activity listed above.

The District is required to maintain documentation to support expenditures from these funds. Supplies are limited to items that will supplement materials and/or equipment purchased from general funds. The one question that must be asked is, “if there were no GENERAL funds, would requests be approved?”. Therefore, if teachers wish to get consent to order extra materials, the request must be written in terms of: Name of activity or general fund expenditure needing support, goal for its use and cost. All supplies must be research-based to insure quality control.

SPECIAL EDUCATION (IDEA)

Responsibility for educating all students resides with the regular education teacher. If a student is struggling a Response to Intervention plan or a pre-referral will be initiated using a team approach. The team may consist of the regular education teacher, the paraprofessional, a special education teacher, parents, and the County Superintendent. Bear Paw Special Education Coop will handle referrals and further testing.

GIFTED AND TALENTED

Just as District Staff is obligated to provide special services to students who have learning disabilities that prevent or limit academic progress, Staff is also required to provide accelerated learning opportunities for students who demonstrate advanced skills in one or more of the core subjects. In such cases, there is an obligation to supplement regular instruction or even advance students to the next grade level in the subject area where advanced learning ability is present. This responsibility is equal to that required by IDEA.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The District is a member of the Montana Small Schools Alliance. Membership fee is paid from federal allocations. The Director of the Alliance is Janelle Beers. Four one-day training sessions are held each year. Each is designed to review or expand the rural school curriculum and provide suggestions and ideas for school improvement. Teachers must attend all sessions unless an emergency, illness or inability to get a substitute prevents attendance. Expenses for all sessions will be reimbursed by MSSA. Sessions that are more than 200 miles away will include motel costs as well as out-of-pocket expense for meals and mileage. MSSA will also reimburse districts for substitutes. Generally, staff will be expected to pay travel expenses and then be reimbursed by MSSA. However, if this is a hardship, the Board may approve an advance, but individuals are required to have reimbursement sent directly to the District.

Teachers may find courses on the internet or at MSU-Northern that will be beneficial to them. However, if the District is expected to pay the fee for each class, it is important to ask first.

HILL COUNTY FAIR PROJECTS

Teachers are encouraged to enter student work in the Hill County Fair. The Fair Manager will mail information to each teacher in the spring. However, any project completed during the year may be used. Participation is recommended, but not required. It is up to the individual teacher to gather materials, tag them correctly and then retrieve them from the fair when judging is complete.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The classroom must be supervised at all times and there are no exceptions to this directive and expectation. This includes CST or IEP meetings, accepting phone calls, meeting with parents, or any personal matters. Each district employs at least one paraprofessional. If an emergency arises, that individual may be left in charge or students may be moved to another classroom. The District is liable if a student has an accident and a certified teacher is not present. The teacher may also be liable for any injury sustained by a student.

If students are kept in during recess or during the noon hour, supervision must be continued. If students are sent outside for recess or for any other activity, supervision must be maintained.

Classrooms are to be kept as free from clutter as possible. Care should be taken not to put up too much decoration on walls, ceiling or windows that may prove distracting. If there is insufficient storage, bring suggestions, etc., to the attention of the Board. Students should be encouraged to keep their own areas free from clutter, etc. Teachers are to use their best judgment on how to arrange classrooms, etc. However, classroom climate and environment is included on each observation report.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior is the responsibility of the classroom teacher. Each teacher has the authority and responsibility to design a classroom management plan and to give consequences for student failure to abide by these rules. However, student response is directly attributed to each teacher's ability to convince students from day one who is in charge. Coupled with this is the institution to trust: Treatment will be fair and unbiased; directly related to the incident; and consequences issued immediately. Failure to do this will render any plan a failure and useless.

Since each district has limited staff, it may be necessary for other staff that witness irresponsible behavior or bully tactics to intervene. All such incidents must be documented in specific terms and given to the classroom teacher. Regardless of which staff member intervenes, only the classroom teacher is responsible and has the authority for notifying parents, and if necessary, set a date and time for a meeting.

Bullying—physical and/or verbal is not permitted in the classroom, on the playground, or on field trips; student to student, student to staff and staff to student. Disrespect is not permitted at any time and will have severe consequences. If such behavior continues after two warnings (teacher determined), the administrator and then Trustees may be contacted. At all times, due process as it is written in the student handbook must be followed.

The County Superintendent is responsible for submitting SCHOOL DISCIPLINE DATA electronically to OPI on or before June 30 of each year. School staff must collect specific data related to the frequency, seriousness and incidence of violence and drug-related offenses resulting in suspensions and expulsions in elementary schools on a quarterly basis and file such data with the County Superintendent.

TITLE IX/SECTION 504 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1974

Title IX Section 504 of the 1974 Civil Rights Act carries several implications for staff and students. Each school district must appoint a Title IX – Section 504 Coordinator as the Board's representative. In addition, each Board must approve a policy that disallows treating students or staff unequally because of race, creed or religion and forbids sexual harassment. The Title IX/504 Coordinator for all three elementary schools is the County Superintendent.

Each district policy manual contains specific reference to how complaints about violations of either section are to be researched and resolved by the Coordinator. Specific due process records must be kept. Coordinator's decisions can be appealed to the Board of Trustees or to Montana or Regional Office of Human Rights.

Title IX/Section 504 applies to both staff and students and can be: student to student, teacher to student, teacher to student, board to teacher. Violations will not be tolerated and may result in legal consequences.

In addition, School Boards must submit assurances to the federal government that they agree to abide by and will retain compliance documentation.

TECHNOLOGY PLAN

All districts have an approved plan. The Technology plan outlines the manner in which technology is to be used across the curriculum. This plan also limits students' ability to access certain inappropriate web sites. It requires students to observe and abide by rules of etiquette, care of equipment and restricted use of internet. The most important document in the plan is the agreement between each District and students/parents regarding computer use. Signature of handbook page indicates an understanding of and an agreement to use district computers only for the academic program.

Funding through E-Rate is based on the number of students enrolled who are eligible for free and reduced lunch and the District having an approved plan in place. Review of these plans needs to take place periodically. Parents, trustees, staff, and other community members may be willing to take on this responsibility as well as maintenance and trouble shooting. District boards may contract with other individuals to provide this service as needed.

TEXTBOOKS

Instructional course material i.e., textbooks and supplemental workbooks for each major subject are available for each classroom. It is important to check through the materials when enrollment is complete. If there are insufficient supplies, notify the clerk immediately by giving title, company, ISBN number so that more can be ordered.

It is also important to make a list of all materials used. This list must be placed either in the lesson plan book or other area where it is readily accessible to a substitute. In the spring, a review of each textbook series and a comparison with the accreditation standards will be done to ensure that the series provides information necessary to meet the benchmarks for each standard. Textbooks older than **2004** must be critically reviewed as the Standards limit the use of older textbooks unless it is determined that the series continues to provide adequate instruction for meeting standards and benchmarks.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Supplemental materials may be used at teacher's discretion. Workbooks, etc that are used in conjunction with textbooks have already been approved. However, videos may only be used in limited circumstances and then only when specific goals or objectives are identified. There may also be a time limitation, so please check your policy manual. There are a limited number of books and videos available through the County Superintendent's office. A list is available at the Superintendent's office.

TEACHER EVALUATIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

Statement of Philosophy: Teacher evaluation in each district is based upon several beliefs. The focus must be on what is happening in the classroom and how it contributes to effective teaching. The evaluation process must promote improvement in teaching performance, professional growth, positive professional behaviors and attainment of

district's educational goals and objectives. This process must be cooperative and ongoing in order to identify needs and carry out productive staff development programs. There must be recognition for outstanding performance and assistance to teachers who are having difficulty meeting district and state requirements. The process must be applied uniformly and fairly to all staff. Above all, to be successful, there must be trust and loyalty between the evaluator and staff.

Purpose of Teacher Evaluation:

- Raise the quality of instruction and education services to students.
- Aid each teacher to grow professionally and increase teaching effectiveness.
- Enable the Board of Trustees to make decisions concerning teaching assignment, contract renewal, or dismissal of professional personnel

Evaluation process must be guided by these propositions.

- Evaluations must be fair and objective.
- Criteria and procedures must focus on sound teaching practices
- Provide information which tells what is right and what is incorrect and suggest methods for improvement and directly linked to staff development.
- Criteria and procedures should be shared and clearly understood by teachers, supervisor and trustees.
- Evaluation must be based upon shared standards endorsed by all concerned.

Evaluation Process: Montana EPAS is a state model for teacher evaluation and while this evaluation system is under formulation in Montana, it may or may not be wholly used to evaluate Cottonwood Elementary School teachers. All teachers will undergo one formal evaluation and multiple (at the superintendent's discretion) informal evaluations. The first will be with notice and a joint decision. Subsequent visits will be unannounced. The Superintendent will have the responsibility for making the visits and scheduling counseling sessions. First-year, newly graduated from college, teachers will undergo one additional for a total of two formal evaluations in a year.

Other visits will be made to the school. Most of the time, no notice will be given. However, anything observed may also enter into the final summary.

TEACHER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

The Bill of Rights guarantees every individual certain unalienable rights. Teachers do not lose those rights when entering the classroom door. Other rights are provided as well. These rights are:

- The right to exercise supervision and to make personal decisions intended to improve the quality of the education they provide.
- The right to collect information relevant to their supervisory and evaluation roles.
- The right to act on such relevant information in the best interest of the students whom they seek to educate.
- The right to have decisions made on the basis of evidence.

- The right to a reasonable degree of professional discretion in the performance of their jobs.
- The right to reasonable participation in decisions concerning both professional and employment-related aspects of their job.
- The right to be evaluated on relevant criteria
- The right not to be evaluated on the basis of hearsay, rumor or unchecked complaints
- The right to know the results of any and all evaluations
- The right to express a reaction to the results.
- The right to appeal adverse decisions and to have their views considered by a competent and unbiased authority.
- The right to an overall assessment of their performance that is frank, honest, and consistent.
- The right to privacy.
- The right to a review with their supervisor before any information is placed before the board of trustees.
- The right to be notified about any meeting of the Trustees in which the agenda item applies to them, a right to participate and to ask for an executive session.

LEAVE TIME

All leave must be taken as per policy manual. All leave must be documented for auditing purposes. Leave sheets must be filled out **each time leave is taken regardless of the reason**. Leave is given for illness, emergency, personal or for staff development.

At all times, it is the staff member's responsibility to find a substitute Paraprofessionals will be used as scheduling allows. It is reasonable that an individual Paraprofessional is capable of handling a classroom on their own If paraprofessionals are used, pay for substituting in the classroom may be different than their regular pay. Which ever is the higher amount will be used to compute substitute pay. Proper documentation is necessary for payroll purposes.

Personal leave requires five days' notice. Teachers who wish to take personal leave must fill out the required form and submit it to the District clerk. Personal leave must be approved by signature before taking the days off. Personal leave may **not** be taken in conjunction with PIR days, the day before school is out at Thanksgiving, Christmas or spring vacation. Each time the regular classroom teacher is gone, the learning curve goes down. Therefore, lengthening absences by combining personal leave with staff development or vacations is not conducive to quality teaching/learning. Remember personal leave is a privilege, not a right, and if abused, may be deleted.

Emergency leave requests may be called in: contact the Board Chair or the Clerk. However, all such requests still need to be documented. Leave sheets may be filled out upon return.

Sick leave also requires a leave sheet which may be submitted to the Clerk or left in the basket set aside for all like materials. Please be sure to fill in the name of the substitute teacher.

During an Emergency Declaration leave shall be governed by Policy 1910F1, and 1910F2, as adopted by the Board of Trustees. Forms 1910F1 and 1910F2 are included in the appendix of this document.

POLICY MANUALS

School Board Policy/Procedures Manual: A copy of the District's policy and procedures manual is available in each school. Staff is expected to abide by all policies. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each person to become familiar with its contents. If any policies are not clear, ask the Superintendent, District Clerk or a Trustee for clarification. All staff are required to sign a statement to the effect that they have an opportunity to read, understand the policies, and will abide by them.

Student/Parent/Staff handbooks are an extension of Board policies. All requirements contained in these handbooks must be regarded as part of the Board's policy manual. Additions or changes to the Student/Parent Handbook must be approved by the Board before distributing to families.

OPEN HOUSE

An open house is usually scheduled before the middle of September. Teachers have the responsibility for organizing the event. This gives parents an opportunity to meet with the staff and Trustees. Handbooks are usually distributed and reviewed at this time. Parents also have an opportunity to ask questions and get more information about the school year plans. It may also be a good time to review the results of assessment and parents' right to transfer students to another District, and the school's progress toward meeting AYP (Annual Yearly Progress). Teachers should plan to have their teaching certificates framed and hanging so that it can be easily seen.

REQUIRED REPORTING

Teacher's Register: A register must be kept listing student's names, addresses, parent's names, attendance and grades for each school. The beginning report that is found in the front of the register must be submitted to the Superintendent by the first week in September.

End of the Period Reports and Discipline Reports: Teachers must fill out a period report form at the end of each nine-week period. This duplicates the work done in the register but the information contained is used for many of the reports required from the Superintendent. It also provides an opportunity to have attendance figures checked thereby eliminating the problem for errors to be carried over from one period to the next. Absences, holidays and PIR days and PI days are recorded and tallied at the end of each nine-week period. The accuracy of this report is vital to the District's ability to account for the required hours for which it receives state aid. The County Superintendent will also

be requesting a discipline report to be turned in with the Period report beginning the fall of 2021.

STUDENTS AND THEIR CARE

Students, particularly those who are new to the District, must be made familiar with the District's campus, classroom rules, safety issues, fire drill escape route, and other safety issues that may require immediate response from students.

Fire drills and emergency drills must be practiced on a regular basis. A record must be kept in the lesson plan book.

Periodically review emergency plans with students particularly those which are to be used in case of an intruder. Review winter dress codes with students.

Students/parents must receive information on:

1. grading criteria
2. home work expectations
3. attendance requirements
4. tardiness
5. playground rules and safe playground behavior
6. lunch procedures
7. student suspension
8. phone calls
9. bringing personal objects to school
10. rules for bringing knives or other sharp instruments to school
11. Technology rules

FREE AND REDUCED LUNCHES

Parents of all students are asked to fill out a free/reduced lunch form. Even though the District has discontinued its hot lunch and milk program, this information is necessary in order to participate in the e-rate program which is supported by Schools & Library Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company. The percentage of students eligible for free/reduced milk and/or meals determines what percentage of the telephone and/or technology bill will be reimbursed by schools and libraries.

If parents elect to not fill out the form, the family must be considered as not eligible. Parents must be provided with an envelope in which to return the form. All forms must be returned to Hill County Superintendent unopened.

LIBRARY REQUIREMENTS AND COUNSELING SERVICES

Montana Accreditations Standards require Districts to comply with library and counseling standards in their schools. The amount of time required for these services is based on the number of students enrolled. The District contracts with certified personnel who will instruct students monthly throughout the school year. Library and Counseling schedules will be determined by personnel and classroom teachers.

TEXTBOOK AND CURRICULAR ORDERS

Teachers are expected to prepare orders for textbooks, workbooks and other teacher materials for the next term in mid-April. This will give the Clerk time to submit requests to the Board for approval, order the merchandise and receive them in a timely manner.

Procedures for purchasing curricula, equipment and classroom supplies: All purchases must be authorized by the Board of Trustees. All such purchases must be done according to board policy and accompanied by receipts given to the District Clerk.

Teachers should prepare information regarding any proposed purchase and submit it to the District Clerk at least five days before any regular or special board meeting. This information must include vendor's name, purchase price, and purpose of purchase. If this is an equipment item, check with several vendors for different prices.

REPORT DAY

The last day of school is a PIR day for teachers. Time is set aside to complete all reports, etc. The Superintendent will meet with each teacher to check in the following:

1. Final period report
2. Teacher's Register
3. Lesson plan book
4. Grade book
5. Discipline Report
6. Review of student cumulative files; health record updates, test results, etc.
7. Filing-reviewing parent/teacher conference reports, workshop evaluations, etc.
8. Classroom clean and materials stored for summer cleaning crews
9. Curriculum guides/manuals
10. Technology plan update
11. Inventory - technology, music, text books, furniture, etc.
12. District policy manual
13. Emergency plan
14. Review of Summative Evaluation Form

CONTRACTING FOR EXTRA SERVICES

The Board of Trustees has issued contracts to educators to teach students. Occasionally, schools are required to produce other documents to meet accreditation requirements beyond the classroom. Teachers are often the most equipped to meet these other needs. However, since the contract is only for teaching services, they are entitled to ask for and be paid for other services provided to the District.

If teachers wish to contract with the Board to provide services over and above their regular contract, please use the following procedure:

1. Submit a proposal to the Board before the next regular Board meeting through the Clerk:
 - a. Outline District's Responsibility
 - b. Identify the work required to meet responsibility
 - c. Predict number of hours to complete the assignment

- d. Identify pay per hour requested.

By handling the request in this manner, Trustees will have time to consider the proposal; check to determine what fund can be used; decide what more information is needed, and approve a contract. Do not do the work and then ask for payment.

PAY LANE CHANGE AND ADVANCEMENT

Deadline and Procedure: Teachers are required to present documentation (official transcript) to the district clerk by January 1 of the current school year in order to advance to a new pay lane. This will help the district set its financial plans for the year with the teacher's next lane advancement/pay taking place the subsequent school year.

PARAPROFESSIONALS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Personnel file:

1. Copy of the letter of understanding or contract must be filed with the County Superintendent's office on or before the first day of school.
2. Newly hired paraprofessionals must:
 - a. Sign a statement to the effect that the staff handbook has been read and understood.
 - b. If hired under Title I, must provide documentation for two years of post high school education, associate degree or be willing to take a test.
3. All paraprofessionals must:
 - a. Complete and file evaluations on all training sessions.
 - b. Complete and file leave (sick, emergency or personal) reports with District Clerk. These leave sheets must be signed by classroom teacher.
 - c. Request permission to use emergency or personal leave from Supervisor.
 - d. Complete a report for **all parent conferences** whether by telephone or personal visits.
 - e. If ill, call supervisor by 7 o'clock. Substitute may not be needed for one day. However, if absence is extended, paras must be responsible for getting a substitute.
4. Supervisor:
 - a. Paraprofessionals who work as a special education aide will be held responsible for meeting the needs of students as written in the Individual Education Plan. The Supervisor of special education aides in this area is **The Special Education Teacher supplied by Bear Paw Cooperative**. However, the classroom teacher/s must be called if ill or if personal leave is needed.
 - b. If position is extended to other areas, paraprofessionals are under the general supervision of the classroom teacher and will be accountable to them for carrying out the duties as described in the employment contract.
 - c. Time sheets will be signed by the Para and Teacher before submission to the Clerk for payment.

- d. Paraprofessionals who are hired through Title I resources are under the supervision of the classroom teacher/s. The teacher is responsible for assigning duties and responsibilities.
 - e. If there is a problem that cannot be resolved between the teacher and the Para, a joint meeting will be held with the Superintendent.
5. Further detailed job description (created by Cottonwood Elementary Board 2018-2019):
- Provide support in planning, designing and implementing IEP, if there are Special Ed. Students, lesson plans
 - Work under the Special Education Teacher only during IEP time, any other time you are under the supervising classroom teacher.
 - Assist in imparting instruction in class
Reinforce learning by working with individual students or small groups
 - Manage student behavior in their class and around the playground
 - Assist the supervising teacher in devising appropriate strategies to impart lessons to challenged students
 - Distribute and collect worksheets and resource materials to students for your IEP class
 - Provide support to students in handling class assignments
 - Score and record grades for your IEP students
 - Guide independent study and handle remedial work set up
 - Prepare Lunches for students and clean up after lunch
 - Alert the lead teacher in case of a medical emergency
 - Supervise recess duty
 - Ensure the safety of students during recess activities
 - Handle rowdy students with tact and diplomacy
 - Assist weak students by providing them with extra attention and compassion
 - Supervise students while they are at lockers
 - Help with all school programs, parties, and field trips
 - Duties may vary depending on the class situation. The paraprofessional may be asked to help with, music, library, or others depending on the situation
 - Willing to sub when the supervising teacher needs to be gone.

*Teacher and Superintendent will co-evaluate paraprofessional during the school first time end of October and second time mid-March.

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION TO ALL STAFF

Cottonwood Elementary School Buildings do not contain any known harmful levels of asbestos materials in the Classroom Building, Resource Building or any out buildings used for storage. All materials used in any construction will be checked with suppliers to make sure no asbestos material is used. If you have any questions or want a copy of the management plan, please call the District Clerk.

STAFF HANDBOOK SIGNATURE FORM

Dear Cottonwood School Staff:

This handbook is designed to highlight for easy access District policies approved by the Board of Trustees and are distinctive to the teaching profession. Trustees expect staff to comply with all conditions of employment.

It is important to always keep in mind this major fact. A school's primary focus must be to teach children (emphasis on children) those skills, behaviors, attitudes and characteristics that will serve them for a lifetime. Textbooks, technology and other resources play a limited role in this process. Parents and teachers play the major role. This can only be accomplished by modeling expectations. A child cannot understand others unless understood, cannot be accepting of others unless accepted by important adults in his or her life and cannot accept failure unless taught that the goal is not perfection but what is learned along the way. Like adults, a child's brain can only take in so much. The trick is to know when to back off.

“The object to teaching is not so much to convey knowledge as it is to excite a determination in the child to acquire it for himself, and to teach him how to go about acquiring it.”

Alec Clegg

SIGNATURE:

My signature certifies that I have read this handbook, understand my role and responsibilities and other requirements for my position.

Staff Member

Date

**COTTONWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT
EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE**

_____ SCHOOL DISTRICT - EMPLOYEE REQUEST FORM -
EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE

Employees may be entitled to Emergency Paid Sick Leave in accordance with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) if the employee satisfies eligibility standards. Employees can complete this form and submit it or any questions to _____ at _____.

Employee Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Alternate Phone Number: _____

Anticipated Begin Date of Leave: _____

Expected Return to Work Date: _____

EMPLOYEE REQUEST FOR LEAVE AT FULL PAY

Employees satisfying one of the three standards noted below are eligible for two weeks of leave capped at 80 hours paid at the employee's full regular compensation rate. For a part-time employee it is the number of hours equal to the average number of hours that the employee works over a typical two-week period. Please select the applicable reason and follow the related instructions.

I am unable to work or telework for the following reasons:

- I am quarantined pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order.
- I am quarantined on the advice of a health care provider.
- I am experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.

Please attach the applicable government order or documentation from medical provider corresponding to the item(s) selected.

EMPLOYEE REQUEST FOR LEAVE AT 2/3 PAY

Employees satisfying one of the three standards noted below are eligible for two weeks of leave capped at 80 hours paid at the 2/3 of the employee’s regular compensation rate. For a part-time employee it is the number of hours equal to the average number of hours that the employee works over a typical two-week period. Please select the applicable reason and follow the applicable instructions.

I am unable to work or telework for the following reasons:

- I need to care for an individual subject to quarantine pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider. I represent that no other person will be providing care for the individual during the period for which the I am receiving Emergency Paid Sick Leave. Name(s) of the individual(s) being cared for:

- I am experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor.

Please attach the applicable government order or documentation from medical provider corresponding to the item(s) selected.

- I am unable to work or telework because I need to care for my child under age 18 because my child’s elementary or secondary school, childcare provider, or child’s place of care has been closed or is unavailable due to a public health emergency. During this period of unavailability or closure, I represent that no other person will be providing care for my child during the period for which I am receiving Emergency Paid Sick Leave.

Name(s) and Age(s) of Child or Children:

If the age of one or more of the child is between 14 and 18, the following special circumstances exist requiring me to care for the child during daylight hours:

Please attach notice or documentation related to the unavailability of the school, daycare, place of care or person providing care to the child. The School District reserves the right to request confirmation regarding the nature of the closure or unavailability.

If you are requesting 2/3 paid leave in conjunction with Emergency FMLA to care for a child under the age of 18 affected by school or care closure due to public health emergency, please complete an EFMLA form to submit with this form.

SUPPLEMENT 2/3 PAY WITH ACCRUED DISTRICT LEAVE

An employee on Emergency Paid Sick Leave at 2/3 pay as noted above, may choose to supplement the 2/3 pay provided through Emergency Paid Sick Leave with accrued District leave to earn full compensation. Please indicate if you would like to use paid leave during your Emergency Paid Sick Leave absence to supplement your 2/3 Emergency Paid Sick Leave compensation. Requested leave is subject to availability based on confirmation by the School District.

- Vacation: _____ Hours
- Sick Leave: _____ Hours
- Personal: _____ Hours

EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURE

I certify that the above information is accurate and complete. I understand that if I fail to report for work on or before the scheduled return date indicated above or fail to communicate changes in the schedule with my supervisor, I may be subject to discipline in accordance with School District Policy.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT USE ONLY

Request Received By: _____ Date: _____

Leave Approved By: _____ Date: _____

Period of
Leave: _____

Duration and Type of Supplemental Leave to Earn Full Pay
Approved: _____

The School District will retain all records related to this leave request for at least 4 years for auditing purposes.

1910F2

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT
Page 1 of 2

_____ SCHOOL DISTRICT - EMPLOYEE REQUEST FORM -
EMERGENCY FMLA

Employees may be entitled to Emergency FMLA (EFMLA) in accordance with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) if the employee satisfies eligibility standards. Employees can complete this form and submit it or any questions to _____ at _____.

Employee Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Alternate Phone Number: _____

Employment Start Date: _____ Employees must have worked for School District for 30 days to be eligible for EFMLA.

Expected Begin Date of Leave: _____

Expected Return to Work Date: _____

REASON FOR LEAVE

Employees satisfying the standards noted below are eligible for 12 weeks* of leave. The first two weeks of the leave are unpaid unless the employee selects available options in the next box. The remaining 10 weeks of leave are paid at 2/3 of the employee's regular compensation rate unless other options are selected on this form. Please select the applicable reason and follow the applicable instructions.

- I am unable to work or telework because I need to care for my child under age 18 because my child's elementary or secondary school, childcare provider, or child's place of care has been closed or is unavailable due to a public health emergency. During this period of unavailability or closure, I represent that no other person will be providing care for my child during the period for which I am receiving EFMLA.

Name(s) and Age(s) of Child or Children: _____

If the age of one or more of the child is between 14 and 18, the following special circumstances exist requiring me to care for the child during daylight hours:

Please attach notice or documentation related to the unavailability of the school, daycare, place of care or person providing care to the child. The School District reserves the right to request confirmation regarding the nature of the closure or unavailability.

* An employee who qualifies for and utilizes the Emergency Paid Sick Leave provisions of the FFCRA, is entitled to an additional 10 weeks of Emergency FMLA. Direct questions about or requests for this leave to the staff member noted above.

SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE FOR FIRST TEN DAYS OF EFMLA

In accordance with the FFCRA, the first ten days of EFMLA is unpaid, however you may be eligible to use Emergency Paid Sick Leave provided through the FFCRA to cover this period at 2/3 of full pay. In the event you have already used Emergency Paid Sick Leave, you are permitted to use available District-provided paid leave to cover this period at full pay. Please indicate if you would like to use paid leave during the first 10 days of your absence and how many hours you plan to use. Requested leave is subject to availability based on confirmation by the School District. If requesting Emergency Paid Sick Leave, please complete and submit an Emergency Paid Sick Leave form. • Vacation:

____Hours • Sick Leave: ____Hours • Personal: ____Hours •
FFCRA: ____Hours

SUPPLEMENT 2/3 PAY WITH ACCRUED DISTRICT LEAVE

An employee may choose to supplement the 2/3 pay provided through EFMLA with accrued District leave to earn full compensation. Please indicate if you would like to use paid leave during your EFMLA absence to supplement your 2/3 EFMLA compensation. Requested leave is subject to availability based on confirmation by the School District. •

Vacation: ____Hours • Sick Leave: ____Hours • Personal: ____Hours