



NEW EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

NEW EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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**WELCOME TO THE
ST. LUCIE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

As an employee you need to be aware of the Mission of the School Board of St. Lucie County as this is the guiding principle for all decisions and procedures followed within the district.

The following is our Mission Statement. Please familiarize yourself with it and let it become the basis for your service to the district.

**The Mission of the
St. Lucie County School District,
is to ensure that all students graduate
from safe and caring schools
equipped with knowledge, skills and the desire to succeed.**

What does this mean for you as an employee of the District? It means that every person who works in our schools or with our children has an obligation to contribute positively to the learning of each child with whom s/he comes in contact. It means that each employee is expected to contribute to the establishment and preservation of a safe learning environment. It means that each is considered to teach by example and demeanor if not by direct instruction. It means that each adult in our schools is expected to provide a positive role model for students in the way his or her assigned duties are performed, in the quality of respect that is shown to students, parents, coworkers and supervisors.

What does it mean to the operation of the district?

- The district has as its goal to provide our students with the very best instructors that can be obtained for each segment of their education regardless of the individual school attended.
- Every employee of the district, no matter what position s/he fills directly contributes to the education of each student with whom s/he comes in contact.
- It is the intent of the district to develop a staff that reflects and represents the diversity found in the population we serve.
- The district recognizes and values the unique contributions brought to it by each individual.
- The district is committed to the goal that each of our schools will become premier centers of learning that are organized around students and the work that is provided to them.

THE ST. LUCIE WAY

There Is a St. Lucie Way:

The St. Lucie Way is described in our beliefs, vision and mission. It is the way we do business every day.

St. Lucie County's Core Business:

The core business of St. Lucie County Schools is to create challenging, engaging and satisfying work for every student, every day.

The Beliefs of St. Lucie School District:

Every child can learn, and each child can learn more than he or she is now learning.

School district personnel, community members, parents, and students share the responsibility for student achievement.

Quality learning experiences are the central focus of all school and district activities.

We ensure equity and quality for all students, not just some.

Equity without quality is prejudice, quality without equity is privilege – equity plus quality equals excellence.

Students are volunteers – their attendance can be required, but their attention must be earned.

We teach “the whole child”, not simply the test taker.

All students have the absolute right to a safe, trusting, and drug-free environment.

The core business of the St. Lucie County Schools is to create challenging, engaging, and satisfying work for every student, every day.

The teacher's primary role is to design rigorous, engaging work that leads students to higher levels of learning.

We provide clear and compelling understandings about what students are expected to know and be able to do.

We provide support for student success, understanding that different students master tasks in different ways and at different times.

District and school support personnel are partners with teachers and schools in the core business.

Collaboration around the core business is essential to quality learning experiences.

Quality tools are required for quality work.

Instructional needs drive the design and construction of facilities.

Quality facilities are required for quality work.

Quality schools are the responsibility of the entire community.

Parents, students, community members, agencies, businesses, governmental entities, other educational institutions, and the school district constitute “the community.”

The community works together to provide the political advocacy and support needed for student success.

Our community actively advocates for support of education by holding candidates and elected officials accountable for their commitment to quality public schools.

The community is responsible for providing and supporting the facilities and infrastructure necessary to accommodate growth.

All district employees are committed to sharing our vision and engaging the community in successfully confronting our common challenges.

The school district has an obligation to achieve quality results for both the schools and the community.

A healthy school system is the key to the maintenance of a healthy democracy.

Quality schools develop productive, contributing citizens.

Quality schools improve the quality of community life.

We strengthen relationships and broaden perspectives by embracing diversity.

We model principles of representative democracy both in our schools and throughout the district.

Systems of checks and balances contribute to quality decisions.

We share a fundamental common commitment to the common good.

Leaders are responsible both to constituents and for shaping the future.

The district and its employees have mutual obligations for support and development toward continuous improvement.

Our core values are fairness, respect, trust, integrity, and commitment to improvement.

We develop leaders committed to our common vision at all levels in the system.

Collegiality and collaboration are key to our success.

All district employees have the absolute right to a safe, trusting, and drug-free environment.

All district employees provide prompt and courteous attention to their customers.

We are a school system, not a system of schools.

We are a “learning organization” in which all roles serve the common purpose of pursuing continuous improvement in quality learning experiences for all.

Therefore, we promise continuous improvement in student achievement and in the success of each individual.

We are committed to a common vision.

We use our beliefs and vision as the key criteria for making decisions.

We lead and manage by results.

We hold ourselves mutually accountable for quality effort.

We assess progress toward agreed- upon goals on a regular basis.

We expect – and we work to bring out – the best in every employee.

We accept change as inevitable and shape it into opportunity.

The Vision of St. Lucie School District:

The schools of the St. Lucie County School District in partnership with parents and community will become premier centers of knowledge that are organized around students and the work provided to them. St. Lucie County School District's name will be synonymous with continuously improving student achievement and the success of each individual. Our school district's promise is to move from good to great focusing on our core business, the creation of challenging, engaging and satisfying work for every student, every day. This is the St. Lucie Way!

The Mission of St. Lucie School District:

The mission of the St. Lucie County School District is to ensure all students graduate from safe and caring schools, equipped with knowledge, skills and the desire to succeed.

Induction:

New employees must internalize and commit to the St. Lucie Way. Our employees will be expected to use their talents and skills in ways that ensure our core business is accomplished. We are and we will remain a talented group of people who share a set of common assumptions that influence everything we do and every decision we make.

Our Customers:

Students are our primary customers. Their attendance can be commanded but their attention must be earned. The work provided to every student must be interesting, satisfying and challenging every day. All employees have important roles in supporting teachers who design quality work and for students who engage in it. All the roles interrelate to create a system where everyone is focused on students and the work provided to them.

Quality:

The example we set is the maximum we can expect from others. Therefore, everything we do, our appearance, our approach, our work must convey the importance we place on quality. Our image of ourselves is critical to our success. Our customers must view us as professionals. Within St. Lucie County School District, we are professionals who act as family, friends, and trusted colleagues.

Trust:

Trust is the foundation on which relationships are built. We strive to earn the trust of our students, their families, and our colleagues. As colleagues, we provide each other with mutual support and encourage innovation and risk-taking. Failure should be viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve. An increased level of trust among students, families, and colleagues creates an environment in which student success is fostered and expected.

Commitment:

We are responsive, dependable, and reliable. We come prepared. Every day is viewed as an opportunity to improve the quality of education for our students. We persist in our position to provide support for teachers as they create work for students that is engaging, satisfying, and challenging. We will never compromise on this commitment.

Innovation and Professional Learning:

As professionals, we realize the importance of finding new ways to meet the needs of our customers. We strive to gain knowledge of cutting edge instructional strategies that have proven results. As people who work in the field of education, we value learning and commit to never being satisfied with status quo or doing what we do because it is what we have always done. Innovation is fostered by our curiosity and the need for improvement; therefore, we devote time to learn new and innovative methods that are aimed at getting better results.

Supporting and Nurturing Ourselves:

Each member of the St. Lucie County School District is a valued member of the St. Lucie County Family. Together “we” are better and stronger than “me.” As a member of a family, we respect, support, and encourage each other. Each of these is a part of our family’s culture and is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Provisions for recognition and affirmation
- Involvement in the decision making process
- Recognition that what one person does makes a difference
- Provisions for professional growth
- Provisions for affiliation, collegial support, and interaction
- Communications that are supportive of ourselves, our students, their families, and our colleagues

IMPORTANT NUMBERS TO NOTE

District Central Switchboard	429-3600
District Nurse's Office	468-5180
DOE Certification Hotline	1-800-445-6739
Professional Development Center	429-3952
Indian River State College	462-4700
Payroll Office	429-3995
Personnel Office	429-7500
Risk Management	429-5521

ACCEPTABLE USE OF INTERACTIVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Use of the telecommunications services and networks by teachers, students and others in the district is intended to advance and promote world-class public education in St. Lucie County for all students and to permit access and exchange of information among schools, offices, and members of the global community. All use of such services and networks shall be consistent with the mission, goals, policies, and priorities of the school district and requires that its users regard it as a shared resource and conduct themselves in a professional, responsible, ethical and legal manner.

St. Lucie County Schools' accounts shall be accessed only by authorized users of the accounts for the purposes specified. All communications and information accessible via the telecommunications services or networks are the property of the School Board. Misuse shall result in the removal of participant access rights and authorization. Authorized users shall be ultimately responsible for all activity under their account and password.

Any use of telecommunications services or networking for illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities shall be prohibited. Inappropriate use shall be defined as a violation of the intended use as described above as well as any use of district-provided telecommunications for commercial purposes, product advertisement or political lobbying.

No guarantee can be made for the privacy of any communication on the network. Authorized system administrators may access private correspondence and files if a user is believed to be in violation of this School Board policy. All network users shall adhere to the rules of copyright regarding software, information and the attribution of authorship. Re-posting personal communications without the author's permission or bulletin board messages without proper attribution is also prohibited. All members of the St. Lucie County Schools community shall be granted free and equal access to as many network services as school resources and availability of technology may permit. Users shall exercise prudence and "fairness" in the shared use of resources limited by the financial support available. **At school, student access to and use of the Internet will be under teacher direction and will be monitored as any other classroom activity.**

AIDS AWARENESS & INFECTION CONTROL

In concern for the well-being of each employee and student, the School Board of St. Lucie County has mandated AIDS Awareness training for all new employees so that they will be knowledgeable about the conditions that spread diseases such as AIDS and be aware of their rights and the rights of others where the disease is involved. Materials regarding the Board policy and the disease itself will be supplied to each new employee during the regularly scheduled New Employee Orientation.

INFECTION CONTROL AND HEPATITIS B

Certain positions within the School District have been identified as having a somewhat greater hazard of contracting Hepatitis B or other infectious diseases. These positions are:

- Exceptional Student teachers and paraprofessionals
- Health Paraprofessionals and school nurses
- Custodians
- Plumbers and electricians
- Bus drivers and bus aides who transport Exceptional Students
- All athletic coaches

Those persons in the above six (6) categories are obliged to take initial training upon hire and annual training thereafter in infection control. After completing the initial training, these employees may choose to undergo the series of shots for Hepatitis B immunization at the expense of the Board.

All employees will be given the initial training during their New Employee Orientation and may also choose to have the immunization series, again at the expense of the School Board. At the time of the orientation all new employees will complete a form (HRD0036) verifying the training and making an initial choice as to whether they wish to receive the immunization. If at a later time they change their minds, the authorization for the immunization may be obtained by contacting the Personnel Office.

A copy of the District Blood-Borne Pathogens plan containing the post-exposure plan is available at each work site. In schools, the plan is located in the clinic. At other work sites, it should be available through the site administrator.

APPROVED LEAVE

Any absence of an employee from his/her regularly assigned duty must be covered by an authorized leave granted in advance to School Board procedures. Except for sick leave which may be submitted after returning to work, all other leave requests must be submitted in advance using the online Time Off Request. It is strongly suggested that Requests for Leave be submitted at least two (2) weeks in advance of the leave in order to insure sufficient time for processing. Leave is not automatically granted upon submission of the Request; approval must be received from the administrative supervisor prior to taking the leave.

Approved leave is permission granted by the School Board or allowed under its adopted policies for an employee to be absent from duty for a specified period of time with the right to return to employment upon the expiration of leave. Any employee absent without having obtained proper authorization may be terminated for abandonment of position.

BENEFITS

Benefits provided to full-time regular employees include:

- § Required employer Social Security and Medicare contributions
- § Worker's Compensation insurance
- § Group Health and Cafeteria Plan
- § Employee Assistance Program
- § Optional tax-sheltered annuities
- § Florida State Retirement contributions
- § Sick leave (one day per month worked)
- § Personal days (maximum five (5) per year; chargeable to sick leave)
- § Vacation Days (twelve-month employees only)
- § Paid holidays (number depending upon the work year)
- § Reduced rates at Indian River State College for courses related to the individual's work assignment or leading to an AA or AS degree or professional certification.
- § Free Financial Planning Guidance through Ernst & Young courtesy of the Florida Retirement System for all members (Call 866-446-9377).

CALENDAR

The student calendar for each year is set by the School Board. Paid holidays for members of the three bargaining units are set as part of the contract negotiations each year. The Calendar (including paid holidays) for employees who are not members of one of the bargaining units is established by the School Board. As a part of your orientation you should receive a copy of the current calendar. The established bargaining units are: Classroom Teachers Association or CTA, Classroom Teachers Association, Classified Unit or CTA/CU, and Communication Workers of America or CWA.

CERTIFICATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

All instructional personnel are obliged to obtain proper certification in order to be employed in St. Lucie County Schools. Application to the Department of Education, Division of Certification, should be made before or immediately upon employment in an instructional position. In order to maintain employment, each new instructional employee must, within 120 days of employment, provide the District with proof of certification. This is usually done by providing the Personnel Office and your school with copies of your certificate once it is issued. Failure to do so may result in loss of employment. Applications for certification may be completed on-line www.fldoe.org/edcert. Click "Apply Here" in the list on the left and follow the directions. You may also submit the certification fee on line using a credit card. Alternatively, a paper certification application may be obtained from the Personnel Office.

Upon receiving the application and fee and all required documents, the Division of Certification will issue a receipt acknowledging that these have been received. Within ninety (90) days the applicant will be issued a **STATEMENT OF STATUS OF ELIGIBILITY** for the area of certification requested. This statement will indicate whether or not the individual has completed the basic requirements that must be completed during the validity period of the temporary certificate before the permanent professional certificate can be issued. A person whose statement of eligibility shows any course work which must be completed prior to issue of a temporary certificate will not be eligible for employment until such course work has been completed or another area has been approved for certification. An alternative to qualifying for certification in a subject area or category is to take and pass the indicated subject area exam (SAE). Call the certification analysts with any questions.

Persons submitting a **complete** application for certification and the required fee may be able to receive issuance of their certificates within a few days of submission of their fingerprints unless there is some special hold due to things such as a criminal history or illegible fingerprints. These will delay issuance because they require manual processing,

During the validity period or the temporary certificate all candidates must successfully complete the Professional Education Competence Program (PEC) and pass those tests required for professional certification. Currently these include the Florida General Knowledge Test (a four-part test of reading, writing, language and mathematics skills), the Professional Education Exam, and the Subject Area Exam specific to the area in which certification is to be held. Many Florida education majors will have taken these prior to having completed their education degrees. Florida education graduates who have completed all of these requirements may be issued a five year professional certificate. Persons who have held professional certificate in another state may meet these requirements through reciprocity. Call the certification analysts with any questions.

NOTE: Beginning July 1, 2002 proof of a passing score on all four sections of the Florida General Knowledge Test must be presented during the first year of employment. In addition, all teachers must be or become “highly qualified” in order to meet the standards of the St. Lucie School District. More information regarding this can be obtained from the Personnel Department.

In addition to PEC and required examinations, persons employed in an instructional capacity who are **not** education majors but hold a degree in a subject area compatible with certification will be required to take up to twenty (20) semester hours of education during the period of their temporary certification or may choose to enroll in an alternative certification program. The employee must plan carefully to complete the required courses or program prior to reappointment in the spring of his/her final year of temporary certification in order to ensure re-employment.

All certified personnel are required to file with the Personnel Office (within thirty (30) days of its receipt) a copy of any renewal certificate issued.

CHILD ABUSE

Florida Statute 39.201 requires “any person, including, but not limited to teachers or other school officials or personnel who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child’s welfare shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).” This includes suspected child on child sexual abuse.

School personnel do not need permission to make a report of suspected abuse or neglect and cannot ask someone else to make the report for them. In addition, anyone who has been told about the suspected abuse needs to have his or her name included in the report when it is made. Reports can be made by telephone or fax. The reporting “hotline” number is 1-800-96ABUSE. The fax number is 1-800-914-0004.

Failure to report is a misdemeanor of the first degree as described in Florida Statute 39.205. Individuals reporting suspected abuse or neglect are immune from any liability when making such reports to DCF in good faith.

School staff should also inform the School Resource Office (SRO) that they have placed or are about to place a call to the Abuse Registry. Informing the SRO does not absolve school staff of the responsibility to call the Abuse Registry. Staff have a duty to comply and cooperate with any child protective investigations.

ALWAYS file a report as soon as suspected abuse or neglect becomes known. DO NOT DELAY!

REPORTING PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

District staff members are required to report to the principal of the school and the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources alleged misconduct by District employees which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. If the alleged misconduct to be reported is regarding the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, the employee shall report the alleged misconduct to the Superintendent. Failure to report such alleged misconduct shall result in appropriate disciplinary action.

CREDIT FOR ADDITIONAL HOURS/DEGREES

All personnel who desire credit on the salary schedule for additional training and/or an earned higher degree must have completed all training by September 1 of the current fiscal year and

proper verification must be submitted to the Personnel Office by October 15 of the current fiscal year in order to receive salary credit for the entire year.

Personnel must have completed all training by February 1 of the current fiscal year and verification of such must be submitted to the Personnel Office by March 15 of the current fiscal year in order to receive one-half of the annual amount for such.

Instructional personnel should submit form PER0083 to request the supplement for additional graduate level hours. Non-instructional personnel should submit form PER0083b for applicable training or degrees. All degrees thus submitted must be from institutions recognized by the State of Florida and accredited by one of the six (6) regional accrediting agencies. The employee is responsible with providing the Personnel Office with a transcript showing the degree and date conferred. A copy of a diploma alone is unacceptable.

CRIMES, REPORTING OF

Evidence of any crime or potential crime known to or discovered by a School Board employee shall be reported immediately to the school principal or administrative supervisor who in turn shall report immediately to the appropriate law enforcement agency. In particular, the school principal shall turn over to the appropriate law enforcement agency all information, reports, and evidence known about any criminal activity on campus, including but not limited to the following:

- Any assault in which the victim is injured, and any continued pattern of recurring simple assaults;
- Possession of knives, firearms, ammunition, blasting caps, or any other weapon or explosive in school;
- Any alcoholic beverage or narcotics offense;
- Any indecent assault or assault with intent to ravish;
- Any act, including any act of sexual harassment of a student, that may involve harm, or threat of harm, to the physical or mental health of the student and that therefore may constitute an act of child abuse or neglect; and
- Gang rivalries or activities.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

All employees are required to use direct deposit of their paychecks by completing the appropriate form and returning this form together with a deposit slip to the Payroll Department.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

It is the intent of the School Board of St. Lucie County that the work environment must be free of all illegal drugs and alcohol. Therefore, employees are prohibited from possessing, using, manufacturing, dispensing, distributing or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while on duty. Illegal drugs are those controlled substances as defined by Federal or State law, or any counterfeit of such drugs or substances.

The workplace is defined as the site for the performance of work done in connection with employment. That includes any school building or premises, any vehicle used to transport students to and from school and school-related activities, school board vehicles used by employees in the conduct of their environment, and any premises where students in a school-approved activity, event or function are under the jurisdiction of the School District.

As a condition of employment, each employee shall notify his or her supervisor of his or her arrest or conviction of any violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace within two (2) days of the occurrence. Failure to observe this condition may result in non-reappointment, suspension, or termination. Instructional employees so convicted shall be reported to the Profession Practice Commission, a division of the Florida Department of Education.

In keeping with the intent of this policy, all new employees are required to undergo drug screening before hire. Also, once hired, any employee who is suspected of reporting to work under the influence of either drugs or alcohol will be subject to additional testing and to immediate dismissal should the results be positive.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides a variety of counseling and informational services. The EAP is available for problems not normally covered under the mental health provisions of the Group Health Plan, such as stress, weight loss, family problems, smoking cessation, etc. It can also be used for information and referral if you need help determining how to tackle a personal or workplace problem. A supervisor may also refer an employee to the EAP if it appears personal issues are interfering with work performance. Basically, the EAP is a tool for employees to use to regain equilibrium during a stressful period.

Employees and their family members are eligible for up to six (6) visits per contract year to an approved mental health provider, at no cost to the employee. There is no co-payment for using the EAP and an employee does not need to be covered by the Group Health Plan of the district to use the EAP. However, if the employee receives a mental health or substance abuse diagnosis and requires a formal treatment, the employee may access the Group Health Plan benefits if the employee (or dependents) are eligible. The goal is to provide early intervention before the issue becomes a more serious problem. For further information, contact Risk Management at 772-429-5520.

EVALUATION

Each employee receives annual evaluation of his/her performance. A copy of the official evaluation instrument will be given to the employee at the beginning of the current fiscal year or upon employment if after the normal start date. Employees who wish may attach a personal statement to his/her evaluation within ten (10) days of its receipt. This statement will be placed in the individual's personnel file along with the evaluation. Evaluations do not become public record until one year after the issuance.

In addition, all annual contract employees will receive a mid-year evaluation to be completed prior to Winter Break. All instructional staff new to St. Lucie County School District will also receive a 45 day review to be completed by the building level principal.

FINGERPRINTS

All applicants for employment with the School Board of St. Lucie County must be fingerprinted as part of the application process. Clearance of the applicant's fingerprints is required before the individual may assume regular duties with the School Board. Any offer of employment may be withdrawn if the individual is found to have a criminal record or to have answered falsely on the employment application. Fingerprints are required by law to be taken by the district. This process is now electronic and results are usually available within 24 hours. The expense of fingerprinting is to be borne by the applicant. Individuals who leave the employ of the District must be re-fingerprinted before re-employment.

FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Regular full-time employees who receive benefits under the terms of their employment are required to be enrolled in the Florida Retirement System. The School Board makes all contributions for an employee to the retirement system based on a percentage of the employee's gross salary. Since the fall of 2002, employees have had an opportunity to select either the traditional "defined benefit" (pension) plan or a newly authorized "defined contribution" (investment) plan for their FRS membership.

New employees should pay close attention to material received about these two plans and make an informed decision as to which to choose. Any new employee who fails to make an active decision within five (5) months of enrollment will be placed, by default, in the defined benefit plan.

An employee is vested in the **pension plan** of the retirement system when s/he has completed a full six (6) years service. Service that is interrupted by leave or by leaving the employ of an FRS employer remains on file and may be added to upon return to FRS-covered employment. Full retirement under the defined benefit plan is reached upon the completion of thirty (30) years of service. Reduced retirement may be taken after the employee is vested and at least forty-two (42) years and one (1) month of age. A penalty of 5% per year for each year under the age of 62 is assessed each person taking early retirement. A person who has reached the age of 62 may retire without penalty before thirty (30) years of service.

Under the **investment plan**, an employee is vested after one (1) year. The value of the contributions plus or minus the results of their investment choices is available for withdrawal or transfer to another retirement account upon leaving the employ of a FRS covered agency.

Since the fall of 1996 the state Division of Retirement has offered annual statements of retirement status to all enrolled employees. These are mailed directly to the employee's home in the fall to anyone who was employed and actively participating in the retirement system the previous June. On-going financial advice and retirement workshops are sponsored by FRS and conducted by representatives of Ernst and Young, a financial advisement company. Retirement counseling is available through the state Financial Guidance Line. Their financial guidance line can be reached at 866-446-9377 once you have received your FRS Choice Packet and PIN.

Employees who have retired from the Florida Retirement System and are returning to employment after having drawn retirement should bring this to the attention of the Personnel Office. No

employee may retire and return to work until they have left all FRS agencies employment for six (6) months. Upon returning to work, they must put their retirement on hold for the 7th thru the 12th month of the first calendar year of retirement. There are no exceptions to this policy.

FLORIDA RIGHT-TO-KNOW

Florida law mandates that all employees who use or store hazardous chemicals in the workplace receive training as to proper procedures. Those employees whose positions indicate that they fall into this category will receive specific training from the Hazardous Material Manager.

Meanwhile all employees are reminded of the following employee responsibilities:

- Always read the label and Material Safety Data Sheet for each material and product that you use or handle at work.
- Request material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and other information whenever you are not completely familiar with the proper and safe procedures for using or handling hazardous materials and waste.
- If you do not understand label and Material Safety Data Sheet information, ask your supervisor for help before using or handling hazardous materials or wastes.
- Immediately report all symptoms of chemical exposure to your supervisor/principal.
- Immediately report spill and leaks of hazardous materials or wastes to your supervisor/principal.
- Report all safety violations to your supervisor/principal.
- Learn the location and proper use of personal protective equipment and emergency equipment in your work area.

FORMS REQUIRED FOR EMPLOYMENT

All new employees are required to have the following forms and documents on file in the Personnel Office within thirty (30) days of appointment. In most instances, these will be completed at your orientation session with Personnel Office staff.

- Loyalty Oath completed and signed in the presence of a notary
- Federal Withholding Exemption Form (W-4)
- Acknowledgment of the District Drug-Free Workplace Policy
- Copies of a signed Social Security Card and Driver's License
- Signed copy of the New Employees' Training Checklist
- Employee Verification of Retirement Status
- Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9)

- Authorization Agreement for Automatic Deposits
- For non-US citizens: Work authorization cards will be required upon employment

Other optional forms may be obtained at the orientation

- PER0083 Instructional Request for Supplement for Graduate Credit
Attach relevant transcript(s) or indicate if submitted with application for employment
- PER0083b Non-instructional Request for Supplement for Salary Purposes
- PER0007 Verification of Experience (Instructional)
- PER0006 Verification of Experience (Non-Instructional)

HARASSMENT

The School District of St. Lucie County is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from all forms of harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the District will not tolerate, condone or permit harassment of employees or others by anyone, including any supervisor, coworker, vendor, client or customer.

(A) Harassment consists of unwelcome and improper conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, of any type. This prohibition includes harassment which is based on a person's gender, color, race, ancestry, religion, national origin, age physical or mental handicap, medical condition, disability, marital status, veteran status or citizenship status.

(B) The School district will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

(C) Sexual harassment is a violation of the District's policy and will not be condoned or permitted. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical, verbal or visual conduct based on sex constitute sexual harassment when:

- (1) submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment,
- (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision, or
- (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual's work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

(D) Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented kidding or teasing, practical jokes, jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene printed or visual material and physical contact such as patting, pinching or brushing against another's body.

Examples of other types of harassment include:

- (1) Nicknames pertaining to any national origin, religious or age characteristics or stereotypes,
- (2) Racial, ethnic age or religious jokes,
- (3) Signs magazines or bulletin board notices that are found to be offensive by a protected minority, and
- (4) Use of any racial or ethnic slurs.

(E) All employees are responsible for helping to ensure that the District avoids harassment. It is each employee's responsibility to report potentially harassing conduct; one cannot assume that management is aware of any potentially harassing behavior unless informed of it. If an employee believes he/she has experienced or witnessed harassment, the employee should immediately notify the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources or the Director of Personnel.

(F) The registering of a complaint will in no way be used or held against the employee, nor will it have an adverse impact on the complaining individual's employment status. The School District expressly prohibits any form of retaliatory action against any individual for filing a complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation.

(G) The School District's policy is to investigate all such complaints thoroughly and promptly. To the fullest extent practicable, the School District will keep complaints and the terms of their resolution Confidential. If an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred, the School District will take corrective action, including such discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment, as is appropriate.

(H) Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Assistant Superintendent for Human resources or the Director of Personnel.

INSURANCE

Health insurance and a "cafeteria plan" of supplemental insurances are provided to employees by the School District. For new employees 65% of the cost of the health benefit for the employee only, or 50% of the cost for either two-person or family coverage is borne by the District with the remainder paid by the employee. There is a thirty (30) day "open enrollment window" during which new employees may enroll in the health insurance plan without any questions asked and without requirement of a physical. Failure to enroll during this thirty (30) day window which begins upon hire may mean that the employee will be asked to submit evidence of insurability or submit to a physical as part of the application process and may result in coverage being denied.

Payment of premiums is deducted on each paycheck so as to maintain coverage in an uninterrupted fashion. Employees who are on unpaid leave (excluding Family and Medical Leave Act Leave) and therefore not receiving a paycheck will need to pay 100% of the cost maintaining their insurance. Retirees under the pension plan are entitled to maintain their insurance through the School Board by paying the entire cost.

Other employees who leave the employment of the School Board may continue their insurance for a specified number of months under the provisions of COBRA. Anyone with questions regarding the insurance program should contact the office of the Risk Manager.

MEDIATION SERVICES

It is the firm belief of the School Board that any disputes between employees, between employees and supervisors, between students or parents and teachers should be resolved at the level closest to the parties involved. The Board recognized that for many disputes there is a less expensive, less traumatic, more effective method of resolution than the traditional grievance or lawsuit. Alternative dispute resolution procedures involve collaborative techniques which can spare the district and individuals the high costs and emotional trauma of litigation. Specifically, the Board believes in "mediation" as a method to intercept a conflict before it necessitates outside intervention or reaches the formal level of either a grievance or a lawsuit. Through a step-by-step communication process, mediation leads to a peaceful win-win solution for all involved parties. Therefore the district has developed a cadre of mediators to assist in this process. Anyone who is experiencing a conflict with another person(s) within the district is encouraged to contact the mediation coordinator through the Personnel Office.

NAME ADDRESS AND RECORDS OF EMPLOYEES

Each employee is expected to use his/her legal name as given on his/her social security card. The employee is also expected to keep the superintendent informed of his/her current address and phone number by notifying the Personnel Office of any changes. Failure to do so is a violation of School Board policy. Also all employees should be aware that their records are public documents. Police officers, firefighters and judges and their family members and any other persons designated by Florida Statutes are exempted from disclosure of address, phone number and picture under F.S. 119.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or marital status against a student or an employee in the St. Lucie County School System of Public Education is prohibited. No person in this District shall, on the basis of race, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or marital status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices.

PAY SCHEDULE

All employees, except those classified as nine-month (183-day) employees and others who may begin their employment late in the year, receive twenty-four (24) equal payments of their annual salaries. These payments are issued on the fifteenth and the last day of the month unless these days fall upon a weekend or a holiday in which case they will be issued on the last workday before immediately preceding. Nine month (183-day) employees receive twenty-one (21) checks varying in amount according to the hours worked. This group includes bus drivers, food service workers, gatekeepers and campus safety monitors and temporary part-time employees.

PERSONAL LEAVE WITH PAY

Personal Leave With Pay is leave time taken in ½ day or full day increments that may be used for personal purposes and is charged against available sick leave. Up to five (5) days per year may be thus used. An employee may only use as many personal days (up to five) as there are sick days available. It is the employee's responsibility to check available days before applying for Personal Leave With Pay. Use of these days without the needed number of available sick leave will result in dockage of pay.

Persons who have been on any type of leave without pay may, if a member of the defined benefit plan under FRS, purchase service credit for the time of the leave after having returned to work for at least thirty (30) calendar days. Contact the Personnel Office for details.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE, CREDIT FOR

New employees may receive salary credit for related past experience. Instructional employees may receive credit for all years of teaching under contract in accredited K-12 schools to the extent of the approved salary schedule. To secure such credit a teacher should request a copy of the Instructional Verification of Experience Form (PER0007) for each applicable former employer. Non-instructional employees may receive credit for all years of employment in a position whose duties are similar and related to those of the current employment with the School Board. Such employment shall have been full time and for more than half a year. To secure such credit a non-instructional employee should request a copy of the Non-instructional Verification of Experience Form (PER0006) for each applicable former employer. These forms may be obtained from the Personnel Office of the School Board.

It is the responsibility of the individual to send the verification forms to former employers and follow up to see that they have been returned in a timely manner. We suggest enclosing a personal note and perhaps a stamped, self-addressed envelope when sending these forms out. This verification must be received by the School District within sixty (60) days of employment in order for the salary credit to be awarded for the current school year. Verifications received after this deadline will be applied in the school term following receipt.

PROBATION

All new support staff employees are under 120-day initial probation period during which any individual may be dismissed without cause and without recourse. All new instructional and administrative employees hired after July 1, 1997 are subject to a 97-day initial probationary period during which the individual may resign without prejudice or be dismissed without cause. Instructional employees are given renewable limited contracts usually of one-year or one semester duration.

Each employee then continues to be under annual status until the conclusion of three years satisfactory service at which time instructional employees may be granted a Professional Services contract and non-instructional employees may be granted Continuing Status according to the terms of School Board policy and applicable negotiated contracts.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Those who enter the teaching profession are considered to be held to a higher standard of conduct than the ordinary citizen. All teachers are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Florida Code of Ethics of the Teaching Profession in all dealing with students, parents, their peers, and in the community at large. **By extension a higher level of personal conduct is also expected of all employees of the School District regardless of position held.** Copies of the **Code of Ethics of the Teaching Profession** will be provided to each new instructional employee during orientation. Failure to abide by this code may result in the loss of certification in the state of Florida.

SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

All operations of the School District are dictated by the official policies thereof. The information contained in this handbook is an adapted version of those policies held to be most important for new employees to know. A complete copy of the **Policies of the School Board of St. Lucie County** is available at each work site. See the appropriate work site supervisor if you have a need to examine the full policies. In addition, all School Board policies are available two places on the St. Lucie web site (stlucie.k12.fl.us): Under the District tab click on “Policies” under School Board; or under Teachers and Staff click on “School Board Policies” in the left column.

SELF REPORTING

All employees are required to self-report in writing within forty-eight (48) hours to both, their supervisor and the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources any arrests by any law enforcement agency and/or any criminal charges being filed (this includes both misdemeanors and felonies of any type, including DUI). The self-reporting requirement shall apply not only to instructional employees but also to all other employees, including substitutes, part-time and temporary employees. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt, nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, self-reporting shall also be required for any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight (48) hours after the final judgment.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COMPETENCE PROGRAM (PEC)

Instructional personnel new to teaching in Florida are required to complete the Professional Education Competence Program (PEC) during the three (3) year validity period of their temporary certificate. The function of this program is to determine that new teachers have acquired professional education competence as demonstrated by their day-to-day classroom performance. Most will complete the PEC in one year. This requirement must be met before a five-year professional certificate can be issued.

There are certain exceptions to this requirement. These include:

- A. The individual who has completed an approved teacher education program at an approved institution within the state of Florida.
- B. The individual who has completed an approved teacher education program in another state having reciprocity with Florida and who has a professional certificate issued by that state.

These individuals may be admitted to a five-year professional certification upon documentation of the above. If you feel that this may apply to you, check with your principal or with the certification analysts in the Personnel Office.

TEMPORARY STATUS

At times the School Board hires employees under a temporary status to replace full-time employees who are on approved leave. These individuals are hired for the time of the leave only. When the employee on leave returns to work the temporary employment shall end. Individuals hired as temporary employees and whose service is expected to be less than six (6) months are not eligible for benefits.

In other circumstances, the School Board may establish temporary positions that are needed only for a limited amount of time or under a non-permanent funding source. These individuals' employment also ceases when the need for the position(s) concludes and they will receive allowable retirement benefits only if the employment is for a period of six (6) months or more. Individuals hired as temporary employees do not receive Health and Fringe Benefits nor do they receive sick and/or vacation days.

WORK DAY

The length of the workday is established according to employee classification to be either 7.5 hours per day or 8 hours per day. The schedule for these hours is set by the school principal or site administrator. No overtime is to be worked by non-instructional employees without the prior permission of the site administrator. Most non-instructional, non-administrative employees are subject to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Compensatory time for overtime work may be granted by an administrator provided that (1) the work that is being compensated was approved and recorded prior to performance and (2) no more than forty (40) hours of compensatory time can be accumulated within a fiscal year. Compensatory time may be taken up to one full day but cannot be granted for more than one full day at a time. Employees falling under the Fair Labor Standards Act will be paid for any accrued compensatory time at the end of the fiscal year.

The use of compensatory time must be requested with at least 24 hours notice using the district approved leave request process.

WORK YEAR

The work year of instructional and non-instructional staff is determined by the School Board as follows:

9	months	-	183 days
10	months	-	196 days
10 ½	months	-	206 days
11	months	-	216 days
12	months	-	250 days

The above includes authorized paid holidays, planning days and other authorized paid leave.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

All work-related injuries must be reported to the employee's supervisor immediately and a First Report of Injury form completed. The form is to be signed by the supervisor and forwarded to the Risk Manager. If medical attention is required for the injury, the Risk Manager should be contacted to authorize treatment. Unauthorized treatment may be subject to denial. Contact the Risk Manager's office before seeking medical attention except in immediate emergency situations.

Employees on approved worker's compensation leave shall be entitled to continuation of retirement contributions by the district while on leave. Employees placed on temporary light duty by a physician approved under worker's compensation will be paid an hourly rate equal to 85% of his/her regular hourly rate of pay for hours worked and may apply to the worker's compensation carrier for additional compensation up to the limits specified by law.

ANY EMPLOYEE WHO FEELS THAT HE OR SHE HAS BEEN TREATED NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES OR THE APPLICABLE CONTRACT, IF INCLUDED IN ONE OF THE THREE BARGAINING UNITS, HAS A RIGHT TO QUESTION OR TO GRIEVE SUCH TREATMENT.

Procedures for members of the bargaining units regarding perceived violation of the bargaining unit contract are contained in such contract. Other employees not covered by one of the bargaining units or bargaining unit members when the subject of complaint is not covered under the contract should contact a Personnel Administrator. A written statement of the complaint will be taken and the complaint will be processed with due diligence and speed.

Revised: June, 1996 July, 1997 July, 1998 July, 1999 July, 2000 July,2001 July, 2002
July, 2003 July, 2004 July, 2005 June 2006 June 2007 July 2008 July,2009
July, 2010



Superintendent
Michael J. Lannon

Board Members
Troy Ingersoll, Chairman
Kathryn Hensley, Vice Chairman
Dr. John Carvelli
Carol A. Hilson
Dr. Judi Miller

If due to a disability, you need special accommodations to receive school board information or to participate in school board functions, call (772) 429-3600 and ask for the School Board secretary. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) phone (772) 429-3919.

Discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or marital status against a student or an employee in The School Board of St. Lucie County is prohibited. No person in this District shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or marital status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices. Personnel Office, 4204 Okeechobee Road, Fort Pierce, FL 34947, (772) 429-7500.