

Denver Public Schools



Handbook for Classified Employees

DECEMBER 2000

Published by the Department of Human Resources

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello!

Welcome to the Denver Public Schools. It is a great pleasure to welcome you as a new member of our team. We encourage you to strive to realize your career potential and professional success as an employee. The success of this school district is built on a firm foundation of common interests, hopes, and objectives. This foundation supports our ability to meet the challenges each year brings.

*As an employee, we value your contribution and, through consistent communication, education, and ongoing support, we will encourage your personal and professional development. **We want you to succeed!***

Educating children is the primary reason for our existence. You have joined a team with a commitment to overcome all obstacles, no matter how difficult, in order to provide a quality educational experience for students. Your efforts in collaboration with parents, teachers, and all members of our diverse community are an important part of our success!

*Again, **welcome to Denver Public Schools!***

Every Child / Every Day!

Bernadette Seick
Interim Superintendent

Considerations of Employment

The employee handbook is intended to provide you with an overview of Denver Public Schools' (DPS) policies, rules, guidelines, procedures, compensation, and benefits for the purpose of understanding and performing within the workplace. This information is provided as a matter of information only and is subject to change, suspension, or cancellation at any time, with or without notice, in whole or in part, at the discretion of DPS. The policies approved by the Board of Education, as well as Agreements with various employee groups, form the basis for this information. **NOTHING IN THIS MANUAL SHALL CREATE, OR IS INTENDED TO CREATE, OR SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT, EXPRESSED, OR IMPLIED.**

Employee Representations

In consideration of my employment, I acknowledge that I have completed a DPS Employment Application and fingerprint card, and received a copy of the DPS Employee Handbook and Harassment Policy.

Employee's Name (please print)

Employee's Signature

Date

c: Employee File

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Denver Public Schools is to provide all students the opportunity to achieve the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing citizens in our diverse society.

HISTORY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

While its roots can be traced to 1859, when the City of Denver was founded, the District was created in 1902 when voters approved a constitutional amendment that created the City and County of Denver. The same constitutional amendment consolidated five school districts into today's School District No. 1.

The Denver Public School District has over 120 elementary, middle, high, and alternative schools. Over 69,000 pupils attend these schools. There are over 11,000 full and part-time employees working for the District. The District has an annual budget of over \$400 million.

EMPLOYMENT

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The Denver Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or disability. DPS extends equal employment opportunity in consideration of all employment relationships including recruitment, hiring, position upgrading or downgrading, promotions, demotions, transfers, position eliminations, position recalls, disciplinary actions, and terminations. DPS voluntarily initiates Affirmative Action efforts which promote the representation of women, minorities, and disabled individuals (who have demonstrated that they can, with or without a reasonable accommodation, meet the essential functions of a job). Questions regarding equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, disability, and related subjects should be directed to:

Director of Classified Employees
Human Resources
Denver Public Schools
900 Grant Street, Room 501
Denver, Colorado 80203

IMMIGRATION LAW

In compliance with federal immigration laws, DPS employees are required to provide satisfactory evidence of their identity and legal authority to work in the United States of America at the time of employment and, as requested or required, periodically thereafter.

PROBATION

Probationary periods apply to all new employees. DPS Board Policy and various employee Agreements govern the length of the probationary period. All full-time employees, except those covered in the Amalgamated Transit Union Agreement, serve a two-year probationary period. Thereafter, an employee may be appointed to Continuing Service status.

EMPLOYEE RECORDS

As an employee, you are encouraged to maintain your own copies of documents you may receive relating to your employment, performance, discipline, recognition, compensation, benefits, or other human resource activities. Your official Personnel File contains original copies of these documents and other information to ensure compliance with governmental reporting requirements. DPS reserves the right to establish document retention practices and to determine when exceptions may apply. Release of information from your file is governed by State Statute and Federal Law. You are always entitled to review your personnel file.

EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE

An employee's performance is a major factor affecting the delivery of quality services to the District. It is the responsibility of management to consistently monitor an employee's work efforts for compliance to established standards of performance. When management determines that an employee's performance is unsatisfactory or an employee's conduct is unacceptable, disciplinary action may be taken.

Wherever practical, discipline is progressive. However, any measure of discipline may be used in any given situation as appropriate. The type and severity of the discipline depends on the gravity of the infraction. The fact that the District uses progressive discipline does not mean that progressive discipline must be taken in all cases before an employee is dismissed. The scope of progressive disciplinary actions includes everything from initial oral warnings to, if necessary, termination.

The following is not designed to be a complete list of standards, but is intended to serve as a general guideline. Violation of these or other inappropriate behaviors could result in discipline, up to and including, termination. More specific standards may be identified by department policy or Union/Association Agreement.

ATTENDANCE

All employees are required to report to work as scheduled. Employees must notify (by telephone, fax, etc.) their immediate supervisor at least 30 minutes prior to their scheduled start-time in the event that they are unable to report to work as scheduled, unless a Union/Association Agreement or department policy requires otherwise. Except in the case of an emergency, the supervisor must be contacted directly by the employee and not by the employee's spouse, relatives, or friends. Failure to report to work as scheduled and on time may result in disciplinary action.

DPS RECORDS

Employees must ensure for the accuracy and maintenance of all records, reports, vouchers, and financial documents. All records, manual and electronic, must not be destroyed, except in accordance with prescribed procedures. Willful falsification of records may be a violation of state or federal laws and may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

FRAUD-VIOLATION OF DPS RULES, INTERNAL CONTROLS, & PROCEDURES

Employee theft, fraud, forgery, dishonesty, or intentional violation of DPS rules, internal controls, regulations, or procedures is not acceptable. Upon disclosure, acts of this nature will be investigated and, if necessary, resolved through disciplinary, criminal, or legal actions.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

The safety and security of District employees and students are of the utmost importance. Threats, threatening or hostile behavior, acts of violence, bringing unauthorized weapons onto District property, or other acts of this type will not be tolerated. In addition, jokes or comments regarding violent acts, which are reasonably perceived to be a threat of imminent harm, will not be tolerated. Any person who exhibits these types of behaviors may be removed from District property pending the outcome of an investigation.

HARASSMENT

DPS maintains and enforces policies that prohibit harassment based on sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and age. If you feel there has been a violation of these policies, you are urged to bring the matter to the immediate attention of your supervisor, the Chief Personnel Officer, or the Superintendent. Complaints of prohibited harassment will be promptly investigated. If it is determined that unlawful harassment has occurred, the District will take prompt action to stop the harassment.

SAFEGUARDING AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

DPS employees cannot divulge school district records, plans, or other data without proper authorization from their immediate supervisor, manager, or administrator.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Employees are encouraged to discuss and resolve any work related problems or misunderstandings with their immediate supervisor or manager. However, in the event that you are uncomfortable discussing matters with your immediate supervisor, please feel free to consult with the Chief Personnel Officer or staff members of the Human Resources Department who will maintain your desire for confidentiality to the extent possible while also seeking to resolve problems effectively and diplomatically.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND FIRST AID

If you become ill at work, please notify your supervisor immediately. (See Workers' Compensation for job related accidents.) First aid supplies (including aspirin, bandages, antiseptics, and other preparations) are available within your work area. In the case of an illness which requires a doctor's attention, one (1) of three (3) courses of action will be taken:

1. The employee will be taken to his/her own doctor.
2. If the employee has no preference of doctor, the employee will be taken to an emergency medical center.
3. If the ill employee cannot be moved, the emergency paramedics will be called.
4. Based on the length and circumstances of the illness, at management's discretion, the employee may be required to produce a physician's written release prior to permitting the employee to return to work.

DRUG AND SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

DPS is committed to a drug-free environment which provides for the delivery of quality services to school district members. To achieve this, the DPS maintains a strict policy prohibiting the use of drugs, alcohol, and other illegal substances. This policy applies to all employees.

No DPS employee may be under the influence, use, possess, store, transfer, distribute, sell or purchase drugs, alcohol, or any illegal substance while:

1. on District property, or
2. engaging in the performance of duties, or

3. participating in any DPS social activity, including DPS sponsored employee events, or
4. while operating or being present in a vehicle that is owned or leased by DPS.

This policy does not apply to employees who are under the direct care of a physician for prescribed drugs or medication. However, employees are encouraged to inform their supervisors if the use of a prescribed medication might cause side effects which might impair their ability to perform.

For the purpose of this policy, illegal drugs are those which are prohibited or restricted by law and an employee engages in improper use regardless of whether such conduct constitutes an illegal act or whether the employee is criminally prosecuted or convicted.

Additionally, no employee may report to work, or remain on duty, while under the influence of or impaired by, any illegal drug or alcohol. DPS reserves the right to test an employee for alcohol or drug use when there is reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Refusal to cooperate in such testing is grounds for termination.

Employees who do not comply with this policy are subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

SMOKING

Smoking, chewing, or other use of tobacco products by employees is prohibited in all School District buildings, at all school sponsored activities, and in all school vehicles.

COMPENSATION

WORK HOURS

In compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), DPS employees are classified either as Exempt or Non-Exempt. Questions on FLSA status should be directed to Human Resources.

The standard work week is 40 hours, five days a week, with a 30-minute or one (1) hour daily lunch period provided. The District workweek is defined as beginning at 12:01 each Monday and ending at midnight on Sunday. These hours may vary according to your department, Union/Association Agreement, or involvement in special work schedules.

Hourly (Non-exempt) Employees: If you are in a non-exempt position (eligible for overtime), you will receive overtime compensation at a rate of one and one-half (1-1/2) times the regular rate of pay for all actual hours worked over 40 hours (or as established by a Union/Association Agreement) in a workweek. (A workweek is a period of 168 hours during 7 consecutive 24-hour periods; it may begin on any day of the week and any hour of the day established by the employer.)

- * *Overtime work is not optional. When directed, an employee is required to work overtime.*
- * *All overtime hours must be approved in advance by your immediate supervisor.*
- * *Compensatory time is not provided to any DPS employee.*
- * *Employees working overtime without authorization are subject to disciplinary action.*
- * *Scheduling of overtime: The FLSA does not limit the number of hours in a day or days in a week an employee may be required or scheduled to work if the employee is at least 16 years of age.*

Time NOT Considered for Overtime Pay

The following practices are NOT counted for overtime pay consideration: vacations, holidays, sick leave, personal leave, lunch or break periods, or severance pay, *unless specifically authorized by Union/Association Agreement.*

Salaried (Exempt) Employees: Generally, salaried positions are not eligible for overtime because they are considered as exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These positions meet one (1) of the following three (3) briefly defined exemptions:

Executive Exemption - Position involves management of a DPS enterprise, department, or division and supervises two (2) or more employees.

Administrative Exemption - Position involves non-routine/non-manual work directly related to DPS management policies or general business operations.

Professional Exemption - Position involves work requiring knowledge of an advanced field of learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction and study (such as a Bachelor's degree or equivalent).

PAY INCREASES

Employees may be eligible for pay increases during a school year. Generally, across-the-board increases are granted to all employees on September 1 of each year. These increases are contingent on funds availability, market considerations, contract negotiations, and Board of Education approval.

Salary step adjustments, if warranted, are generally made effective January 1. Employees must have been employed by the District prior to October 1 to be eligible. However, some pay schedules contain "fast track" provisions, which provide for six-month step increases.

PAYDAYS

For most DPS employees, paydays are monthly and occur the last scheduled workday of each month. Some positions are paid twice per month. Please review the Yearly Paydays Schedule for a listing of all paydays, pay periods, and related payroll processing activities for your particular work year or position. Paycheck advances are NOT provided.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

In order to expediently and efficiently process payroll, your paycheck can be directly deposited to a designated financial institution of your choice. You will receive a pay stub verifying the deposit.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Required: Taxes (State of Colorado and Federal) and Pension, Medicare (if started after 1986), City of Denver (Head) Tax.

Voluntary: Union/Association Dues, Flexible Spending Accounts (Medical, Dependent Care), Hospital-Medical Coverage, Additional Life Insurance, Tax Shelter Annuities, Teachers' Club Insurance, United Way, Savings Bonds.

MILEAGE

DPS will reimburse employees for using their personal vehicles for official school district business at the current IRS allowable rate.

LONGEVITY

Some employee groups are entitled to longevity pay. This pay is generally awarded at the 15th year of service and each five-year service increment, thereafter.

BENEFITS

We recognize the importance of health care for you and your family. The DPS sponsored health program offers two plans from which you may choose. *Your coverage for benefits begins on the first day of the month, following your start date, as long as the appropriate forms have been completed. Information regarding health care and other benefits is contained on handouts. These handouts are available from the Employee Benefits Department.* **Note: Payroll deductions for payment of benefit premiums may begin as early as one month after hire and pays for coverage for one month in advance.**

MEDICAL CARE COVERAGE

The District currently offers Kaiser and PacifiCare as medical care options. Currently the District pays the full employee premium for the Kaiser and PacifiCare HMO plans and the employee pays for the family premium, if selected. If the PacifiCare Plus plan is selected, the employee pays a small portion of the employee-only cost, as well as the family premium.

NOTE:

**DENTAL AND VISION COVERAGE ARE “PACKAGED” TOGETHER.
YOU CANNOT SELECT ONLY DENTAL OR ONLY VISION.
YOU MUST SELECT BOTH DENTAL AND VISION COVERAGE, OR NEITHER.**

DENTAL PLAN

Two dental programs are provided, Delta Dental and Colorado Prepaid.

You select a dentist from a list of participating dentists who are providing dental services through the Delta Dental Plan (DDP). This is generally the most frequently utilized preventive and restorative service with fees substantially below an individual dentist's usual and customary fees. If you select Delta Dental, you must pay the difference between non-network provider fees and Delta's allowable rates. For Colorado Prepaid, NO benefits are provided if you use non-network providers.

The District pays the premium for the employee-only coverage for either the Delta Dental or Colorado Prepaid plans.

VISION PLAN

One vision program is provided through Vision Service Plan (VSP). The District pays the premium for the employee-only coverage.

GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

Your coverage is currently two times (2x) your annual salary. You also have the option of purchasing additional voluntary group life insurance for yourself and/or your immediate family.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

All employees are covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance for injuries incurred on-the-job. DPS's designated provider is HealthONE Occupational Medicine and Rehabilitation.

An informational pamphlet is available, which explains the provisions of the workers' compensation program. Please make yourself familiar with the contents of the pamphlet. When the need arises to use medical services, you may not wish to spend additional time determining the procedure.

Some key provisions of the workers' compensation procedures are:

- When you have a work-related illness or injury, report it to your supervisor immediately.
- Your supervisor will give you an "Authorization for Treatment" Form and will call ahead to the HealthONE Occupational Medicine and Rehabilitation Center to alert them of your arrival.
- In a life or limb-threatening situation, you can go, or be transported to, the nearest health facility for treatment.
- Prescriptions for on-the-job injuries can be filled at your nearest King Soopers Pharmacy.

MEDICAL LEAVE

If you will be using five (5) or more consecutive days of sick leave time, you must notify the Employee Health Services Department. You will need to complete a Health Leave of Absence Form and a Request for Health Leave Action Form. Medical verification of your condition must be provided to the Health Services Department in the case of a Family Medical Leave (FMLA) or Disability Leave. The Employee Health Services Department will provide you with a FMLA Certification of Health Care Provider Form for your medical condition for the care of your family member, for care of your child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care.

You can elect to use all or none of your personal sick days when caring for a newborn child, or caring for a child placed for adoption or foster care. The Employee Health Services Department will discuss your medical options with you.

LONG-TERM DISABILITY

Long-term disability is disability coverage provided by Denver Public Schools at no cost to DPS employees to receive a partial income replacement in the event of a disability. All full-time contract employees are eligible for this coverage after 90 days of employment with Denver Public Schools. If you are disabled, you may be eligible to receive 60% of your monthly salary up to a maximum monthly benefit of \$5,000. You would be eligible to receive this partial income replacement after 180 days of total disability.

COBRA

The purpose of COBRA (the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reduction Act) is to allow employees and dependents to elect to continue group health, dental, and vision coverage (generally for an 18 to 36 month period) at group rates, plus a 2% administrative charge, when they otherwise would have lost coverage (as a result of a voluntary employee termination, divorce, death, or other changes in benefit status).

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Unemployment Compensation is provided in the event of loss of employment. In compliance with Colorado law, DPS pays the full cost of this benefit. However, the DPS will contest payment of unemployment benefits to employees who have been terminated.

RETIREMENT

DPS offers a traditional defined benefit retirement plan for employees through the Denver Public Schools Retirement System (DPSRS). Employees are required to contribute 8% of their salary to the pension fund. Employees become vested after five (5) years of service.

SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE

Full-time employees contributing to the Denver Public Schools Retirement Plan are not required to contribute to social security. However, all employees hired after 1986 are required to contribute to Medicare (1.45% of salary).

UNION/ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Some employees are eligible to become members of unions/associations. Informational material is made available by each of these groups.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

The District offers a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all employees. Employees are eligible for up to three (3) visits per issue with EAP. These visits may be for any number of reasons, including marital and personal problems, work-related issues, or other issues which are affecting an employee. EAP may refer employees to other counseling resources if the issue cannot be resolved in three (3) visits. The cost of this program is paid for by the District. Contact Employee Benefits for further information.

VACATION

Paid vacation days are provided to full-time employees. Generally with less than 15 years service, classified employees receive 15 paid vacation days per year. However, there are exceptions per various Union/Association Agreements. The Payroll Department credits vacation accrual on September 1 of each year. These days are available immediately. However, their use is intended for the following calendar year. If days are used ahead of schedule and the employee leaves, payment for those days will be subtracted from the last paycheck.

HOLIDAYS

Each year the Board of Education publishes the School Calendar. The calendar identifies holidays for the school year. Each year's holidays are published on a separate handout. Specific holidays are also noted in Union/Association Agreements.

SICK LEAVE

Depending on their work year, full-time employees earn ten (10) or twelve (12) days of sick leave per year. Some employees are eligible to participate in a sick leave bank.

PERSONAL DAYS

Generally all employees are credited with two (2) personal days per year. A Union/Association Agreement may provide for more days. In some employee groups, personal days, if not used, may be converted to sick leave days.

EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

Employees are responsible for reporting the following items or circumstances to the individual or office named. Union/Association Agreements and/or department policies may have additional and/or different requirements.

1. Change of telephone number, address, or name (Human Resources).
2. Change of dependency (exemptions) for tax/pay purposes (Payroll Office)
3. Discrepancies in pay (over or underpayment) (Payroll Office)
4. Change of beneficiaries named in a life insurance policy (Employee Benefits Office)
5. Change of beneficiaries named in retirement plan (Retirement Office)
6. Anticipated absences (Supervisor or designee)
7. Unable to report to work due to illness or accident (Supervisor or designee)
8. Accidents, injuries, or illness related to work (Supervisor)

JOB ABANDONMENT

Any classified employee who does not contact his/her supervisor and remains absent from his/her duties for several (exact number depends on Board Policy or Union/Association Agreement) consecutive days (i.e., *NO CALL, NO SHOW*), shall be deemed to have involuntarily resigned from the District as of the last day on which he or she worked. The resignation document will be mailed to the address of the record of the employee.

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

Unauthorized solicitations of employees by print (handbills, notices, etc.), telecommunications (fax, telephone, modem, etc.), or through other media on DPS premises (including official off-site activities) is prohibited. This prohibition applies both to employees and to non-employees. .

GIFTS

Employees shall not offer or accept money, gifts, or gratuities from individuals and firms in consideration of obtaining an appointment, promotion, or privilege that might reasonably tend to influence the discharge of their duties. If you have questions about any gifts, please ask your supervisor or the Department of Human Resources.

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

In the event of early morning adverse weather conditions, please contact your supervisor to verify whether DPS will be open, listen for official announcements through the major Denver television stations, or to KOA or KHOW radio stations.

Again, welcome to the Denver Public Schools.
If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the contents of the employee handbook, please contact:

Human Resources
Denver Public Schools
900 Grant Street
Denver, Colorado 80203

(303) 764-3543
or FAX (303) 764-3253

USEFUL CONTACTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>
DPS Main Switchboard	764-3200
DPS Employee's Credit Union 3700 E. Alameda Ave., Denver 80209	321-4209
Employee Benefits:	
<i>Mary Acuna, Secretary</i>	764-3371
<i>Dee Taylor, Health Insurance</i>	764-3373
<i>Flora Osenda, Life, Dental and Vision</i>	764-3374
Employee Health Services:	
<i>Genny Zutis</i>	764-3915
Human Resources:	
<i>Linda Teachout, Executive Secretary</i>	764-3271
<i>Jan Landry, Employment Manager</i>	764-3473
<i>Christina Blair, Labor Relations</i>	764-3308
<i>Pam Amador, Full-time employees</i>	764-3274
<i>Michelle Snyder, Part-time/Hourly employees</i>	764-3273
<i>Laura Kaplan, Paraprofessionals</i>	764-3302
<i>Thelma Tinsley, Paraprofessionals</i>	764-3268
<i>Jean Mahoney, Classified Office</i>	764-3265
<i>Trip Reynolds, Classification/Compensation</i>	764-3543
Job Information Line	764-3263
Payroll	764-3450
Retirement Office	813-4651
Security:	
<i>Administration Bldg Security Desk</i>	764-3207
<i>24-hour DPS Emergency Number</i>	764-3911
Technology Hotline	764-3888
<i>TTY/TDD</i>	764-3741
Welcome Center	764-3970
Workers' Compensation	764-3281
DPS Website:	www.denver.k12.co.us/