

the **R**esource

People are the greatest asset of Lincoln Public Schools. The mission of Human Resources is to facilitate the selection, support and development of all employees so that each student receives the maximum opportunity for growth.

Human Resources Lincoln Public Schools Lincoln, NE Issue 2004-003 October 18, 2004

Human Resources Policies & Regulations

In August the Board of Education adopted a total revision and update of the Human Resources policies. All administrators and supervisors should familiarize themselves with the new version of the policies that govern our work with employees. For the next few months Human Resources staff will highlight some of the policies in The Resource. Please share the information with the staff you supervise. To view the current policies click on the following link or cut and paste it into your browser address bar (<http://www.lps.org/about/policies/default.html>).

Nancy Biggs

Drug and Alcohol Policies

The first policy to be highlighted is Policy 4900, Drug Free Schools, as well as Regulations 4900.1 and 4900.2. Much of the language included in this policy and the two supporting regulations is a result of state and federal legislation. Regulation 4900.1 specifies that the use, possession, or being under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol is prohibited in the work place. It is a violation of district expectations if the employee commits a criminal drug or alcohol offense off the work place or during off duty time. In addition, employees must notify Human Resources of any criminal drug conviction no later than five days after the conviction. Disciplinary sanctions, including termination, may be imposed for employees who violate this policy and these regulations.

Regulation 4900.2 addresses when alcohol and drug testing may take place. Those employees whose position requires a commercial driver's license (CDL) will be tested as dictated by law. Employees who test positive for drugs or alcohol shall be immediately removed from the safety-sensitive positions and will be terminated.

Administrators must take any suspicion of consumption of, or impairment by, drugs and/or alcohol seriously and notify Human Resources immediately to develop an action plan. The allegation must be investigated by the administrator or supervisor immediately, gathering documentation from any persons who may have had contact with the employee. An employee appearing to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol should never be allowed to continue to work. Every effort should be made to discourage the employee from driving. Any employment actions will be determined by Human Resources upon review of all relevant documentation.



As is always true, our goal is to provide role models who positively influence the development of our students.

Please direct questions regarding this topic to Marla Styles (mstyles@lps.org / 436-1579).

Can You Speak Your Mind at Work... About Politics?

In the work place we're always communicating. We send messages, we receive them, we interpret what's said, and we respond to the messages we see and hear. We also have policies and expectations regarding appropriate communication between and among employees at work.

We know that we can generally "speak our minds" at work. However, we also know there are limits... no right is absolute! Reasonable limits are imposed to avoid discrimination or harassment, and to ensure that everyone's right to speak freely is respected and ensured. The policies are typically clear, and employees generally know what acceptable conversation in the workplace is. But, some areas present interesting challenges. For example: Are partisan political conversations allowed in the workplace? A couple of Lincoln Public Schools policies are helpful in answering the question.

Key national, state and local issues are the topic of vigorous discussion and activity leading to the upcoming elections. Obviously, individuals, including LPS employees, have and may want to share their opinions with others on these important public matters. Debate, discussion and dialogue being the reality of an educational workplace, it is important to offer some guidance regarding political conversations and activities in the workplace at LPS.

First, LPS Board of Education Policy 4762 states that "All school personnel shall enjoy the rights and privileges of any citizen in political matters." However, the policy imposes some reasonable restrictions on "political activity" by employees of the District. In these regards, any LPS employee must receive prior approval from the Board of Education to engage in political activity which may interfere with the normal work requirements. So, occasional conversations or activity involving "politics" that do not interfere with normal work requirements are probably allowable. If they interfere with work requirements and do not have Board approval, they are not allowable.

The second bit of guidance comes from the Federal Election Commission (FEC). That Commission has established rules regarding political activity that all entities, public and private, must follow. For example, employees generally cannot use company resources (e.g., time, machines, supplies, telephones, and staff) to advance or support partisan

political activities. The general principle public entities are expected to follow in these regards is, "Public resources for public purposes." The use of public resources for private and/or political purposes is probably a violation of FEC rules and would not be allowed by LPS.

Last, but not least, we can garner guidance for political conversations in the workplace from the LPS policy on "civility." The Board of Education Policy 4750 states in part that "all employees shall behave with civility, fairness and respect in dealing with fellow employees, students, parents, patrons, and anyone else having business with the District." The policy further defines "uncivil behaviors" as any that are physically or verbally threatening, either overtly or implicitly, as well as behaviors that are coercive, intimidating, violent or harassing." So, politically-focused conversations, be they via telephone, voicemail messages, face-to-face, or in writing that are "civil" are probably allowable.

So what's the answer to the question, "Are partisan political conversations allowed in the workplace?" Well, the answer seems to be "yes," under the following conditions:

- 1) The conversation or activity must not interfere with the employee's normal work requirements, and
- 2) The conversation or activity does not violate FEC rules, and
- 3) The conversation or activity is within the "civility, respect, and fairness" provisions of the district's policy on "civility".

The spirit and function of education support educators engaging in conversations that elucidate and expand horizons. Of course, the ensuing



expectation and responsibility is that those conversations be conducted in a manner that do not violate established policies, do not run afoul of applicable laws, and do maintain an elevated level of respect, tolerance, and opportunity for diversity of opinions. In this framework, partisan political conversations are allowed, and encouraged.

Please direct questions regarding this topic to Thomas Christie (christt@lps.org / 436-1604).

The Sub-Lime Spot

Using substitutes to cover additional periods of teaching duties saves the district substantial amounts of money. Candy Johnson, the payroll secretary at Northeast High School and Brenda Roseberry, executive secretary at Goodrich Middle School kept track of class cover cost savings during the 2003-2004 school year. By using substitutes to cover additional periods at Northeast, Candy recorded a savings of \$11,762. At Goodrich, Brenda recorded a savings of \$7,805. Both confirmed that they knew other schools were also using substitutes to cover classes. To Candy, Brenda, and all of the secretaries that help us diligently monitor coverage costs, we say thank you for all the time and effort you take each day to find coverage for all of our classes.



I have also been asked to send a **special thank you to the secretaries from the substitutes** for the kindnesses extended to them every day they come to the schools. Every month at Sub Caucus/Cohort Leader Meeting, the substitutes express their appreciation for the smiles and warm greetings they receive when they arrive at schools. They indicate that the secretaries are gracious and patient about answering questions and providing information, keys, directions, and materials as well as reassurance and a pat on the back when they leave.

Administrators, Directors, and Supervisors

Just a reminder!

Please avoid scheduling in-district professional meetings for teachers on Mondays and Fridays.

Substitute Teacher Orientation and Conference Schedule for 2004-2005

October Substitute Teacher Conference – October 26, 2004 – Scott Middle School

January Substitute Teacher Conference – January 18, 2004 – Lincoln High School

March Substitute Teacher Technology Fair – March 29, 2005 – Southwest High School



Local Sub Orientations for 2004-2005

January 21, 2005 – LPSDO – Room E111

February 4, 2005 – LPSDO – Room E111

Please remind all teachers to register on SubFinder and “voice” their name, grade level or subject area and schedule on SubFinder. High school teachers need to voice their parking spot number, if so assigned.

Substitutes are to wear their picture ID's to every assignment. Pictures ID's are made every Thursday morning from 9:00 - 9:30 AM at LPSDO. Substitutes may direct questions regarding this topic to Sandy Wrobliski (swrobli@lps.org / 436-1588).

Substitute Pay for 2004-2005

Daily Rate for Full Day

Regularly certified Substitute Teacher - \$118.79
Local Substitute Teacher - \$106.91

Daily Rate for Half Day

Regularly certified Substitute Teacher - \$62.35
Local Substitute Teacher - \$56.42



Please direct questions regarding these topics to Kay Byers (kbyers@lps.org / 436-1577).

Breast Cancer Awareness

Since this October marks the 20th Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Risk Management staff would like to share the following information with you:

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, except for non-melanoma skin cancers.
- The chance of a woman developing invasive breast cancer is about 1 in 7 or 13.4%.
- It is estimated that in 2004 about 215,990 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among women in the United States.
- 3 out of 4 of all breast cancers diagnosed occur in women 50 years old or older.
- There are over 2 million women living in the US who have been diagnosed with and treated for breast cancer.
- Breast cancer also occurs in men. It is estimated that 1,450 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004.



Some of the Risk Factors that we cannot change include:

- **Gender:** Simply being a woman is the main risk factor for breast cancer.
- **Age:** 17% of all breast cancers are diagnosed in women in their 40s, 77% in women 50 or older.
- **Genetic Risk Factors:** Recent studies have shown that 5-10% of breast cancers are hereditary.
- **Family History:** Risk increases if close blood relatives have a history of breast cancer.
- **Race:** White women have a slightly higher risk, African-American women have a higher mortality rate.
- **Reproductive/Menstrual History:** Women who start menses before age 12 or start menopause after age 55 have a slightly greater risk.

Some of the Lifestyle Risk Factors include:

- **Reproduction:** Not having children or having children after 30 yrs. old slightly increases the risk.
- **Use of birth control pills(BCP):** Women who have used BCP have been found to have a slightly greater risk, women who stopped use more than 10 years ago do not appear to have an increased risk.
- **Use of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** Long term use of HRT especially after menopause, particularly use of estrogens and progesterone combined may increase the risk.
- **Breast feeding:** Has been found to lower the risk.
- **Alcohol intake:** Women who consume 2-5 drinks/day have 1 ½ times the risk.
- **Diet, weight and exercise:** Fat tissue can increase your estrogen levels, 1-2 hours of brisk walking per week can reduce your risk by 18%.
- **Smoking:** Some studies suggest that smoking might increase breast cancer risk, especially those who started smoking in adolescence.

Although many risk factors may increase our chance of developing breast cancer, it is not yet known exactly how some of these risk factors cause cells to become cancerous. A woman's hormones somehow stimulate breast cancer growth. Just how this comes about has not yet been clarified. Even though we do not know how to prevent Breast Cancer, a woman of average risk might reduce her risk somewhat by adjusting the factors that can be changed.

Good News:

- Progress in both early detection and treatment of breast cancer decreased the mortality rates during the 1990s.
- More than 90% of the breast cancers are now diagnosed at localized and regional stages, for which the five-year survival rates are 97% and 79%, respectively.

The most important action a woman can take is to follow these **Early Detection Guidelines:**

- Women 40 and older should have a breast exam by a health professional and a mammogram every year as long as they are in good health. The American Cancer Society has recently found that many women are not getting their mammograms often enough to avoid advanced cancer.
- Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam by a health professional every 3 years.
- Breast self exam is an option for women starting in their 20s.
- Women at increased risk should consult with their physicians about the benefits and limitations of starting mammograms when they are younger, having additional tests and/or more frequent exams.

We encourage all employees to consult with your physician as appropriate if you have questions/concerns about this and/or any other health issues. Please know that the Risk Management staff cares about your health and safety! Please direct questions regarding this topic to Janet Blain (jblain@lps.org / 436-1591).

Source: American Cancer Society web site - www.cancer.org

Certification Renewal

Each year more than 300 LPS teachers, administrators, nurses and other staff need to renew their certification through Teacher Certification at the Nebraska Department of Education. In late January of each year, a reminder letter and instructions for renewal go out to all staff whose certification will expire on August 31 of that year.

After several years of fine-tuning our process, we have decided to delay the reminder letter until the middle of February. The reason for this change is that Teacher Certification sends their renewal notice and application for renewal in late February. We have found that many times the Human Resources information is set aside and forgotten before the forms are received from Teacher Certification. We are hoping that this change in timing will make it even easier for our staff to quickly renew their certification well before the expiration date. As usual, we will set up two afternoons when staff can bring their renewal forms to be signed and checked by Human Resources personnel. Dates and times will be announced in the reminder letter.



Please direct questions regarding this topic to Gail Bachinski (gbachin@lps.org / 1581).

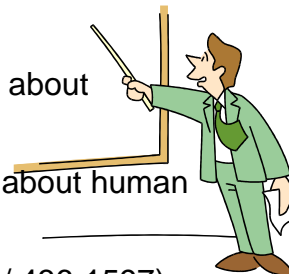
Office and Technician Staff Development

The fall Office Professional and Technician Staff Development will be held Thursday, October 28, 2004, at North Star High School. Two sessions will be offered - one in the morning starting at 7:45 a.m. and one in the afternoon starting at 12:15 p.m. Participants will need to pick the session that best fits their schedule and sign up on the Web. More information will be sent out to all office professionals and technicians. Mark your calendar now and plan to join us for a rewarding educational experience with your colleagues. Topics for the day include:

Contributing to a Culture of Respect by Kevin Mattran of Continuum (Professionalism is more than a job title or a wardrobe. It's a mindset – a way of thinking about self and others – that shapes one's approach to work and one's relationships with others.)

Health Insurance 101 by Ken Babcock (Everything you always wanted to know about the LPS health insurance program and the basis of health insurance funding.)

Human Resources Alphabet Soup by Nancy Biggs (Things you need to know about human resources legislation and actions and how they relate to you and your job.)



Please direct questions regarding this topic to Kevin Johnston (kjohnst@lps.org / 436-1597).

What Does “The District Is Self-insured” Mean?

It means the district (not an insurance company) covers the cost of the loss up to the deductible (retention). In other words the district is its own insurance company.

An insurance fund has been established for the district to operate the self-insurance program. The program saves money for the district in several ways:

1. By operating a self-insured, high deductible program and investing the money normally paid out for premiums.
2. By identifying hazards and correcting them, thus eliminating accidents and claims.
3. By having district legal counsel represent us on all claims.
4. By pursuing collection of the costs associated with losses caused by a third party.



Currently our deductibles (self-insurance) limits per incident are:

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Property and Liability | \$150,000 |
| Workers' Compensation | \$500,000 |
| School Board Legal | \$150,000 |

Sub Clerical Reminder

When utilizing a substitute for a clerical person, please include your own account number for payment. The account number formerly provided by Human Resources is only for Human Resources use.

Forms for Non-LPS Employees Driving on Field Trips

Just for clarification, the forms that parents, volunteers, etc., complete related to driving their personal vehicle on field trips should be retained in your building until the end of the school year. Do not forward the forms to Risk Management.

Please direct questions regarding these topics to Sue Wright (wrights@lps.org / 436-1759).

Agreements Reached With All Employee Groups

On September 28th, the Board of Education approved the agreement with the nutrition services workers concerning the wages and working conditions for the 2004-05 and 2005-06 school years. This was the last of the nine groups to reach agreement with the district.

Information was emailed earlier to administrators concerning the agreements for teachers and administrators. The highlights of the classified agreement changes are:



1. All classified agreements call for 2.5% package increases for 2004-05 and 3.5% package increases for 2005-06. These are the same package increases received by the certificated staff.
2. Leave donation requests due to catastrophic illnesses are now limited to 30 days per year.
3. Changes were made to the leave that is to be used for school cancellation days (generally snow days). Paraeducators, transportation employees, and some technicians, who have no work to go to and who are not given the opportunity to make up the day, will be able to use a maximum of two sick leave days after the exhaustion of their emergency leave and special leave.

Nutrition services employees will be paid for the first school cancellation day. After that day, further school cancellations days will require them to use any available emergency leave and special leave. As part of this change, the nutrition services workers' sick day allowance decreases from ten days per year to nine days per year.

An email will be sent to all administrators at a later date outlining the school cancellation rules for all employee groups.

The salary schedules have all been updated within the Human Resources section of the LPS web site. We are in the process of updating all of the agreements on the site.

Also on the site is the schedule of salaries for the substitute and miscellaneous employees, which includes the salaries of employees such as substitute teachers and substitute office professionals, as well as employees performing additional duties such as ticket taking and operating the concession stand. Please refer to this schedule prior to discussing salaries with prospective employees.

Please direct questions regarding this topic to Ken Babcock (kbabcock@lps.org / 436-1571).

Be Cautious With Signatures

For centuries, personal signatures have been used to indicate acceptance of important agreements. When you purchase a home, you sign your name countless times on various forms. Even renting a car requires multiple signatures. The signature acknowledges that you have read and you agree to the terms of a document. Thus, you must be very careful prior to signing or requiring a signature in your work for LPS.

Policy 3140 authorizes the Associate Superintendent for Business Affairs to sign the documents necessary for the district's business activities. Thus, other supervisors should not be signing business contracts, rental agreements, and other documents committing the district to expend funds. The Purchasing Department will assist you in completing the proper paperwork and securing the needed signatures for contracts, leases, rental agreements, etc. Please direct questions regarding this area to Dwayne Odvody (dodvody@lps.org or 436-1753).

Occasionally, principals will be asked to sign a document stating that a teacher has taught for a certain period of time and thus is eligible for a college loan cancellation, deferment or postponement. Please do not sign these documents. Forward the paperwork to Human Resources for processing.

Supervisors are sometimes asked to sign work release requests. This document outlines the conditions necessary for an employee to be released from jail on a daily basis to work for us. Once again, do not sign the documents. Please call Human Resources and forward the paperwork to the appropriate human resources supervisor.

We should also be very careful about asking employees to sign documents. For example, a principal may want a teacher to do some work for the district during the summer and ask the teacher to sign a form which outlines the summer duties and pay. Such a form could be problematic for it may inadvertently grant additional contractual rights to the employee. Thus, prior to presenting such a form to an employee, please send it to Human Resources for review and discussion.

In your professional duties, as in your personal life, you should think carefully prior to signing or requiring someone to sign a document. Through contacting the appropriate district office, you will avoid inappropriately obligating the district to an agreement.

Please direct questions regarding this topic to Ken Babcock (kbabcock@lps.org / 436-1571).