



**Providence School Department  
Employee Manual**

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## **1. WELCOME**

### **1.1 History, Mission & Strategic Goals**

#### **Who We Are**

As the largest school district in the state, the Providence Public School District (PPSD) serves approximately 24,000 students and their families among 42 schools. Throughout the District each day, PPSD educators, administrators, and staff are dedicated to our students and supporting their paths to success.

As the largest municipal department within the City of Providence, accounting for approximately half of the City's operating budget, PPSD employs more than 3,500 individuals who support our many schools, including 23 elementary schools, seven middle schools, ten high schools and two public charter schools. Approximately 2,000 PPSD employees are educators, and more than 600 others directly support students in our schools. Additional staff members support students through a variety of roles, such as bus monitors and crossing guards, as well as central office administrators and staff who oversee PPSD functions, including facilities and operations, human resources, academics, finance and purchasing, and information technology.

#### **Who We Serve**

PPSD has experienced relatively stable enrollment in recent years. Our schools are diverse learning communities—approximately 65% of our students are Hispanic, 17% Black, 9% White, 5% Asian, 3% Multi-racial, and 1% Native American. PPSD also serves a high concentration of students with special needs. Approximately 19% of students are English Language Learners (ELLs) and about 16% of students receive special education services. Nearly 60% of students come from homes where English is not the primary language spoken. Combined, students and their families speak 31 different languages and hail from 52 countries of origin. Approximately 88% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Real progress is being made in our schools on a number of important student success indicators.

#### **Goals**

In joining our team, you have become part of a dedicated workforce whose primary goal is to prepare all PPSD children to graduate from Providence schools ready for college and careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our work is challenging, but brings significant rewards. The goal of this employee manual is to ensure that job conditions permit you to do your best work, and to enable others to do the same in the service of our students, their families, and our schools' faculty and staff.

The PPSD employee handbook (the "Handbook") has been developed to provide general guidelines about PPSD policies and procedures for employees. It is a guide to assist you in becoming familiar with some of the privileges and obligations of your employment. None of the policies or guidelines in the Handbook is intended to give rise to contractual rights or obligations, or to be construed as a guarantee of employment for any specific period of time, or any specific type of work. Additionally, these guidelines are subject to modification, amendment, or revocation by PPSD at any time, without advance notice.

PPSD will provide each individual a copy of this Handbook upon employment. All employees are expected to abide by it. The highest standards of personal and professional ethics and behavior are expected of all PPSD employees. Further, PPSD expects each employee to display good judgment, diplomacy, and courtesy in their professional relationships with all PPSD stakeholders, including the general public.

## **1.2 Scope of Handbook**

The rules contained in this handbook apply to all employees of the Providence School Department except where expressly addressed in labor agreements negotiated between the City of Providence/Providence School Department and the Providence Teacher's Union (AFT Local 958), Rhode Island Laborer's District Council (AFL-CIO Local 1033), and Rhode Island Council 94 (AFSCME Local 1339) on behalf of respective members.

Where compensation, benefits, and working conditions identified in this handbook exceed those identified in said labor agreements, the provisions in this handbook are not applicable, and not in addition to those identified in the respective labor agreements. For any situation not explicitly described in this handbook, the prevailing policy shall be that of the City of Providence.

The information provided in this document is accurate at the time of publication. It may occur that the school board policies and internal district procedures contained within are revised. Please note that the most recent school board policy will prevail.

## **2. EMPLOYMENT LAWS AND PROTECTIONS**

### **2.1 Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination**

The District, including its officers and employees, does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, color, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. This non-discrimination policy [Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#) governs all aspects of employment, including recruitment, selection, job assignment, advancement, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits.

The District complies with employment discrimination laws, including the Rhode Island Fair Employment Practices Act (Rhode Island General Law § 28-5); Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; Title 1 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and Title 34 CFR. § 104.01, et. seq.

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination for any protected group should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity and Recruitment Officer, Raymond Lambert ([raymond.lambert@ppsd.org](mailto:raymond.lambert@ppsd.org); 401-456-9100 ext. 11187), who is responsible for the coordination of activities and grievances as they relate to compliance with equal employment opportunities. All correspondence should be sent to:

Providence Public School District  
Raymond Lambert, EEO & Recruitment Officer  
[Raymond.lambert@ppsd.org](mailto:Raymond.lambert@ppsd.org) 401-456-9100 x 11187  
Human Resources Office  
797 Westminster Street  
Providence, RI 02093

Please refer to the District's [Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#) for more details.

## **2.2. Accommodations/Disability Non-Discrimination**

In accordance with state and federal laws, PPSD does not discriminate on the basis of disability with regard to access to educational services, treatment, or employment in its programs and activities. It is the policy of PPSD to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified persons with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment with PPSD, unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Reasonable accommodations shall be provided in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Applicants and employees seeking reasonable accommodation, or who wish to file a complaint alleging discrimination based on disability, should contact Raymond Lambert at 401-456-9100 X11187. All correspondence should be sent to:

Providence Public School District  
Raymond Lambert, EEO & Recruitment Officer  
Human Resources Office  
[Raymond.lambert@ppsd.org](mailto:Raymond.lambert@ppsd.org)  
797 Westminster Street  
Providence, RI 02093

## **2.3 Harassment and Bullying Free Workplace**

PPSD is committed to safeguarding the right of all members of the District community to an educational and work environment that is free from all forms of harassment. Harassment in the workplace on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity is not tolerated and is against the law. The workplace includes District property and school buses, and all District-sponsored events, including those that take place at locations outside the District.

Additionally, to protect the rights of all individuals to engage in teaching and learning, bullying and/or harassment of/by any student, teacher, administrator, staff member, parent, or community partner participating in any sanctioned school activity is prohibited.

Please refer to the [Students and Staff Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) for more information.

## **2.4 Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace**

The District is committed to the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse in the workplace. PPSD, in accordance with the District's Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace policy, prohibits the possession, use, and distribution of illegal drugs in the workplace. The only exceptions to this policy are those specified by RIGL § 21-28.6, known and cited as The Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act.

In addition, any employee who is found guilty, or pleads guilty or *nolo contendere* for violation of any federal or state criminal drug statute is required to inform the District within five (5) days.

Employees who violate the Drug-Free Workplace Policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

The District encourages any employee with an alcohol or drug abuse problem to seek assistance from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The District's EAP provider is Coastline EAP; live Coastline counselors can be reached 24 hours per day, 7 days per week at 800-445-1195 or 401-732-9444.

For further information and details, see the [Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy](#).

## **2.5 Smoke- and Tobacco-Free Workplace**

In accordance with Rhode Island General Law § 23-20.9 and § 23-20.10, PPSD prohibits smoking and tobacco use on all PPSD premises. This prohibition applies to all tobacco, electronic cigarettes, candles, or any other items that smolder or have open flames. Smoking and tobacco use are prohibited:

- Inside any PPSD owned/leased building.
- Inside any PPSD owned/leased indoor workplace.
- In any outdoor areas, including grounds and fields.
- Inside any PPSD owned/leased parking garage or parking lot.
- Inside any PPSD owned/leased vehicles, or vehicles used for District purposes.
- Within 25 feet of any District property.

The prohibition applies to all PPSD employees, contractors, consultants, and visitors. Smoking is permitted only where allowed by relevant state law. Please refer to the [Tobacco-Free Policy](#).

## **2.6 Healthy & Safe Workplace**

### **Physical Safety**

The District is committed to providing safe and healthful working conditions in all offices and facilities. Employees should immediately report any suspected unsafe conditions to their direct supervisor.

### **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, razors, clubs, or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the District's weapons policy should report it to the building principal or their direct supervisor and call the Providence Police Department.

### **Bloodborne Pathogens**

The District has adopted several policies that address hygiene precautions and procedures with situations where there is the possibility of exposure to blood or other body fluids. These procedures state that, except in life-saving situations, all employees shall wear rubber gloves when treating open cuts, scrapes, or spills of blood or other bodily fluids. A supply of gloves is maintained in the nurse's office in every building. School staff receive an orientation during opening of schools by school nurses, with information including procedures for health and safety related to blood-borne pathogens. Each staff member signs their name on a document stating they have received the information.

## **2.7 Work-Related Injury**

Employees should immediately report all work-related injuries to the attention of Worker's Compensation—Office of Human Resources.

## **2.8 Workplace Gender Transitions**

PPSD is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning and working environment for all students and employees, free from discrimination, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

PPSD has protocols in place for employees who express that they wish to transition from one gender to another in the workplace, for their immediate supervisors and colleagues, and for the District's administrative support staff.

Please refer to the [Workplace Gender Transitions Policy](#) for more information.

## **2.9 Violence-Free Workplace**

All employees, volunteers, partners, visitors, vendors, and business associates at PPSD should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees will refrain from fighting, “road rage,” “horseplay” or other conduct that may be dangerous to others. Conduct that threatens, intimidates or coerces another employee, volunteer, partner, visitor, customer, vendor or business associate will not be tolerated. PPSD resources may not be used to threaten, stalk or harass anyone at or outside the workplace. PPSD treats threats coming from an abusive personal relationship as it does other forms of violence.

Indirect or direct threats or other expressions of violence, any overtures of violence, incidents of actual violence and suspicious activities are strictly prohibited, and shall be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor, the Providence Police Department, security personnel, human resources (HR), or any member of management. When so reporting, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. Employees should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident.

Employees shall promptly inform the HR department of any protective or restraining order that they have obtained that lists the workplace as a protected area. Employees are encouraged to report safety concerns with regard to intimate partner violence. PPSD will not retaliate against employees making good-faith reports. PPSD is committed to supporting victims of intimate partner violence by providing referrals to the employee assistance program and community resources and providing time off for reasons related to intimate partner violence.

## **3. EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

### **3.1 Definition of Employee**

The term “employee(s)” as used in this document refers all employees appointed by the school board, including those covered by an individual employment contract and collective bargaining agreements.

#### **3.1.1 Exempt**

The Fair Labor Standards Act defines exempt employees as those who are paid on a salary basis.

#### **3.1.2 Non-Exempt**

PPSD complies with all requirements of The Fair Labor Standards Act. The Act entitles non-exempt employees to overtime pay for any work performed in excess of forty (40) hours per week. Employees are only exempt if they qualify as Executive, Administrative, or Professional employees as provided for in Section 13(a)(1) of the Act. The provisions of the Act can be found at: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa>.

Overtime for all non-exempt employees must be approved in advance by a supervisor, before it can be worked or paid, in accordance with departmental procedures of the specific department.

#### **3.1 Probationary Periods**

Newly-hired employees are considered probationary employees for a period of six (6) months, or as provided for in their respective collective bargaining agreement. Employees may be dismissed prior to the conclusion of the probationary period without recourse.

### **3.2 Background Checks and Employment References**

PPSD verifies the background and employment references of all final candidates for positions. A national and state criminal background check is required as a condition of employment as per RIGL § 16-2-18.1. The requirement also extends to consultants and contractors. Any findings of falsification of

records may be grounds for withdrawal of a job offer or termination of employment.

All degrees and credits used to satisfy qualification requirements must be from institutions of higher education accredited by regional or national accrediting agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education.

### **3.3 Immigration Law Compliance**

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with the District within the past three years or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact Charles Ruggerio ([charles.ruggerio@ppsd.org](mailto:charles.ruggerio@ppsd.org); 401-456-9100 ext. 11179), the Deputy City Solicitor. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

### **3.4. Prior Consecutive Service**

Prior consecutive service may be applied in accordance with employees' respective collective bargaining agreement, or the applicable rules pertaining to non-union employees.

### **3.5 Evaluation**

The job performance of each employee will be evaluated annually by his/her supervisor, or as provided for under the employee's collective bargaining agreement, contract, or state law.

### **3.6 Personnel Records Maintenance and Access**

PPSD maintains a personnel file for each employee. Personnel matters are confidential. Employees have a specific right to privacy in the maintenance and use of information contained in the personnel file. The personnel file includes, but is not limited to, such information as the employee's job application, resume, credentials (including licensure), letters of recommendation, copies of correspondence between the District and the employee, performance evaluations and disciplinary actions, records of professional development, benefits, time/attendance records, salary change information, and payroll documents.

Personnel files are the property of PPSD, and access to the information they contain is restricted to the employee and appropriate District employees. Only Human Resources staff who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file have access to the files. Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Office of Human Resources in writing to request a review. Prior to responding to a public records request for a personnel file, the District will inform the employee of such request.

#### **3.6.1 Personnel Record Alterations**

Current employee information is essential to maintain accurate payroll, benefits, and other personnel records. Employees are required and expected to inform the Office of Human Resources in the event of *any* changes in name, address, telephone, family or marital status, beneficiaries, or certification information. Addition of dependents to benefit plans may require documentation in the form of social security cards, birth certificates, or a marriage license. Any changes in your tax status, whether through a change in the number of dependents or for other reasons, should be reported in writing to the Payroll Department.

## **4. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS**

### **4.1 Professional Workplace**

District employees are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a professional and reliable manner. Types of conduct considered unacceptable include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Violation of School Board policy
- Failure to adhere to District guidelines or regulations
- Divulging confidential information
- An act or acts of personal dishonesty committed by the employee at the expense of PPSD
- Refusal or intentional failure on the part of an employee to obey or carry out reasonable directives, which are consistent with the mission and values of PPSD, from the employee's supervisor
- Willful falsification of any record, report, or District document (See Section 4.3)
- Being at work under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance (See Section 2.4)
- The possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs during work hours or on school premises (See Section 2.4)
- Sexual or other forms of harassment (See Section 2.3)
- Violence, fighting, or threats
- Inappropriate social media postings (see Section 4.10.1)
- Using or borrowing District property, including cars, equipment, tools, and supplies, without authorization
- Intentionally damaging the property of others, including PPSD property
- A felony conviction

Employees whose conduct violates these provisions are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Other possible disciplinary actions include oral warnings, written warnings, and suspensions.

The District will employ a progressive disciplinary process, based on the severity of the circumstances, in the handling of employee behavioral issues.

### **4.2 Code of Professional Conduct**

In accordance with RIGL § 36-14-1, public employees, including all employees of PPSD, "must adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, respect the public trust and the rights of all persons, be open, accountable, responsive, avoid the appearance of impropriety, and not use their position for private gain or advantage."

Employees must conduct themselves professionally and appropriately both in the workplace and outside the workplace. Conduct outside the workplace must not interfere with an employee's ability to perform the duties of his/her job, or damage the reputation of PPSD or its ability to fulfill its mission.

Additionally, the [Providence Code of Ethics](#) and the [Rhode Island Code of Ethics in Government](#) establish the statutory and regulatory provisions related to the ethical conduct of elected and appointed officials, and state and municipal employees. Employees are expected to familiarize themselves with both codes.

### **4.3 Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the District's financial resources.

The District prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, including, but not limited to the following:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the District
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other District assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of District money or reporting of District financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of District information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the District
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the District that are in conflict with Rule 4.5.2.
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the District

#### **4.4 Employee Arrests and Convictions**

An employee must notify the Human Resources office within five (5) calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, and any of the other offenses listed below, whether felony or misdemeanor:

- Crimes involving school property or funds
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude, including the following:
  - Dishonesty
  - Fraud
  - Deceit
  - Theft
  - Misrepresentation
  - Deliberate violence
  - Base, vile, or lewd acts
  - Drug- or alcohol-related offenses
  - Acts constituting child abuse or neglect

#### **4.5 Ethics**

All employees shall adhere to the District's rules and regulations and carry out the policies of the District with good will. Staff shall not use paid time to promote personal gain or self-interest. Employees are expected to remain objective in their presentation and discussion of subject matter. Employees shall also be guided by the Providence School Board policy on Staff Ethics, Fraternization and Nepotism, and by the [Providence Code of Ethics](#) and the [Rhode Island Code of Ethics in Government](#).

##### **4.5.1 Conflicts of Interest**

Employees must adhere to the [Providence Code of Ethics](#) and the [Rhode Island Code of Ethics in Government](#) to avoid activities that may conflict or appear to conflict with the responsibilities of their job and the interests of PPSD. Such conflicts include accepting or providing gifts, loans, or entertainment; personal investments; criminal behavior; and/or activities that interfere with the employee's ability to perform his/her job, or which compromise the reputation of PPSD.

#### **4.5.2 Gifts and Favors**

Employees must follow the [Providence Code of Ethics](#) and the [Rhode Island Code of Ethics in Government](#) regarding the acceptance of gifts. Additionally, employees may not accept gifts or favors from a vendor that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an employee that might reasonably tend to influence the discharge of their duties in the best interest of the District may result in prosecution of a Class B misdemeanor offense.

#### **4.5.3 Nepotism**

PPSD prohibits hiring preferences on the basis of friendship, familial relations, or business or financial relationships. [Staff Ethics, Fraternization and Nepotism Policy.](#)

#### **4.5.4 Fraternization**

PPSD prohibits romantic or spousal relationships between supervisors and subordinates, as such relationships may impede proper management, and could lead to various workplace conflicts. Individuals who become involved in such relationships must disclose this information to a supervisor. PPSD is not obligated to transfer employees to avert or correct a violation of this policy. [PPSD Staff Ethics, Fraternization and Nepotism Policy.](#)

#### **4.6 Outside Employment**

The City's Code of Ethics, Section 17-33 (c)(8), prohibits employees from engaging in any outside business or commercial activity during work hours.

#### **4.7 Confidentiality**

Employees of PPSD may have access to confidential, protected, or privileged information as part of their work responsibilities. It is expected that employees will protect others' rights to privacy by not releasing such information to unauthorized individuals, and by discussing such information only in a confidential setting. Student privacy rights are governed by the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

#### **4.8 Attendance**

PPSD employees are obligated to maintain satisfactory attendance, to conduct themselves professionally and appropriately at work, and to successfully perform the duties of their jobs. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

#### **4.9 Flexible Work Schedule**

Flexible work schedules may be approved by an employee's supervisor, as provided for under School Board policy. (PPSD Policy: [Flexible Work Schedule](#))

##### **4.9.1 Time Reporting**

Employees should follow the time reporting procedures at their appropriate location.

All sick and personal day absences should be entered via the AESOP system either by phone or website. Upon entrance into employment at PPSD, employees will be assigned a user name and password for the AESOP system. The deadline for submission to AESOP is one (1) hour before the start of the work day. Employees may also be required to notify their principal or supervisor via email or phone call.

#### **4.9.2 Meals and Rest Periods**

Meal and rest periods for union employees are described in their respective collective bargaining agreements. Non-union employees shall, with supervisor approval, schedule their daily meal and/or rest periods.

#### **4.10 Technology Usage**

The use of school computers, software, network resources, and/or the Internet for non-educational purposes such as for-profit activity, personal business, or illegal activity is prohibited. The use of all District computer systems and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. The District's computer systems are District property to which users are permitted access. All passwords and restricted access to District computer systems must be protected.

Users of the District's computer systems must comply with the [PPSD Internet Acceptable Use Policy](#) and accompanying regulations. Failure to comply may result in suspension of access to the District's computer systems and/or other appropriate penalties, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees should not have any expectation of privacy with respect to messages, data, or files sent, received, or stored on the District's electronic mail, voicemail, or computer systems. The District has the right to monitor any and all voicemail or electronic mail messages. They may be accessed by authorized employees and authorized individuals from outside the school or department at any time and without notice. The District will inspect the contents of computers, voicemail, or electronic mail in the course of an investigation triggered by indications of unacceptable behavior or as necessary to locate needed information that is not more readily available by some other less intrusive means.

#### **4.10.1 Use of Social Media**

Employees must adhere to the Social Media for Employees School Board policy, as well as the Social Media for Employees Regulations. [PPSD Social Media for Employees Policy](#).

#### **4.11 Copyrighted Materials**

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of federal copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (e.g., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Rented videos are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the software licensing agreement made between the vendor and the District.

#### **4.12 Solicitation / Distribution of Literature**

Except as specifically authorized by District administration, employees may not engage in soliciting, collecting, or selling for any purpose during working time. In addition, employees may not distribute literature, pamphlets, or any other documents either during working time, or at any time in work areas. Persons not employed by the District are not permitted, except at the District's invitation, to engage in solicitation, collecting, selling, or distribution of literature, pamphlets, or any other documents for any purpose including research on the District's premises.

#### **4.13 Associations and Political Activities**

Providence Public School District encourages and supports the free exchange of ideas and political viewpoints. The District and its employees are prohibited from engaging in partisan political activity or permitting District resources to be used for support of such activities during the workday or while on school property. An appearance by a candidate for or holder of public office must be for educational purposes to the school or District community at large, and must be sponsored by the school or District,

not an individual employee.

#### **4.14 Professional Demeanor, Attire and Grooming**

All District employees are expected to present a professional and positive image to students, visitors, and the public, and to adhere to a code of dress as outlined in the employee's collective bargaining agreement, if applicable. Accordingly, each employee is expected to dress and engage in personal grooming in a manner that reflects positively on the District and is respectful of others in the school and work environment, both during the work day and at after-hours work-related functions.

##### **4.14.1 Dress Code**

Supervisors may regulate dress policies specific to work assignments. Where work activities require informal attire due to the nature of the job duties, attire is to be appropriate to the situation. Supervisors may direct an employee to leave District premises until he/she is properly dressed. Supervisors must make reasonable accommodations for dress or grooming directly related to employees' religion, culture, or disabilities. Supervisors should also specify any additional or alternative requirements necessary for reasons of employee safety or public health.

The following are examples of clothing that is considered unacceptable dress for the workplace. This list is illustrative and not exclusive, and supervisors are authorized to use their discretion in determining whether an employee is dressed appropriately for the workplace.

- Torn, patched or faded clothing
- Clothing with printed messages or pictures
- Tennis and athletic shoes, beach shoes, slippers, or flip flops unless medically required as demonstrated by a doctor's statement
- Tank tops, muscle shirts, halter tops, and tube tops
- Leggings, spandex, sweat suits, warm-up suits, or other workout attire
- Shorts or mini-skirts
- Sheer clothing or clothing that is otherwise revealing or provocative
- Jeans, unless appropriate to the assignment

Employees who work in athletic-related positions (e.g., coaches or physical education teachers) may wear athletic-type clothing such as jogging suits, sweat suits, warm-up suits, and sweat shirts, provided such clothing is neat, clean, and not torn or otherwise cut.

Employees who are required to wear uniforms are to wear the complete uniform. Uniforms are to be kept neat, clean, and in good condition. Employees who are required to use or wear safety equipment are to do so in accordance with the regulations of their division.

##### **4.14.2 Grooming, Personal Hygiene, and Personal Habits**

All employees are expected to use good judgment in grooming, appearance, personal hygiene, and personal habits. Body odor, from any cause, should not create distractions.

Employees are discouraged from using or wearing perfume, cologne, hairspray, air freshener, or other scented products in the workplace in order to accommodate employees, students and visitors who may have chemical sensitivities and allergies.

Additionally, employees should minimize eating, keeping or storing foods at desks or work areas, and instead utilize break rooms, cafeterias or other designated areas.

## **5. STUDENT -STAFF RELATIONS**

### **5.1 Professional Conduct with Students**

The District values the relationship between employees, students, and their families and believes it should be one of cooperation, understanding, and respect. Employees are expected to follow professional standards in their interaction with students and their families.

While staff are encouraged to foster positive relationships with students, they are also advised against engaging in more personal relationships that could be construed as inappropriate or compromise their professional relationship.

Prohibited behavior is detailed in the [PPSD Professional Conduct with Students Policy](#). Additionally, District employees and District partners are responsible for reporting direct and indirect knowledge of anyone violating the policy.

### **5.2 Mandated Reporting**

All District staff have a responsibility under State law to report the suspected physical or sexual abuse of a student. Please see the [PPSD Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and/or Neglect](#) regulation. Employees must sign an acknowledgement form that they understand the reporting protocol.

PPSD supports the policy of the State of Rhode Island "to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and neglect; to strengthen the family and to make the home safe for children by enhancing the parental capacity for good child care; to provide a temporary or permanent nurturing and safe environment for children when necessary; and for these purposes to require the mandatory reporting of known or suspected child abuse and neglect, investigation of such reports by a social agency, and provision of services, where needed, to such child and family" (RIGL § 40-11-1).

PPSD will neither condone nor tolerate any form of child abuse or neglect by any employee, nor will the District accept the failure of any employee to immediately report reasonable knowledge or suspicion of child abuse or neglect by any person, including an employee or parent.

### **5.3 Code of Conduct**

All school staff and school administrators are required to read and be familiar with the PPSD Student Code of Conduct in order to foster a positive school climate that promotes safety, respect, equity and responsibility for all members of our school community. [PPSD Student Code of Conduct](#).

## **6. SECURITY**

### **6.1 Identification Cards**

Identification cards with photographs are issued to all employees upon entrance into employment. A nominal replacement fee may be charged to cover the cost of materials for lost identification cards. These cards are the property of PPSD and must be returned upon termination of employment.

### **6.2 Parking**

To the extent possible, employees are provided with free parking at or near their work location. Employees who use employee parking lots must abide by all rules established for such lots. Employees may not park in reserved parking spaces unless they have been assigned to them, and may not park in

handicapped parking spaces unless they have the appropriate approval. Any accidents or damage occurring in a lot must be reported as soon as possible. Employees who violate any parking rules may lose parking privileges and may be subject to disciplinary action. PPSD assumes no responsibility for damage to or theft of vehicles or theft of items left in vehicles.

### **6.3 Personal Property**

PPSD does not assume responsibility for the security, safekeeping, or condition of personal belongings or property that employees bring to work.

Employees are strongly discouraged from bringing valuable personal property, including cash, expensive clothing, electronic equipment, jewelry, objects of high sentimental value, or any other valuable personal property into the workplace.

All lockers, desks, cabinets, or other storage areas in the workplace are the property of the District and may be accessed at any time by authorized administrators. For that reason, employees should not consider such areas to be private.

## **7. DISCIPLINE**

### **7.1 Progressive Discipline**

Managers are responsible for maintaining standards and discipline among the employees assigned to their schools, departments, or offices. The primary objective of disciplinary action is to provide a structured opportunity for employees to improve performance and remedy misconduct before poor performance or misconduct jeopardizes employment. When appropriate, progressive discipline will be utilized.

There are several levels of discipline that may result from employee misconduct. The sequence of progressive discipline of employees includes the following four (4) levels:

- Oral reprimand
- Written warning
- Suspension
- Dismissal

These progressive levels, or steps, generally should be followed in sequence; however, in some cases, the seriousness of the offense may warrant otherwise.

The degree of discipline administered is dependent upon the severity of the infraction and must be in accordance with appropriate labor contracts where applicable. All evidence must be objectively evaluated before taking appropriate disciplinary action. For members of the collective bargaining unit, requests for union representation should be honored at any meeting or interview where the employee has a reasonable belief that the information gathered may be used for disciplinary purposes. Written documentation of all disciplinary actions will be provided to the employee upon issuance.

## **8. COMPENSATION**

### **8.1 Salary Schedule**

Hourly wage rates and annual salary ranges for all instructional and non-instructional positions within PPSD are set by ordinance of the Providence City Council and are available from the City Clerk's office.

Salaries and rates of pay shall be included in all job postings or descriptions and shall be approved by the Chief of Human Capital and the Business Manager prior to any recruiting activities, including any posting or advertising for the position. The salary shall be expressed as articulated in the appropriate CBA or district step and salary for non- union positions. Candidates may be hired at the first step of the scale or may be hired at a higher step on the scale consistent with comparable experience and past earnings in similar positions, as approved in advance by the Superintendent.

Employees who are hired at a step below the top step of the range for their job shall advance to the next higher step in the range on the anniversary of their incumbency in the position, provided they have received a satisfactory performance evaluation for the intervening year if an evaluation was conducted. Employees shall continue to advance to successfully higher steps on subsequent anniversaries until they have reached the top step in the range, provided they have received a satisfactory evaluation for each corresponding year. Wage ranges and steps for exempt non-union employees shall be adjusted annually at the beginning of the budget year.

All salary increases and increases to wages and steps must be consistent with City ordinances and School Board policies, and are subject to City Council appropriation.

#### **8.1.1 Direct Deposit**

Employees must have their pay electronically deposited into a designated bank or credit union account. Further, employee pay statements will be delivered electronically. Employees may contact Payroll Supervisor Lori Lazzareschi ([lori.lazzareschi@ppsd.org](mailto:lori.lazzareschi@ppsd.org), 401-456-9313) in the Payroll Office for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

The standard pay period for most non-union employees is two weeks, with pay statements issued every other Friday. Exceptions to this schedule will be noted to employees upon hire. The pay schedule may be changed at the discretion of the Superintendent and/or School Board.

#### **8.2 Payroll Deductions**

The District is required to make the following automatic payroll deductions, as applicable:

- Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island (ERSRI), City of Providence Retirement System, and/or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax
- Medicare tax
- Rhode Island state income tax
- IRS or State-mandated child support and student loan payments
- Union dues as required per applicable collective bargaining agreement

#### **8.3 Additional Payroll Deductions and Tax-Sheltered Annuities**

Employees may have additional payroll deductions based on their benefit elections, including: employee share of premiums for health and dental insurance; disability insurance; life insurance, and flexible spending accounts (health care and dependent care). Employees may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations.

Employees may participate, on a voluntary basis, in the purchase of tax-sheltered annuities through payroll deduction. Information on annuities is available from the Payroll Office.

#### **8.4 Overtime**

Non-exempt employees are entitled to be paid at the rate of one and one-half times their hourly rate of pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in any payroll week, provided such overtime is pre-approved by an employee's supervisor in accordance with departmental procedures.

Exempt employees, including executives, administrative employees, and professionals, are not entitled to overtime pay under any circumstances.

#### **8.5 Employee Travel and Reimbursement**

Prior to making arrangements or paying for conference registration fees or travel fees, such conference and travel must have approval by appropriate staff, as required on the [Travel Request Form](#).

Registration information and content describing the conference must be attached to the request form. Estimated costs for hotels, transportation, and rental vehicles can be obtained through the Purchasing Office.

Reimbursement for meals, mileage, and other expenses (excluding airfare and hotel) must be submitted on the [Travel and Expense Report](#).

Additionally, prior to travel, employees should familiarize themselves with the [PPSD Event Travel Policy](#).

### **9. BENEFITS**

#### **9.1 Medical and Dental Insurance**

PPSD offers regular, full-time employees medical, prescription, and dental insurance effective on the first day of the month following hire. Employees have up to 30 days from their date of hire to make health insurance elections and to add dependents. Once made, elections are fixed for the remainder of the plan year. Dental coverage for Local 1033 Employees is covered by Local Union 1033.

Terms and conditions of these plans are set forth in the summary plan descriptions, which are available from the Benefits Office at City Hall (401-680-5281 or online at <http://www.providenceri.gov/hr/hr-benefits-active-school-employees/>). Providers and employee contributions for these plans are subject to change.

##### **9.1.1 Open Enrollment**

Employees may make changes to their health insurance during the open enrollment period, September 1 - September 30. When making changes to health insurance coverage during open enrollment, applicable supporting documentation (e.g., birth certificates for children, marriage certificate for spouse, final divorce decree for ex-spouses, etc.) need to be submitted.

##### **9.1.2 Qualifying Events**

Employees and/or dependents may enroll in your Plan as a special enrollee under the following circumstances within 30 days of the qualifying event:

Status Change	Qualifying Event	Required Documentation
Marital Status Change	Marriage Divorce/legal separation Remarriage	Marriage certificate Divorce decree
Dependent Status Change	Birth Legal adoption Judgment or decree requiring coverage	Birth certificate Legal adoption papers Court judgment/decree
Loss of Coverage	Loss of prior coverage	Letter from employer/carrier stating loss of coverage and the effective date

### **9.1.3 Coordination of Benefits**

PPSD requires that an employee's spouse (including common-law spouse and domestic partner where applicable), or ex-spouse who remains on the employee's coverage due to a requirement in a divorce decree ("qualified ex-spouse"), enroll in an individual healthcare plan through his or her employer, if such coverage is available. PPSD will allow an employee's spouse or qualified ex-spouse to remain on the PPSD plan as secondary coverage. The cost of the spouse's/ex-spouse's individual premium is reimbursable. Please contact the Benefits Office at City Hall for additional information.

Coordination of Benefits (COB) applies to all active and retiree groups.

### **9.1.4 Healthcare Buy-Back**

Local Union 1033 and non-union employees may choose not to be covered under PPSD medical coverage upon presentation of proof of alternative coverage. Eligible employees enrolled in a family plan making this choice will receive \$1,500.00 for each full plan year in which they are not covered for family coverage. Eligible employees enrolled in an individual plan making this choice will receive \$750.00 for each full plan year of non-coverage by a PPSD plan. Eligible employees need to complete an opt-out form during open enrollment each year in order to receive the buy-back. Payments to eligible employees shall be made in June for the previous plan year (July to June) in which they were not covered under the PPSD's medical insurance plan.

Employees eligible for a family dental plan and electing not to be covered by a PPSD plan shall receive \$500.00 for each full plan year in which they are not covered for family coverage. Employees eligible for individual coverage and electing not to be covered by a PPSD plan shall receive \$250.00 for each full plan year in which they are not covered by a PPSD plan.

Retirees less than 65 years of age, eligible for individual coverage and electing not to be covered by a PPSD plan shall receive \$750.00 for each full plan year in which they are not covered by a PPSD plan.

Employees whose spouses are employed by PPSD or the City of Providence, and employees and retirees who have chosen, prior to January 1, 2006, not to be covered by PPSD plans, are not eligible for the health care buy-back.

For each year in which the employee opts out of PPSD health coverage in order to receive the buy-back, he/she shall receive no health coverage from PPSD, except in the event of a qualifying event resulting in loss of coverage. Proof of loss of alternative coverage will be required before the employee is enrolled.

Payments to employees under this provision shall be made in arrears for the period of September to August with payment made in September. If an employee has opted back into PPSD coverage during the course of a plan year, he/she shall not be entitled to any payment for that year.

### **9.2 Flexible Spending Account**

PPSD offers a voluntary employee-funded Flexible Spending Account (FSA) plan to all regular, full-time employees. Plan participants may elect to enroll in either the medical out-of-pocket FSA or Dependent Care FSA. Medical out-of-pocket FSA has a maximum contribution limit of \$2,500 per plan year as established by the IRS. Dependent Care FSA has a maximum contribution limit of \$5,000 per plan year as established by the IRS.

If eligible medical or dental expenses are less than the elected annual amount of flex dollars for that year according to regulations, the balance will be forfeited.

### **9.3 Group Life Insurance**

Employees may contact the Benefits office, or their respective union representative, as applicable, to determine eligibility in group life insurance benefits.

### **9.4. Deferred Compensation**

PPSD offers voluntary 457b Deferred Compensation Plans that employees may enroll in and have the premium deducted from their paycheck on a pre-tax basis. For questions regarding vendors and enrollment, employees should contact the Controller's Office at (401) 456-9100.

### **9.5 Employee Assistance Plan**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a service provided at no cost to PPSD employees and their family members that allows individuals to contact counselors for help with a range of personal and professional problems at any time. PPSD's Employee Assistance Provider is Coastline EAP. Employees and their family members can reach live Coastline support 24 hours per day, 7 days per week by calling 800-445-1195 or 401-732-9444. EAP services are confidential; the District receives only general information about the number of employees accessing EAP and cannot link that information to individual employees.

Human Resources may require employees with demonstrated workplace concerns to work with EAP. In those cases, PPSD receives information about compliance with prescribed treatment regimens, but does not receive diagnostic information. Supervisors who believe their employees may benefit from EAP services should contact Human Resources at 401-456-9100 ext. 11172.

Detailed information is available on Coastline's website at [www.coastlineeap.org](http://www.coastlineeap.org). The website requires a Company Name for login purposes; PPSD's Company Name is Providence Schools.

## **10. TIME OFF/LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

### **10.1 Vacation**

Employees who are collective bargaining members must review their respective collective bargaining agreements to review vacation accrual schedules, if applicable.

Twelve-month non-union employees shall be entitled to paid vacation according to the following schedule.

- 1) Executive level positions will immediately accrue five (5) weeks of vacation per year.

- 2) Senior Management level positions shall immediately accrue four (4) weeks of vacation per year.
- 3) Mid-Management level positions shall immediately accrue three (3) weeks of vacation per year.
- 4) Entry level positions shall immediately accrue two (2) weeks of vacation per year.

A 12-month employee shall be entitled to receive an initial one week of vacation accruals upon hire. The balance of the additional vacation accrual will be calculated and dispersed accordingly over the remaining months within the first year of employ. Every year thereafter the accrual of the designated level of vacation will be dispersed over a 12-month period.

Additionally, for twelve-month non-union employees additional accruals based on years of service will be paid according to the following;

- 1) After five (5) years of service accruals will total three (3) weeks of vacation.
- 2) After ten (10) years of service accruals will total four (4) weeks of vacation.
- 3) After fifteen (15) years of service accruals will total five (5) weeks of vacation.

The Superintendent shall be authorized to offer new 12-month employees with no prior service with PPSD but who have comparable experience with other employers vacation based upon service with said other employer, to a maximum of five (5) weeks.

Vacation requests must be submitted to the employee's supervisor on the request form available from the Office of Human Resources, and the supervisor may approve or deny the request based on the needs of the Department. Approved requests must be submitted to the Payroll Department. Request forms should be submitted at least two weeks in advance.

Vacations will normally be taken within a reasonable time after being accrued, but in no case, except as noted below, shall accumulation of accrued paid vacation exceed sixty (60) days for all staff; Chiefs and the Superintendent accumulation of accrued paid vacation shall not exceed one hundred (100) days. Employees shall be paid for any accrued and unused days at the termination of their employment. Holidays and sick leave days that fall within required vacation period shall not be counted as a vacation day.

### **10.2 Sick Leave**

Non-union employees accrue sick leave at the rate of one (1) day per month and may accrue up to 180 days. Union employees should refer to their respective collective bargaining agreements to determine their rate of sick time accrual and the maximum number of days that may be accrued.

Under no circumstances may an employee be paid for accrued and unused sick leave for reasons other than sickness and/or injury incapacitating him or her from performing the duties of his or her job, or for absences required to attend to the illness of a household member of the employee.

Employees who are absent due to illness or injury for three (3) or more consecutive days are required to provide medical evidence certifying that the illness or injury prevents him or her from performing the duties of his or her job, or certifying that the absences were required to attend to the illness or injury of a household member of the employee. Additionally, Human Resources may request documentation on an as-needed basis as warranted by the circumstances of an employee's absence.

### **10.3 Personal Days**

Employees accrue two (2) personal days per year, which are credited to them as of July 1 each year. New employees will receive two (2) days if hired between July 1 and January 1, and one (1) day if hired

on or after January 1. Personal days shall not accumulate from year to year. Days not taken will be forfeited.

**10.4 Holidays**

Employees shall be paid for the follow holidays observed by PPSD:

New Year’s Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Day	Columbus Day
Presidents’ Day	Election Day (on which schools are closed)
Good Friday	Veterans’ Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Independence Day	Friday after Thanksgiving Day
Victory Day	Christmas Day

Holidays that fall on Saturday or Sunday will be observed on the preceding Friday, or the following Monday, at the sole discretion of the Superintendent and/or School Board.

**10.5 Court Service**

An employee who is summoned into court for matters related to PPSD or in connection with cases in which the personal interests of the employee are not involved shall receive his/her regular salary but shall be required to remit fees received for court service to PPSD within ten (10) days of receipt of such fees.

Employees who are summoned to jury duty should contact Human Resources upon receipt of the summons so that appropriate steps can be taken to ensure coverage as appropriate and so that the time can be entered into the District’s absence management system (Aesop). Employees should note that absences due to jury duty *cannot* be entered into Aesop by the employee; these absences *must* be entered by a Human Resources staff member. Please refer to the chart below to determine whom to contact.

Elementary teachers, elementary administrators, non-union employees (M-Z)	Karen Lanzieri	<a href="mailto:karen.lanzieri@ppsd.org">karen.lanzieri@ppsd.org</a> ; 401-456-9100 ext. 11222
Middle/secondary teachers, middle/secondary administrators, non-union employees (A-L)	Susan Bettencourt	<a href="mailto:susan.bettencourt@ppsd.org">susan.bettencourt@ppsd.org</a> ; 401-456-9100 ext. 11201
All 1033 members (TAs, PSSSOs, BEST)	Carol Laird	<a href="mailto:carol.laird@ppsd.org">carol.laird@ppsd.org</a> ; 401-456-9100 ext. 11204
All 1339 members	Charlene Vela	<a href="mailto:charlene.vela@ppsd.org">charlene.vela@ppsd.org</a> ; 401-456-9100 ext. 11202

**10.6 Family and Medical Leave**

Employees may be granted family and medical leaves of absence in compliance with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and the Rhode Island Parental and Family Medical Leave Act (RIPFMLA).

To be eligible, employees must meet the following criteria:

FMLA: Employees must have at least 12 months of service *and* have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months preceding the beginning of the leave.

RIPFMLA: Employees must have at least 12 consecutive months of service *and* must have worked an average of at least 30 hours a week for the School Department during the 12 months preceding the beginning of the leave.

Eligible employees under FMLA are entitled to take up to 12 weeks of leave during a 12-month period: in the event of the birth of a child; in the event of the adoption, or placement for foster care, of a child; to care for a spouse, domestic partner, child or parent with a serious health condition; or for the employee's own serious health condition that prevents the employee from performing their job.

Eligible employees under RIPFMLA are entitled to take up to 13 weeks of leave during a 24-month period: in the event of the birth of a child; in the event of the adoption, or placement for foster care, of a child; to care for a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent or parent in-law with a serious health condition; or for the employee's own serious health condition that prevents the employee from performing their job.

PPSD utilizes the rolling 12-month or rolling 24-month method of determining eligibility for leaves under FMLA and RIPFMLA respectively.

PPSD requires 30 days advance notice when a leave is foreseeable. If 30 days advance notice is not possible, then the employee must request the leave as far in advance as possible.

PPSD requires medical certification to support a request for a leave because of a serious health condition and may require second or third opinions and a fitness for duty certification to return to work. Employees requesting a leave due to a serious health condition must provide a physician's certification of the serious health condition within 15 days.

Employees requesting a leave due to the birth or adoption of a child shall be required to provide proof of the birth or adoption.

An approved leave of absence under either the FMLA or the RIPFMLA is credited concurrently toward the employee's entitlement under each statute.

Employees returning within 12 weeks from a leave under FMLA or within 13 weeks from a leave under RIPFMLA will be returned to their same job, or an equivalent job, unless their employment would have been terminated during that period for reasons other than the leave (for example, because of a layoff).

Employees who are on reduced or intermittent leave because of their own serious medical condition, or to care for a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent with a serious medical condition, may be transferred temporarily to a position with equivalent pay and benefits to accommodate PPSD's operational needs.

While FMLA and RIPFMLA leave is unpaid, employees' accrued paid sick time shall be concurrently discharged during the period of leave.

Employees who exhaust all accrued and/or contractual leave and all statutory leave must either return to work and maintain satisfactory attendance, resign, or be subject to dismissal. Employees may apply for an unpaid leave of absence (see Unpaid Leave of Absence) to be granted at the discretion of the

Superintendent. Employees may also contact Human Resources regarding reasonable accommodations should their medical condition persist after all leave has been exhausted. Note that requests for accommodations may be denied if the granting of the accommodations would result in an undue hardship for the District.

### **10.7 Military Leave**

Military leave for service members and family members is also covered under federal and state law. Employees with questions about military service-related leave should contact the Human Resources Office for detailed information pertinent to their specific situations.

### **10.8 Bereavement Leave**

An employee may be absent for five (5) consecutive work days without loss of pay in the case of the death of a father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, domestic partner or child regardless of where the deceased resided, or the death of any person with whom the employee may then be living.

An employee may be absent for three (3) consecutive work days without loss of pay in the case of the death of his/her own grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, spouse's or domestic partner's brother or sister, spouse's or domestic partner's grandparent who had been residing with the employee, son-in-law, daughter-in-law.

Bereavement leaves must be taken on consecutive work days beginning not earlier than the death of the relative. Benefits described in the paragraphs above may not be combined during the same leave. Employees may be required to provide evidence of the death and the relationship or place of residence of the deceased in order to receive benefits.

### **10.9 Family Leave**

The Parental Leave Policy permits regular, full-time PPSD employees who have been employed for a minimum of a full year, and who have recently given birth or adopted a child or have received a foster child in their home the opportunity to take up to six weeks of paid leave.

The Family Leave policy does not cover employees in a temporary position or those who are members of a collective bargaining unit. In addition, certain grant funded positions may not be eligible.

The application and approval process are detailed in the District's [Parental Leave Policy](#).

### **10.10 Adverse Weather/Adverse Event**

Inclement weather and adverse conditions can affect PPSD's ability to open for business, and employees' ability to get to work. Based on the adverse weather or event, the Superintendent will determine the status level.

**Level One.** During a Level One event, the District will remain open and operational. All non-union and union employees who are considered 12-month employees will report to work. Twelve-month union employees will report to work in accordance with the language in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement, unless otherwise directed by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Should an employee elect not to report to work during a Level One event, the employee can discharge accrued personal or vacation time, and may be permitted to discharge accrued sick time contingent upon approval by the employee's supervisor.

**Level Two.** During a Level Two event, District offices remain open, but only essential employees will be required to report for duty. All non-essential non-union and union employees who are considered 12-month employees will not be required to report for duty and will not be required to discharge paid leave of any kind. Employees who are discharging pre-approved vacation, personal or sick time on the day the Superintendent declares a Level Two event are required to discharge the paid time off as approved.

The definition of “essential employees” and further information about protocols during adverse weather/adverse events are provided in the [Adverse Weather/Adverse Event Policy](#).

## **11. RETIREMENT**

### **11.1 Retirement Plans**

Employees whose positions require certification by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education participate in the Employees’ Retirement System of Rhode Island. Employee and employer contributions, and terms and conditions of benefits, are pursuant to rules established by ERSRI and based on state law. Details of the plan are available from ERSRI or by accessing the [ERSRI website](#).

Employees whose positions do not require certification by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education participate in the Employee Retirement System of City of Providence. Employee and employer contributions, and terms and conditions of benefits, are pursuant to the Providence Code of Ordinances, [Chapter 17, Article VI](#). More information on this plan is available from the City of Providence Retirement Office, <http://providenceri.com/retirement> or 401-680-5299.

### **11.2 Retirement Criteria**

Retirement criteria is described in the City of Providence Code of Ordinances, [Chapter 17, Article VI](#).

## **12. SEPARATIONS**

### **12.1 At-Will Employment**

Except as provided for under applicable federal or state laws, Providence School Board policy, collective bargaining agreements, or individual employment contracts, employees are considered at-will employees, and may be terminated for any reason not prohibited by state or federal law at any time.

### **12.2 Rights of Employees Upon Separation**

Employees whose employment terminates are entitled to: payment of any accrued and unused vacation, up to a maximum of sixty (60) days; payment for service up to and including the date employment is terminated; and reimbursement for any previously approved expenses incurred in the course of the employee’s job prior to the termination. Employee healthcare benefits will terminate on the last day of the month in which the employee’s termination becomes effective; the employee may continue to participate in the healthcare plans at his or her own expense under the provisions and limitations of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA).

#### **12.2.1 Rights of Employees Upon Termination Due to Death or Disability**

Employees whose employment terminates based on death or disability shall be entitled to: any accrued benefits under an applicable retirement plan at the time of their death or disability; payment of any accrued and unused vacation, up to a maximum of sixty (60) days; payment for service up to and including the date of the employee’s death or disability; reimbursement for any reasonable and customary employee expenses incurred in the course of the employee’s job. In the case of an

employee's death, payment of wages, accrued and unused vacation and employee expenses shall be made pursuant to the standard payroll process.

### **12.3 Return of District Property**

District/school equipment or property or that of other employees may not be removed from its location without permission of the employee's direct supervisor and should be returned upon separation.

In the event of transfer, departure for an extended leave of absence, or termination, employees are required to turn in all keys, identification badge, equipment, and private or proprietary documents belonging to the District.

### **I have received my copy of the Providence School Department Employee Manual.**

This manual and the policies and procedures contained herein supersede any and all prior practices, oral or written representations, or statements regarding the terms and conditions of your employment with PPSD. By distributing this handbook, PPSD expressly revokes any and all previous policies and procedures which are inconsistent with those contained herein.

I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

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Employee's Signature and Date

## **11. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF RECEIPT**

### **11.1 EMPLOYEE**

### **11.2 EMPLOYER**

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*Note: All School Board policies referenced in this handbook may be accessed on the Policies & Regulations page of the [Providence Electronic School Board](#) website.*