

Southern Plains Education Cooperative

Employee Handbook

8/1/2017

<http://southernplainedcoop.org>



SPEC OFFICE STAFF

Sarah Mittelstadt, Director 507-238-1472

Dawn Becker, Business Manager 507-235-4310

- Payroll Concerns
- Timesheets/Veritime
- New Employee documentation
- Budgets and Billing

Megan Heller, Office Coordinator 507-235-4301

- Director's Calendar
- Worker's Compensation
- Seniority Lists
- Leave Questions and Leave Set Up
- Absence Management (Aesop) questions
- Special Transportation (Winnebago Programs)
- Staff Development Requests
- Changes in contact information
- Evaluation Reports
- Psychologist Secretary
- Southern Plains Operations (Conference room, van, etc)
- SPEC website
- SpEd Forms Set up and Questions
- Board Meeting Information
- Caseload Reports: 10/1 and 2/1
- LCTS
- Family Medical Leave Act

Shelley Junkermeier, Student Services Coordinator 507-235-4303

- Third Party Billing
- MARSS and Student Information Reporting Data for Southern Plains sites

Laura Teveldal, Financial Secretary 507-235-4304

- Supply Requisitions, Purchase Orders
- Invoices, Accounts Payable
- Vision and Hearing Screening

Julie Becker and Sue Clabaugh. Payroll (contracted with Fairmont) 507-235-4005

payroll@fairmont.k12.mn.us

- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Disability Insurance
- Health Insurance
- Life Insurance

SOUTHERN PLAINS CONTACTS

Office			
Sarah Mittelstadt		507-238-1472	sarah.mittelstadt@southernplainedcoop.org
Dawn Becker		507-235-4310	Dawn.becker@southernplainedcoop.org
Megan Heller		507-235-4301	Megan.heller@southernplainedcoop.org
Laura Teveldal		507-235-4304	Laura.teveldal@southernplainedcoop.org
Shelley Junkermeier		507-235-4303	shelley.junkermeier@southernplainedcoop.org
Coordinators			
Cheryl Hamp	Fairmont High School, Parochial 7-12, GHEC, Truman	507-236-1709 (cell) 507-235-4235 (desk)	champ@fairmont.k12.mn.us
Deb Bertram	BEA, USC	507-236-2968 (cell)	deb.bertram@southernplainedcoop.org
Kellie Fischer	Early Childhood Special Education, Fairmont Elementary, Parochial K- 6	651.238.7670 (cell) 507-238-4133 (desk)	kellie.fischer@southernplainedcoop.org
Lori Jacobsen	Martin County West	507-764-4671	lorijacobsen@mcwmavericks.org
Stephanie Schmitz (Administrative Coordinator)	ALC, Bridges, ATCW, PALS,	507-327-7997 (cell) 507-893-3701 (Wgo)	Stephanie.Schmitz@southernplainedcoop.org

GENERAL TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT

The Southern Plains Education Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, age, family care, leave status, or veteran status. Reasonable accommodations for disabled employees will be made as required by law. Refer to Board Policy 401 *Equal Employment Opportunity* for more information.

DISCRIMINATION, BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

Southern Plains wants employees and students to feel respected and safe and prohibits any form of religious, racial, or sexual harassment and violence. The Southern Plains Education Cooperative does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or bullying under any circumstances. The cooperative prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying on the basis of race, color, gender ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, creed, religion, sexual orientation, family care leave status, veteran status, status with regard to public assistance, age, or disability. Administration should be notified immediately for all incidences related to students or staff. See relevant policies for more information.

If you feel you have been a victim or witness a student you feel is victimized in the school environment, you should file a complaint as soon as possible with Stephanie Schmitz, the Human Rights Officer. For concerns related to Stephanie Schmitz, Sarah Mittelstadt should be contacted. You will not be subject to any form of reprisal or retaliation for making a good faith complaint under this policy. (Refer to Policy #413, "*Harassment and Violence*", Policy #515, "*Bullying Prohibition*", and Policy #522, "*Student Sex Discrimination*".) You are obligated to intervene and report bullying to the appropriate building individual if you see bullying of others. If you do not do so, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

Other complaints should be dealt with at the lowest level (going directly to the individual of concern). If concerns persist, these concerns should be brought to the building supervisor, ongoing concerns should be brought to the director. Any staff that are made aware of concerns from students, parents, community members, or others should always be brought to the building supervisor in the relevant district. If assistance is needed, the director is available to support this report.

IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of your right to work in the United States. You will be asked to provide original documents, as required by federal law, to sign a Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form. Identification is required that meets federal requirements to establish work eligibility. If you at any time cannot verify your right to work in the United States, Southern Plains may be obligated to terminate your employment.

EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECK

Southern Plains completes background checks on applicants who receive an offer of employment as described in the Minnesota Child Protection Background Check Act, Minnesota Statute Section 123B.03 or other background checks as allowed by law. The applicant signs a criminal history consent form, which provides permission for Southern Plains to conduct a criminal history background check. If the applicant fails to provide Southern Plains with a signed informed Consent Form and payment for the background check at the time the applicant receives a job offer, the applicant will be considered to have voluntarily withdrawn the application for employment. The offer of employment shall be conditioned upon a determination by Southern Plains that an applicant's criminal history does not preclude the applicant from employment. Southern Plains specifically reserves any and all rights it may have to conduct criminal background checks regarding current employees or applications without the consent of such individuals.

CALENDAR

Many of the Southern Plains staff members are itinerant and work between multiple school district schedules. Staff members are responsible to ensure they work the appropriate number of contracted days to meet the needs of each of the member districts. Staff should be prepared to present a calendar with the days worked. Staff should keep these days on file for two years.

Southern Plains serves 6 school districts; no one school district dictates the schedule for all the districts. Students need to receive all services possible as designated by their Individualized Education Plan. It is not appropriate to say, "I am not working on Thursday because XYZ School District does not have school."

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

Materials should not be distributed by staff for items that are not directly related to cooperative or school district related items without prior authorization from the director.

DISTRICT POLICIES

Please follow the policies and "culture" within each district to the best of your ability. For example, some districts require an identification badge; all Southern Plains staff are expected to follow this on a regular basis. Make every effort to follow the dress code expectations in each building; work with the building principal if you are unable to do so due to your position.

DRIVER'S LICENSE AND DRIVING RECORD

Employees whose work requires operation of a motor vehicle may be required to present and maintain a valid driver's license. Any changes in your driving record which would hinder driving privileges must be reported to your supervisor immediately. If you lose your right to drive for business, and your job is travel-intensive, you may lose your job.

If you use your vehicle for work related purposes, you are expected to: 1) drive defensively, 2) wear your seat belt, 3) make accommodations for bad weather including carrying appropriate requirement in your vehicle for your safety and 4) carry proof of insurance on your vehicle as required by law (you may be asked to show proof of vehicle insurance).

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

In order for us to be in compliance with transportation laws (MN Statute 171.02, subd 2.b), no one is allowed to transport students, **unless they have received the Type III transportation training, signed the form indicating they have received the training, and signed a waiver to do a background check of your driving record, completed the Special Needs and Knowledge quiz, and completed the Behind the Wheel ride-a-long. This must be done annually. There will be no exceptions to this.**

All staff must use a vehicle from one of our member school districts or the cooperative van. No personal vehicles may be used unless you have the following items and authorization from myself on an annual basis:

- umbrella insurance policy,
- certification from the Department of Transportation inspection within the past year,
- legally required safety supplies (fire extinguisher, ten-unit first aid kit, body fluids cleanup kit) stored in a removable, moisture-and dust-proof container, and
- three reflective, red triangle, road-warning devices.

Disclosure Requirements (MS 171.02 sub 2b (h), (i), (j), (k))

In the event you incur any of the following you are required to disclose in writing within 10 days of conviction to your employer:

- DWI

- Disqualifying offenses
- Moving violations

A person who sustains a conviction of a moving offense in violation of chapter 169 within three years of the first of three other moving offenses is precluded from operating a Type III school bus for one year from the date of the last conviction.

Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing MS 171.02 sub 2b (f)

LICENSE RENEWAL

All employees requiring a professional license as part of their position are required to provide an updated copy of their professional license to the Southern Plains office. Southern Plains maintains a continuing education committee; staff can submit continuing education credit requests through this committee. Please contact Eric Weedman, eric.weedman@southernplainscoop.org, Chair of the CE Committee with any CE questions.

NON-EXEMPT AND EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

Employees are classified as either “exempt” or “non-exempt”. Non-exempt jobs are generally measured by the hour, require time sheets, and are performed under direct supervision. These employees are subject to overtime pay provisions as provided by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any applicable state laws. Overtime or compensatory time off begins after 40 hours worked in a given calendar week. (The calendar week is defined as 12:01 a.m. Saturday through midnight Friday.)

Exempt employees are those whose duties and responsibilities are exempt from overtime pay provisions as provided by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any applicable state laws. Exempt employees do not keep hourly time records, and are expected to get the job done no matter how long it takes. They are not paid extra if their work takes more than 40 hours in a week.

For non-exempt employees, hours worked beyond the work day must be pre-approved.

Except in emergencies, all hours beyond the work agreement must be approved in advance by the building principal or director.

Hours must be submitted on a time sheet within one month of the date of the hours worked unless other arrangements have been made with the director.

Classified staff have a paid lunch included in their master agreement. They should not submit for pay for days in which they do not get lunch (i.e. field trips), because they already are paid for that time.

PERSONNEL FILE

Southern Plains maintains an employee personnel file. Keeping your personnel file up-to-date is important. You may see information in your own personnel file by making a request in advance to review it during regular hours in the presence of an appointed office staff. You may also request to receive copies of all documents in your file. All medical records, if any, will be kept in a separate file.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Southern Plains staff needs to keep updated contact information for all employees in case of an emergency. In order to ensure this information is kept up to date; all staff should notify the office of any changes in name, address, and phone number. For at least one year following employment, staff should provide updated information. . It is your responsibility, when experiencing a family status change, to notify Southern Plains office personnel in writing within 30 days for benefit modifications.

PURCHASING MATERIALS

Southern Plains staff should seek permission prior to purchasing items for which she/he anticipates obtaining reimbursement. No items will be purchased using cooperative dollars that will be utilized through individual's personal technology accounts such as Kindle or Audible. Applications will not be purchased for individual's personal technology devices.

Paraprofessionals should contact their assigned case manager if they are in need of any supplies. The districts are obligated to provide the lowest cost items, not always the preferred type of school supplies.

Individuals that have input into purchasing materials (this includes, but is not limited to, all certified and Classified staff involved in purchasing) may not accept gifts of more than \$5 from vendors. Donations may be made to the school; however, employees may not accept sample curriculum, iPads, meals, etc. for personal use.

RESTRICTIVE PROCEDURES

Restrictive procedures are the use of physical holding or seclusion in an emergency:

- Restraint: physical intervention intended to hold a child immobile or limit a child's movement and where body contact is the only source of physical restraint.
- Seclusion is defined as confining a child alone in a room from which egress is barred (the student is not allowed to leave). Removing a child from an activity to a location where the child cannot participate in or observe the activity is NOT seclusion. Seclusion rooms must be registered with the commissioner and have a written notice from local authorities that it complies with the state code.
- Emergency is defined as a situation where immediate intervention is needed to protect a child or other individual from physical injury or to prevent serious property damage.

It is not allowed to physically carry or restrain students unless it is written in the Individual Education Plan.

The only types of restraints allowed within the Southern Plains Education Cooperative (SPEC) districts are those taught in the Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training. If you use restraints and have not been trained on these techniques in the last year, you will need to take the course or refresher course. At this time, we have **no** registered seclusion rooms in any of our member districts; if you feel a room is being used for seclusion, please contact the Southern Plains Director.

If you work with students who are at risk for creating emergency situations, you will need to participate in the Restrictive Procedures Training offered by SPEC. Once you have this training and use a restraint, there are several forms that must be completed. The training discusses the appropriate forms.

WAGE DISCLOSURE

Southern Plains does not restrict employees' right to discuss their wage with others and will not retaliate for disclosing their pay. Minnesota Statute 181.172.

LEAVES

All individuals are responsible to ensure they are familiar with their work agreement or contract. Provide complete information in Aesop. Additional information may be requested to interpret the contract or agreement.

SICK LEAVE

Sick leave can be taken in any increment. For leave less than four hours, please make every effort to find staff within the programs to cover the needs of students without using a substitute. The administration reserves the right to require sick leave be taken in half-day increments.

PARENTAL LEAVE

According to Minnesota Statute 181.9412, employees are entitled to take up to 16 hours of unpaid leave a year to attend school conferences and “school related activities” that cannot be scheduled during non-work hours.

ATTENDANCE/TIME OFF FROM WORK

You should be ready to work at the beginning of your assigned daily work hours. As soon as you know you will be unable to report to work, or if you will arrive late, log the absence in Aesop immediately.

Consistency in attendance is important for work productivity and services to students. It is understood individuals have illnesses and family emergencies; it is important to take time to regain health and support family. However, any time you are absent or late impacts our ability to deliver services, negatively impacts the reputation of Southern Plains, and places extra burdens on your coworkers. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness may result in corrective measures, up to and including termination. If you have been absent for three consecutive days without notification, you will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Employees may have rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for leave without risk of disciplinary action. FMLA may be taken for the following reasons:

- For the birth and care of a newborn child of the employee,
- For placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care,
- To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition,
- To take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition, or
- For qualifying exigencies arising out of the fact the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty or call to active duty status as a member of the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation.
- Additional leaves may be taken within the confines of the FMLA.

Employees are responsible to notify the cooperative 30 days prior to taking the FMLA leave whenever the leave is foreseeable. When 30 days is not possible, the employee must provide as much notice as possible and follow all call-in procedures. Employees also need to complete the forms online to request and certify FMLA leave.

If you have questions or would like to review the cooperative’s policy, please contact Megan Heller.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION

Staff should follow the calendar of the district in which they work, and itinerant staff should have a calendar of their hours and locations available should it be requested.

If school is cancelled, for weather or school activities, staff within that district and programs will be cancelled. Itinerant staff will only be cancelled for districts that are cancelled; they will be expected to service schools that are open.

Make up time will be the responsibility of the individual staff when assigned by the district, but the director reserves the right to make up time if needed.

PARAPROFESSIONAL

Call-In Procedure for Absences

This procedure is to be followed by all employees of Southern Plains Education Cooperative. As soon as you become aware that you will not be able to work please log-in or call:

LOG-IN: aesoponline.com
CALL: 1.800.942.3767

All staff **must be knowledgeable** of your Master Agreement and follow the proper procedure for calling in to request a leave of absence (stating a reason) and to obtain a sub.

HR REASON	DESCRIPTION
Association Leave	Association/Bargaining Unit (Local); Please list specific reason for absence
Education Minnesota	Association/Bargaining Unit (State); Please list specific reason for absence
Jury Duty	Court Jury Duty; only to be used when called to be on a jury. A copy of check will be required following service.
Local Funeral No Sub	Local funerals (per Master Agreement) 2 hours or less, no sub is needed; Additional information may be requested
P Im Fam SkLv Loss5 (Para Immediate Family Sick Leave Loss 5)	Illness or Injury - Immediate Family Member: parents, child, spouse, siblings, of employee or spouse (Name of individual and relationship. Additional physician verification may be required. Subd 1) 5 days per year - Loss of Sick Leave
P Ext Fam Ber/III L2 (Para Extended Family Bereavement/Illness Loss 2)	Death or Serious Illness - Other Family Members: aunts, uncles, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law or first cousins of employee or spouse. (Name of individual and relationship. Additional physician verification may be required. Subd 2) 2 Days per year - Loss of Sick Leave
Parental Lv Deduct	Pay deduct hourly – for Child School Activity; List the school activity
Personal Leave	Specify reason
Personal Lv Deduct	Pay deduct – Overuse of Personal Leave; Specify reason
Pregnancy/Adopt Lve	Medical forms required
Professional	List reason for leave (i.e. Crisis Prevention Intervention; IEP Meeting). These are leaves that do not go through staff development.
Substitute (Winnebago only)	List who you are subbing for.
Special Permission	List reason for leave, these are specifically approved by Coordinator (classes towards teaching degree, tests for degree, etc)
Sick Child	Minor Child Loss of Sick Leave
Sick Leave Deduct	Pay deduct – If you have no sick leave remaining.
Sick Leave Self	Personal Illness;
Staff Development	Submit paper form to SPEC Ofc. If this was approved by a member district, please indicate so and list the chair of the committee.
Work Comp	1ST Report of Injury Form required

➤ **Please make every effort to contact Aesop by 6:00 AM.**

SAVING YOUR ABSENCE REQUEST:

SAVE

Absence Management will find a substitute

SAVE & ASSIGN

ASSIGN YOUR OWN SUBSTITUTE. **WARNING!** CLICKING THE “SAVE AND ASSIGN” BUTTON INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE PREARRANGED WITH THE SUBSTITUTE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO ASSIGN ON THE NEXT PAGE.

TEACHER CALL-IN PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCES

This procedure is to be followed by all employees of Southern Plains Education Cooperative. As soon as you become aware that you will not be able to work please log-in or call:

LOG-IN: aesoponline.com
CALL: 1.800.942.3767

All staff **must be knowledgeable** of your Master Agreement and follow the proper procedure for calling in to request a leave of absence (stating a reason) and to obtain a sub.

HR Reason	Description
Association Leave	Association/Bargaining Unit – Local Level; Please list specific reason for absence
Family Leave A	Sick Leave days deducted (Refer to Master Agreement); Specify name of individual and relationship; additional physician verification may be required (parents, brothers, sisters, husband, wife, children of employee or spouse)
Family Leave B	Loss of Sick Leave (Refer to Master Agreement) death, serious illness (aunt, uncle, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, or first cousins of employee or spouse. Specify name of individual and relationship; additional physician verification may be required
Education Minnesota	Association/Bargaining Unit – State Level; Please list specific reason for absence
Extracurricular	Indicate activity; the relevant district must approve this expenditure
Jury Duty	Court Jury Duty; only to be used when called to be on a jury. A copy of the check will be required following service.
Local Funeral No Sub	Local funerals (per Master Agreement) 2 hours or less, no sub hired/covered from within; Note the name of the individual who's funeral you will attend.
Paperwork Days	Paperwork day List the tasks you intend to complete including the initials of students.
Parental Lv Deduct	Pay deduct – for Child School Activity; List the school activity
Personal Leave 1	No information needed
Personal Lv Deduct	Pay deduct - Overuse of Personal Leave; A reason must be stated
Pregnancy/Adopt Lve	Medical forms required
Professional	Specify reason (i.e. CTIC meeting)
Sick Child	Sick leave for a minor child
Sick Leave Deduct	Pay deduct - Overuse of Sick Leave & Family Bereavement
Sick Leave Self	Personal Illness
Staff Development	Submit paper form to SPEC Ofc. If this was approved by a member district, please indicate so and list the chair of the committee.
Work Comp	1st Report of Injury form required

➤ **Please make every effort to contact Aesop by 6:00 AM.**

LOSS OF PREP. There is no place on the system for teachers to indicate if their class will be covered by a colleague. If this is the case, you should select “No sub required,” and note the name of the teacher subbing for you in the “Notes to Administrator” box. **If a name is not provided, your colleague will not receive payment for his/her loss of prep time.**

SAVING YOUR ABSENCE REQUEST:

SAVE

Absence Management will find a substitute

SAVE & ASSIGN

Assign your own substitute. **WARNING!** Clicking the “save and assign” button indicates that you have PREARRANGED with the substitute that you are going to assign on the next page

PAYROLL AND REIMBURSEMENTS

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Every effort is made to avoid errors in your pay. If you believe an error was made, contact Julie immediately. The staff will take the necessary steps to research the problem and to assure that any necessary correction is made promptly.

Pay dates are the 25th of each month of the Friday prior if the date falls on a weekend.

To access the Employee Self Service system to view your pay stub, go to the Southern Plains website. Your employee ID is your ID#. The first time you log into the system your password will be the last four digits of your social security number; you will be prompted to change this after you log into the system the first time.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

You must have written authorization prior to incurring an expense on behalf of Southern Plains Education Cooperative. To be reimbursed for all authorized expenses, you must submit an expense report accompanied by original receipts (detailed receipts must be provided) and approved by your supervisor. Expenses must be submitted within one month of the expenditure on the "Expense Form" located on the Southern Plains website.

Checks are written on the second and fourth Thursday of each month.

If the employee is directed to attend a training that involves overnight stay, meal reimbursements will be provided at the following rate:

Nonmetro \$30 per day

Metro \$40 per day

Out of state travel will be at the federal IRS rate which can be identified at www.gsa.gov/perdiem

TIME SHEETS

All time sheets should include:

- 1) total hours
- 2) an hourly rate of pay
- 3) a total salary
- 4) a signature

Completed time sheets are due to Laura Teveldal on the first working day of the month in which the check will be issued.

VERITIME

Southern Plains is transition to Veritime, which is a timeclock system. This is needed because of the Affordable Care Act, Special Education Fiscal Compliance, and the Fair Labor Standards Act require that there be documentation of actual hours worked.

This will not change the way you are paid, it is a tracking system that replaces time sheets.

- Time must be entered daily. Always enter the actual time worked; however, you do not need to clock out for lunch times of 30 minutes or less.
- If there is any 15 minute time or more that is not included in your original work agreement that you do not work, you must include this time in Aesop.

- Whenever possible, clock in using the “barcode”; however, it is acknowledged that there are times that
- Any time you arrive early or stay later than your contracted time must be prior approved (verbally or via email) with your coordinator.
- Submit your time at the end of the last working day each week. **By “submitting” your time, you are indicating that this time is a complete and accurate reflection of your time.**

Time that is entered in the Veritime system (such as riding the bus) that is more than your original work agreement, will be paid as “gap” time. This time is paid in the following month. Only hours that are more than 40 hours worked per week are hours that count as “overtime”.

STIPENDS

All stipends need prior approval. Stipends that are NOT contract related should be submitted on a PAYROLL PAYMENT VOUCHER, which is available in SPEC office. The voucher should list:

- 1) the hours worked
- 2) the amount of salary to be paid

The voucher must be submitted to Laura Teveldal on the first working day of the month in which the check will be issued and needs to be signed by both the employee and the supervisor.

PAY CHECKS

Monthly paychecks are issued through automatic deposit. The auto-deposits are made on the 25th of each month.

Employees submitting time sheets or payment vouchers, or those requesting extra duty pay will be paid the month following the date of work.

AUTO DEPOSIT

If your auto deposit is split between two accounts (one designated as a dollar amount and the other as a percentage), the dollar amount you designated may be greater than the total of your ADDITIONAL summer check. In this case, the check will be automatically deposited into the account designated as a percentage. If you wish to change this, you must notify Julie/Sue C. by the first working day of the month in which the check will be issued. No adjustments will be made after the auto deposit transaction has been completed.

WAGE GARNISHMENTS

When court-ordered deductions are to be taken from your paycheck, Southern Plains Education Cooperative acts in accordance with the Federal Consumer Credit Protection Act, which places restrictions on the total amount that may be garnished from your paycheck.

BENEFITS

CREDIT APPROVAL FOR LANE CHANGES (CERTIFIED STAFF)

The master agreement provides for salary lane changes for employees who improve their professional skills by continuing their graduate education. In order to count toward a lane change, a course must be germane to their assignment as determined by the director. Course credit approval forms must be completed and submitted to your

director **before** you take the course. When credits have been earned, submit to the lane change form with appropriate documentation. Both of these forms are located on the Southern Plains website.

DISABILITY INSURANCE

The cooperative pays the premium for a long-term disability insurance policy for eligible employees. There is a 120 day continuous workday waiting period of eligibility (30 days for employees with 5 or less years of experience). The policy pays 66 2/3% of an employee's normal pay, subject to taxation, up to age 65 if necessary for continuing disability.

FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS

The Southern Plains Education Cooperative maintains a flexible spending plan to which eligible employees may contribute pre-tax dollars from their pay to cover either of the following areas:

1. Unreimbursed Medical Expenses
2. Child Care Expenses

By participating in the Flexible Savings Account, employees can receive reimbursement of these before tax dollars and save themselves money.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Currently Southern Plains provides several health insurance programs in combination with the Fairmont Area School District. Plans currently offer employee only or family coverage Plan reimbursements depending upon collective bargaining and work agreements.

LIFE INSURANCE

In most collective bargaining agreements/work agreements, the cooperative pays the premium for basic life insurance for eligible employees. This insurance currently has an accidental death and dismemberment provision.

RETIREMENT

PERA & TRA

All employees of Southern Plains Education Cooperative who meet minimum requirements of hours worked in a year are covered under either the Public Employee's Retirement Association or the Teacher's Retirement Association. The school district and the employer both contribute to those mandated state retirement plans in an amount set by law. Further information is available on the PERA website at www.mnpera.org or the TRA website at www.tra.state.mn.us

DEFERRED ANNUITIES – 403(B)

The school district sponsors district-approved companies who provide 403(b) deferred annuities/mutual funds. Depending upon work agreements, employees may contribute to these annuities with pre-tax dollars up to the maximum allowed by law. In some contracts/agreements, the employer will match a portion of the employee contribution up to the maximum specified in the contract/agreement. Please check your contract/agreement to see if there is any employer match and contact Elaine if you are interested in signing up to participate in the 403(b) program.

SOCIAL SECURITY (FICA)

As an employee of the Southern Plains Education Cooperative, you are automatically covered under the Federal Social Security Act. You and Southern Plains contribute a portion of your gross salary to Social Security as required by law.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Southern Plains assists employees in continuing education by subsidizing attendance at conferences and workshops and by providing on-the-job training in some areas. Requests for inservices should be submitted in writing on the Staff Development Request form available on the Southern Plains website.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

All employees are entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits. This coverage is automatic and immediate and protects you from on-the-job injury. An on-the-job injury is defined as an accidental injury suffered in the course of your work, or an illness which is directly related to performing your assigned job duties. All injuries or illnesses arising out of the scope of your employment must be reported immediately. Employees returning to work and may be required to bring a doctor's clearance for returning to work.

Any employee who is injured on the job should report the injury to Megan Heller at the SPEC Office within 24 hours; please complete the First Report of Injury Form (FROI). Reports should be made whether or not an individual anticipates they need to go to the doctor. The employee should also report to Megan if they will go to the doctor after a period of time following the initial report. The form can be faxed to Megan at 507-238-2361. If the injury is serious, seek medical treatment immediately.

TRA credit **does not** accumulate while on work comp. Employees have two options regarding work compensation:

- Option 1. Work comp coordinator (Megan Heller) will make a copy of the check
 - ◆ There will be a deduction from paycheck for total amount
 - ◆ .33 will be taken from sick leave
- Option 2. Employee will keep the check
 - ◆ SPEC will not pay any payroll
 - ◆ There will be no deduction in sick leave days

Corvel Certified Managed Care Plan

Southern Plains Education Cooperative has enrolled with CorVel, a Certified Managed Care Plan, to provide all necessary medical treatment for workers' compensation injuries.

How to Obtain Medical Care through the CorVel Certified Managed Care Plan

You are entitled to receive an initial evaluation from a participating medical provider within 24 hours of your initial request for medical care. If you live within the 7-county metro area, the provider must be geographically convenient and within a 30-mile radius of your workplace or residence. If you live in rural Minnesota, the provider must be geographically convenient and within a 50-mile radius of your workplace or residence. CorVel has a complete managed care provider network which includes the following medical specialties: medical doctor; chiropractor; podiatrist; osteopath; or dentist. You may obtain medical care from a doctor within any of these specialties provided the treatment is available within your community and is appropriate for the injury or illness being reported.

CORVEL ACCESS LINE
612-436-2500 OR 877-703-4241

CorVel has an Access Line to assist in providing access to medical services under Certified Managed Care Plan and to address any questions or complaints regarding managed care services. The CorVel Access Line is answered by CorVel staff during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays) and provides recorded information after regular business hours and on holidays. In addition, all employees can access the CorVel Provider Directory on line at www.corvel.com, PPO Look Up, Find a Provider, Select a Network, MN Certified Managed Care. You can search by location, specialty or service.

How to Obtain an initial appointment-

1. Prior to obtaining an appointment, report your injury to the person or department at your employer that has been designated to receive reports of work-related injuries. Upon reporting your injury, you will be provided with a Patient Identification Card and a Certified Managed Cared Plan Instruction Brochure.
2. Call the CorVel Access Line for assistance in obtaining an appointment with an approved medical provider, or make an appointment directly with a healthcare provider using the online CorVel Provider Network Directory.
3. Please present the Patient Identification Card to the medical provider when you begin treatment.

How to Obtain Emergency Medical Care or Urgently Needed Medical Services-

In the event of a medical emergency, seek treatment at the nearest emergency medical facility or call 911 IMMEDIATELY. Other urgently needed medical services may be obtained at the nearest available urgent care center. Emergency or urgently needed medical services may be obtained from any qualified provider regardless of participation in CorVel's Managed Care Provider Network. Either you or your representative must call the CorVel Access Line within 48 hours of your initial emergency medical treatment. If you need additional medical care, CorVel will assist you in choosing a participation medical provider.

Medical Care Following Your initial Appointment-

- If you received an initial evaluation from a provider in the CorVel Certified Managed Care Plan network and you require treatment beyond your initial appointment, you may continue care with this provider. It is necessary that your required treatment is within this provider's scope of practice.
- If the provider who performed your initial evaluation is **not** a member of the CorVel Certified Managed Care network (non-participating provider), and you wish to continue care with this provider, then refer to the conditions outlined under Medical Care with a Non-Participating Provider
- You also have the right to select a different treating provider following the initial evaluation. For assistance in obtaining an appointment with a new provider, call the **CorVel Access Line**.

Medical Care Outside of CorVel's Regular Business Hours-

CorVel's regular business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. If you require non-emergency medical care outside of regular business hours, you may obtain care through one of the following options:

1. Call the **CorVel Access Line** and leave a recorded message. A member of CorVel's Access Line staff will respond to your message immediately on the next business day and will provide any necessary assistance in obtaining a medical appointment on your behalf.
2. Seek care at the nearest available medical facility. Then call the CorVel Access line within 48 hours. If you require further care, a member of CorVel's Access Line staff will provide any necessary assistance in obtaining a medical appointment on your behalf.

How to Change Treating Providers-

If you are not satisfied with your medical treatment, you are allowed to change treating providers at least once. To change treating providers, call the **CorVel Access Line**.

Note: Selecting a different treating provider following the initial evaluation does not count as a change of treating provider **unless** you have seen the evaluating provider more than once for your current injury.

Medical Care with a Non-Participating Provider

If you have sustained a work-related injury **prior** to this notice, you may continue to receive treatment for that injury from a non-participating until you decide to change doctors. Then you must change to a participating provider.

For work-related injuries occurring **after** this notice, you may seek treatment with a non-participating provider in the following cases:

1. If you have established a history of treatment with a healthcare provider who maintains your medical records and you have received medical care from this provider at least twice in the two years before your date of injury. If your treatment history with a provider does not meet the standard you must seek approval from CorVel or the workers' compensation insurer. The treatment for your work-related injury must also be within this provider's scope of practice. Call the CorVel Access Line for more information and/or if you want to treat with an established – non-participating provider.

- If you decide to change doctors, it must be to a participating provider. All referrals are to be within the CorVel Certified Managed Care Plan Network.
2. If the nearest provider available within the CorVel network is beyond the state mileage guidelines (30-mile radius in the 7-county metro area and 50-mile radius in rural Minnesota) from your place of employment and residence. Call the CorVel Access Line for assistance in finding an appropriate non-participating provider.
 3. If you require emergency or urgently needed medical services.

Questions or Concerns Regarding CorVel's Certified Managed Care Plan

CorVel will be happy to respond to questions about its Certified Managed Care Plan-

Please Call:

877-703-4241

You may also contact the Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry with questions at:

DLI- Greater Minnesota – (Toll Free) 1 (800)-342-5354 (DIAL-DLI)

Metro – (651) 284-5032

Duluth – (218) 733-7810 or (Toll Free) 1 (800) 342-5354

TTY – (651) 297-4198

CorVel likewise welcomes feedback regarding its services. To voice a comment or concern about services you have received from CorVel's Certified Managed Care Plan, call the CorVel Access line at : **877-703-4241**

You may also email your concerns to: MinnesotaReferralCenter@CorVel.com

Dispute Resolution Process Available to Employees

If you wish to file a dispute regarding services you have received from CorVel's Certified Managed Care Plan, please make a written request to initiate CorVel's Dispute Resolution Process to the attention of the Managed Care Manager at:

CorVel Certified Managed Care

3001 NE Broadway Street, Suite 600

Minneapolis, MN 55413

You may also email your request to: MinnesotaReferralCenter@CorVel.com

This process will be completed within 30 days after your written request is received by CorVel's Managed Care Manager.

The Southern Plains Education Cooperative contact for CorVel Managed Care Plan is Laura Teveldal, 235-4304 or marsha.malo@southernplainscoop.org

Return-to-Work Program

Southern Plains Education Cooperative supports the practice of bringing injured employees back to work, as soon as they are medically able, to a position in our cooperative compatible with any physical restrictions they may have. We believe this practice serves the best interests of our employees and cooperative

Current positions can be modified to fit the medical limitations of injured employees by modifying assignments or working reduced hours. If this is not possible, temporary transitional jobs or temporary assignments may be made available.

This return-to-work program is an important part of our cooperative's commitment to manage work-related injuries in a way that's best for our employees and for this cooperative.

WORKPLACE PROCEDURES

COMMUNICATIONS

Employees are encouraged to maintain two-way communication. With employees working in more than 15 buildings across at least two counties, communication can be very difficult. Southern Plains board and administration does all it can to communicate information in a timely manner; however, employees are encouraged to ask questions and bring forward concerns. Employees are also encouraged to bring forward ideas as to how Southern Plains can enhance the services toward the member school districts.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Employees may not use Southern Plains or their position within Southern Plains to represent or engage in legislative activities unless specifically approved by the Director.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees are strongly discouraged from working with students they currently service in the student's home. If individuals do work in this situation, staff should refrain from sharing school information in the home environment or home information in the school environment. Individuals are encouraged to notify the director if they are working in the home environment with students currently serviced in the school setting.

COMPUTERS, ELECTRONIC MAIL, AND VOICE MAIL MESSAGE

Southern Plains makes every effort to make technology available as a business tool to enhance performance and services you provide; however, along with this benefit come important responsibilities which you assume in using the technology resources. Southern Plains Internet Usage Policy is meant to advise those who use our equipment on the subject of access to and disclosure of computer-stored information, voice mail messages, and electronic mail messages created, sent or received by Southern Plains employees with Southern Plains equipment (Refer to Policy #524, "Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy"). Southern Plains employees must adhere to the Southern Plains technology policy and the policy associated with the equipment and network in which the employee is located. The data stored and recorded by electronic means can be accessed by technology staff and administration at any time; users should expect only limited privacy in the contents of files.

Employee use of social media/Student Relationships. It is important to continually be an ambassador to students and communities in a professional manner while promoting the morals and ethics of our districts and the cooperative. With current technology and social networking, it can promote difficulty with setting boundaries. Examples of social networking include blogs, wikis, podcasts, and social networks.

Social networks can be a valuable communication tool for both professional and personal relationships; however, it is important to continually be an ambassador to our students and communities in a professional manner while promoting the morals and ethics we promote. The following are guidelines for setting these boundaries:

- Keep separate social networks for personal use and professional use.
- If you have a social network that is used for personal use, do not "friend" minors that are students you service.
- For "professional" networks, be sure that all communication is appropriate and a positive representation of the districts we service.
- For "personal" networks, check your security and privacy settings frequently.
- Do not post on any networking site pictures of students or information about students without checking for appropriate parental releases or anything that would release private data about students.
- Do not publicly criticize policies or personnel that would negatively promote the mission we service.

- Avoid any public communication that could be construed negatively about the districts or use of tax payer dollars (this is tricky):
 - Do not post about personal items during the school day (you are being paid, “liking” a friend’s family vacation photos is often construed as you using tax payer dollars to browse Facebook).
 - Posting that you cannot wait for the last day of school can construe that you hate your job.

Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Do not fraternize with students as though they are peers or friends. Personal emails and text messages that are unrelated to class work or school activities are inappropriate. Sending pictures to students that are “personal” or any form of sexual dialogue is inappropriate and will result in disciplinary action.

CONFIDENTIALITY/DATA PRIVACY

In the course of their position, all Southern Plains employees can undoubtedly gain knowledge of those students and their families that is considered confidential. Information contained in one or more of the students files pertaining to diagnosis and treatment by another agency, child protection or social services reports, and reports from hospitals and clinics are all considered confidential. This includes information in a student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and other special education forms.

Confidential information cannot be related to another party without the written consent of the parents. Confidential information may be shared in the school among school personnel but only if the individual clearly is in a "need to know" position.

The following are some guidelines to consider regarding the release of confidential information:

- Only share information that is germane to the student's education;
- Only share information with people that can use it to improve the student's education;
- Do not share confidential information in the lounge or out in the community. (If asked about your students in such situations simply state that data privacy laws do not allow you to discuss information about your students in those settings.);
- When in doubt about sharing information, consult the student's special education case manager, a coordinator, or the director of special services.

This policy also refers to employees using access to confidential records (including, but not limited to, student information systems, due process software, and paper records) to gain information for reasons that are not germane to the individual’s professional position.

Note: Many well-meaning individuals and school districts have found themselves in litigation because information was shared about a student in the wrong location or context. Following the guidelines above and Data Privacy Laws can avoid such an occurrence in our district.

See Cooperative Policy #206.

WEAPONS

Individuals are not allowed to possess, use, or distribute weapons on school property.

JURY DUTY

If you are called to jury duty, you are asked to log this absence into Aesop as soon as possible. If there is a change in schedule, please notify Megan Heller of the change. Following jury duty, please bring the check to the Southern Plains Education Cooperative office so a copy can be made. The amount of the check will be deducted from payroll.

MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All employees are subject to the mandatory reporting policy. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused, or has been a victim of sex trafficking, within the preceding three years, you are required to immediately report the information to the local welfare agency, police department, or county sheriff. If the report is about abuse in school, both the oral and written report can be made to the Minnesota Department of Education. Every complaint of alleged child abuse that occurred at school or a school-related activity must be reported to MDE, even if the complaint is not believable. An oral report must be made within 24 hours by telephone or otherwise and a written report must follow within 72 hours (not counting weekends and holidays). Reporting the possible abuse to a supervisor is not required and does not constitute a report. (Refer to Policy #414, "*Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect of Physical or Sexual Abuse*" in the Board Policies.)

This section serves as your notice of the requirements as mandated reporters and that retaliation against an employee who reports alleged maltreatment is prohibited.

SMOKING

Smoking and use of tobacco products are prohibited in all school buildings, the Southern Plains office, and vehicles. (Refer to Policy #419, "*Smoking/Tobacco Free Environment Policy*" in the Board Policies.)

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

Southern Plains is a drug and tobacco-free workplace. (Refer to Policy #418, "*Drug-Free Workplace Policy*" and Policy #419, "*Tobacco-Free Environment*" in the Board Policies.)

Southern Plains will occasionally use canines to search property. There is no expectation of privacy where such searches are concerned. This can include lockers, personal possessions, and automobiles on school property. Use, possession, or sale of illegal drugs may result in disciplinary action or arrest.

PESTICIDES

All Minnesota schools employees have the right to request to be notified prior to pesticide applications on school property. Pesticides include chemicals which are used to control insects, weeds, rodents or other pests as defined by the law (M.S. 123B.575, Subd.9).

Pests have the potential to sting, bite, contaminate, cause property damage, spread disease, cause asthma and/or trigger an allergic reaction. Therefore, school districts prevent and control them.

Because the long-term health effects on children from the application of such pesticides or the class of chemicals to which they belong may not be fully understood.

An estimated schedule of interior pest control inspections and possible treatments is available for review or copying at each school office. A similar estimated schedule is available for applications to school grounds of herbicides and other materials. Parents and staff may receive, at their expense, notification of pesticide application prior to their use in the event application is necessary on unscheduled days. If you wish to receive this notification, please contact the building office(s).

SCHOOL CLOSING/LATE STARTS/EARLY DISMISSALS, AUTO DIAL

In the event of emergency cancellation, late start, or early dismissal of school, the Southern Plains programs will follow the schedule of the school district in which the program is located. Staff should listen to local radio stations or work with the member school district to determine if school will be in session.

Most of our schools require employees to remain in their building until notification is received that all students have been safely transported home; it is expected that Southern Plains staff will follow the same requirements as staff within the member district. Staff need to consult with building administrators or director prior to making exceptions.

For persons who are excused early on days of school closure, it is important that you notify the building secretary that you have been excused early by the administration. Once reaching your destination, it is equally as important that you phone the building secretary to notify the district that you have arrived safely.

ENDING EMPLOYMENT

INSURANCE NOTICE OF CONTINUATION COVERAGE RIGHTS

The right to continuation coverage was created by federal law, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), as well as certain state laws. Continuation coverage may become available to you and to qualified dependents covered under insurance with Southern Plains Education Cooperative. For more information about your rights and obligations, you should review the insurance plan's Summary Plan Description or get a copy of the Plan Document from Julie.

Qualified beneficiaries who elect continuation coverage must pay for it. Qualifying events may include:

1. Hours of employment are reduced;
2. Your employment ends for any reason other than gross misconduct;
3. The employee dies and the employees' spouse or dependent child/children lose coverage as a result; or
4. An individual loses coverage due to becoming divorced or legally separated.

The Plan Administrator must be notified of the qualifying event within 30 days following the date coverage ends.

The length of coverage varies depending upon the qualifying event and plan policy.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Be sure to notify the Southern Plains office of changes of address, name, and additional contact information for at least three years after employment.

UNEMPLOYMENT/RE-EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

If you are terminated from your job or laid off from your job, you may be eligible for this insurance. Please contact the local job service or www.positivelyminnesota.com Additional resources for interviewing and resume writing are available, please contact the director.

FINAL PAY

The payroll cycle varies depending upon a variety of factors. Generally individuals in the two collective bargaining agreements are paid on a twelve month cycle; the final paycheck runs through August of the summer following the end of the school year. This may vary depending upon the terms, conditions, and circumstances for each employee.

RETURN OF PROPERTY

Any Southern Plains or member district property issued to use, such as computer equipment, keys, or identification must be returned to the Southern Plains office at the time of your termination/resignation. You are responsible for any lost or damaged items. The value of any property issued and not returned may be deducted from your paycheck, and you may be required to sign a wage deduction authorization form for this purpose.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Employee Handbook contains important information about Southern Plains Education Cooperative, the contents of this employee handbook summarize some of the programs and policies for Southern Plains. Further clarification of benefits and rights are clarified within individual contracts and work agreements. I understand I should consult the Director of Special Services regarding any questions not answered in the handbook

Since the information, policies, and benefits described herein are subject to change at any time, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur. All such changes will generally be communicated through official notices and a complete copy is available on the Southern Plains website; the board policies and/or collective bargaining agreement take precedence over anything within this manual. Should any part of the Employee Manual be found to be unenforceable or invalid, such finding does not invalidate the entire Employee Manual, but only that part.

I have access to a copy of the Southern Plains Education Cooperative Employee Handbook on the website, www.southernplainedcoop.org and have read it on the date listed below. I understand that I am expected to read the entire handbook, accept the terms of the handbook, and agree to comply with the Southern Plains Education Cooperative policies and requirements. Additionally, I will sign this Acknowledgment of Receipt, and return it to the Southern Plains Office. I understand that this form will be retained in my personnel file.

Signature of Employee

Date

Employee's Name - Printed

I recognize there are occasionally times member school districts ask for information regarding my name, address, and additional contact information (examples include: emergency call lists, weather related announcements, fall inservice information, etc). I give Southern Plains Education Cooperative the right to share this information.

Signature of Employee

Date

Please return to Megan Heller by September 15, 2017