

CLASSIFIED STAFF HANDBOOK 2017-2018

**MARION COUNTY
SPECIAL EDUCATION
COOPERATIVE #617**

Approved by the MCSEC Board of Directors July 17, 2017

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PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

1. The Marion County Special Education Cooperative is dedicated to appropriately meeting and serving the needs of all exceptional children within its boundaries. The Cooperative believes that each child, regardless of ability, deserves the opportunity to develop to the maximum potential in a free and appropriate program. There is a deep commitment in the Cooperative in the belief that each exceptional child can have, through proper education, guidance, and training, a meaningful and productive place in society. The dignity and self-esteem of these special students is to be supported in the process.
2. The Board of Directors and the staff of Marion County Special Education Cooperative are committed to the belief that all students can learn and that programs are developed that will best serve the needs of students.
3. Students with different levels of abilities are the educational responsibility of both special education and regular education. To address this responsibility there shall be the goal of acceptance and integration of students in the schools and communities.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND MISSION STATEMENT

The general objectives and mission of the Marion County Special Education Cooperative are as follows:

1. To provide a free, appropriate education for every exceptional student within the boundaries of the cooperative districts;
2. To stimulate the development of abilities and skills, however limited or extensive, that each individual possesses;
3. To develop the skills of communication, self-care and basic academics; appropriate habits in safety, work, and leisure time activities; and motor and sensory integrity;
4. To develop in each individual the ability to maintain effective relationships with others, and to maintain internal harmony;
5. To develop some degree of vocational competence and economic productivity, regardless of whether the individual lives within a sheltered or supervised environment or lives in complete or relatively complete economic independence;
6. To provide students with different levels of ability vocational services and modified courses, if necessary, to prepare for the adult world of work;
7. To encourage the special education staff to conference with regular education staff to assist with the maintenance of students in regular education;
8. To support the integration of students into the communities in work study or community service programs; and
9. The Marion County Special Education Cooperative will maintain programs within the cooperative boundaries or contract with other agencies for needed services. Determination of programs and contracted services required to meet the needs of students shall be assessed at least annually and more frequently, if necessary.

Adopted October 20, 1980, Revised March 18, 1991

CONFIDENTIALITY

Parental Rights in Special Education – Confidentiality rights regarding all aspects of students who receive special education intervention are protected by federal, state and local regulations. The Kansas Special Education Exceptional Children Act requires each local board of education in Kansas to provide special education and related services to exceptional children. Exceptional children include children who are gifted in addition to children with disabilities as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A copy of Procedural Safeguards Available to Exceptional Children and Their Parents is available at the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office.

CHILD ABUSE

State law requires that when any employee has reason to suspect that a child has been injured as a result of physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse, the person shall report the matter promptly as provided in state statute K.S.A. 38-2223. It is not the responsibility of the school employees to investigate abuse

or neglect. Employees are encouraged to report such incidents to the building administrator as well. According to the County Attorney, the initial call should be to the reporting center at 800-922-5330. If they are not open, then Law Enforcement should be called.

PARAEDUCATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The special education instructional paraeducator is qualified to assist certified/licensed staff in the instruction of exceptional children. The paraeducator is a team member who works alongside the special educator. The responsibility of the paraeducator is to follow the program planned by the certified professional. The professional assumes the primary responsibility for the instruction of the students.

Following is a comparison of paraeducator and teacher responsibilities:

<u>Supervising Teacher</u>	<u>Paraeducator</u>
1. Diagnoses educational needs.	1. Scores and compiles data associated with testing and other types of assessment.
2. Plans instructional programs.	2. Assists with the planning process; copies, transcribes, types, files, etc.
3. Grades students' performance.	3. Checks and scores student work.
4. Takes responsibility for new concepts, skills and each new classroom activity.	4. Reinforces and reviews concepts and skills. Assists students in performing activities initiated by the supervising teacher.
5. Revises instructional programs.	5. Monitors student progress in instructional programs and relates findings to the teacher.
6. Designs instructional materials.	6. Helps develop instructional material designed by the supervising teacher.
7. Designs and implements behavioral intervention plans.	7. Monitors and reinforces student performance concerning behavioral interventions through observation; assumes data collection compilation, and other recordkeeping duties.
8. Communicates with parents.	8. Maintains records associated with the parent conferencing procedure.
9. Responsible for behavioral management.	9. Manages students during times when the teacher is involved in the regular performance of professional duties or has reasons for being out of the classroom; plays supportive role when the supervising teacher is present.

The delineation of supervisor and paraeducator responsibilities offered above may be further clarified by the following list of paraeducator do's and don'ts.

The paraeducator may:

1. Be left alone in the classroom for short periods of time when supervisor is away
The supervisor remains responsible for the classroom at all times and must remain accessible. Regular Education staff may assume supervisory duties
2. Work without direct supervision with individuals or groups of students.

The paraeducator may not:

1. Be used as a substitute for certified teacher, unless actually hired in that capacity and paid accordingly. Paraeducator positions are not to be established in lieu of needed certified or licensed staff.
2. Teach independently new concepts and skills.

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| 3. | Have specific instructional and management responsibilities for the students. | 3. | Be given sole responsibility for working with individual students. |
| 4. | Be involved in student staffing. | 4. | Be assigned to attend student staffings in lieu of the supervising teacher. |
| 5. | Be used to support the integration of exceptional students into general classes by tutoring these students in general class assignment and giving tests orally, etc. | 5. | Be given primary responsibility for mainstreaming one or more students or used to teach regular curriculum content to non-exceptional students. |
| 6. | Be assigned recordkeeping tasks relevant to the classroom assignments. | 6. | Be used to carry out clerical responsibilities usually assigned to other staff members in the building. |
| 7. | Assist the supervisor in supervising assemblies and group field trips. Take individual students on job-related activities, job interviews, curriculum-based recreation, shopping, etc. | 7. | Take full responsibility for supervising assemblies, field trips or other non-teaching duties usually assigned to teachers. |

PERSONNEL FILE INFORMATION

The following should be on file in the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office before the classified staff member will be allowed to work. Payroll checks may be withheld if file is incomplete.

- Employee Application
- Employee Agreement
- Personal Information and Emergency Contacts
- W-4
- K-4
- Health/TB Test Form
- I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification (include proof of identity)
- Oath or Affirmation of Officer or Employee (must be notarized)
- Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs) Report of Member Status and Beneficiary Form (must be witnessed)
- Drug Free Policy Signature Sheet
- Section 125 Benefit Selection Form
- Authorization Agreement for Direct Deposit of Payroll
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Benefit Election Change Form

OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Marion County Special Education Cooperative will send out offers of employment following approval of compensation for the upcoming school year. Classified staff members with questions concerning the continuation of their employment should contact the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office.

If the classified staff member does not wish to renew his or her offer of employment, a letter of resignation should be submitted to the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office at the time this decision is made.

DRESS CODE

Classified staff members are expected to dress appropriately and professionally at all times. You will also be expected to follow all dress codes that are established by the building and district you work in. Piercings and tattoos on the face are highly discouraged, as they may cause students to be distracted during learning times. There may be some exceptions based on the type of program to which you are assigned.

USE OF CELL PHONES

Paraeducators are required to leave their cell phones in their lockers or purses during learning time. You will be allowed to check your phones at scheduled breaks and lunch. If your position requires you to carry your cell phone to stay in contact with your supervising teacher and other staff, you are asked to use it only for school and not for the purpose of social media.

WAGE DETERMINATION

Paraeducator’s pay will be determined by their placement on the paraeducator compensation schedule. The column that the paraeducator is placed in on the schedule is determined by the number of college credit hours earned and only upon receipt of official college transcripts or receipt of a teaching license showing college degree earned. Paras will notify MCSEC Central Office in writing prior to June 1 of proposed movement to the next column on the para wage schedule for the upcoming school year. Movement will not take place until official college transcripts are received in the MCSEC Central Office. The step that the paraeducator is placed on is determined by the years of experience working for Marion County Special Education Cooperative or other school districts. Placement on the paraeducator compensation schedule will be determined by the Executive Director. Other classified staff pay shall be determined by the board.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Any Paraeducator working 30 hours or more is eligible for group health insurance. The Board will pay \$383.00 per month towards the plan of the paras choice.

Deductible	<u>\$650</u>	<u>\$1,300</u>	<u>\$2,000</u>
Single Monthly Premium	\$ 578.00	\$ 528.00	\$ 497.00
Family Monthly Premium	\$1,328.00	\$1,213.00	\$1,141.00

An additional portion of the premium will be deducted from the paras pay each month during the school year to cover insurance through the summer months.

A signed ESSDACK Health Insurance Group Benefit Election/Change Form is required annually, regardless of whether you take insurance or not.

EVALUATION

Classified staff is required to go through an evaluation process as follows:

Paraeducators– One evaluation is required per school year and shall be completed by the supervisor by April 1st. Exception may be made for paras hired during the school year. The supervisor has the prerogative to evaluate the paraeducator more than required if desired.

Other classified staff shall be evaluated annually.

TIMESHEETS & PAY – PLEASE NOTE: MCSEC WILL BE TRANSITIONING TO A NEW SOFTWARE PROGRAM THAT WILL INCLUDE A TIME KEEPING SYSTEM. UNTIL THEN, YOU WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP YOUR TIME ON A PAPER TIMESHEET.

Each hourly classified staff member must maintain a record of hours worked on timesheets provided by the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office. These timesheets should be submitted to the supervisor by Friday of the week worked. The supervisor will then submit the timesheets to the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office by no later than the Monday following the week worked.

Employees may elect to receive their pay by direct deposit or by paper check. Employees selecting the direct deposit option will have their pay deposited in their bank accounts on the 5th of the month or the 1st working day preceding the 5th if the 5th is not a business day. Paper checks will be mailed or will be available to be picked up on the 5th of the month or the 1st working day preceding the 5th if the 5th is not a business day. If the 5th is on a weekend or a holiday, the preceding workday will be the pay date.

LEAVE AND RECORDING OF HOURS

Recording Hours - Marion County Special Education Cooperative expects all hourly classified staff members to account for the number of hours stated in the offer of employment by recording on the timesheet the hours worked and/or leave taken. If the hours on the timesheet do not match these hours, **there must be an explanation of the difference in the comment section.**

Taking Leave - When a classified staff member needs time off for sick leave or for personal reasons, MCSEC expects paid sick leave or paid personal leave to be used before taking time off without pay. The justification for this is because Categorical Aid dollars are based on total hours paid, and we want to ensure that our paras are paid the minimum hours needed for full reimbursement from the State. All paid leave for classified staff members is based on the number of hours stated in the offer of employment.

Requesting Unpaid Leave – If a classified staff member needs sick leave and is out of paid sick leave the classified staff member must request approval from the Executive Director for the leave. If a classified staff member needs personal leave and is out of paid personal leave the classified staff member must request approval from the Executive Director. Request for unpaid personal leave must be approved 3 business days prior to the leave. An explanation must be written in the comment section of the time sheet. Requests for unpaid leave must be submitted on a Request for Leave/Report of Absence form.

Reporting Absences – The classified staff member must contact the appropriate building level person as soon as possible (supervisor, principal, secretary, etc.) when they know they will not be at work. All leave must be recorded on the timesheet.

Attendance – Attendance and punctuality convey how seriously you take your job. The supervising teacher and the students you work with count on you being at work and on time every day. Excessive absences can interrupt student learning. Paras with an excessive number of absences (10 or more) will be reviewed by the Executive Director.

Extended Personal Leave – Prior approval from the Executive Director is required for a classified staff member who is requesting to take more than two consecutive personal days during the regular school year. Extended leave during the school year is discouraged and may be denied.

SICK LEAVE

- Sick leave for paras is granted at the rate of ten days per employment year, accrued one day per month. Sick leave for 12-month employees is granted at the rate of twelve days per employment year. A day is defined as the average hours worked per day based on the number of hours stated in the offer of employment of each individual classified staff member, (e.g. The average hours worked per day will be determined by dividing the number of hours in the offer of employment per week by five.)
- Sick leave for paras is allowed to accumulate to a total of seventy days (70); for 12-month employees to accumulate to a total of eighty-seven (87) days.
- Twelve month classified staff shall be paid twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for each day of unused sick leave in excess of 87 days at the end of the fiscal year. Payment shall be made as soon as processing of such pay can be completed. A day is defined as 8 hours. All partial days shall be forfeited. Paras shall be paid twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for each day of unused sick leave in excess of 70 days at the end of the fiscal year. Payment shall be processed in July, for payment in August. A day is defined as 8 hours. All partial days shall be forfeited.
- Sick leave may be taken in 1/4-hour segments.
- Sick leave absence is granted for personal illness or doctor's appointments or for illness or doctor's appointments of immediate family.
- By obtaining approval from the Executive Director, sick leave absence will be granted to attend a funeral.
- If a classified staff member believes that sick leave should be granted for reasons other than those listed above, arrangements must be made with Executive Director before the absence.
- A doctor's order stating the length of time the classified staff member needs to be off work may be required.
- Upon retirement, unused sick leave accumulation will be reimbursed at the rate of \$25.00 per day. Retiring classified personnel on KPERS retirement benefits will receive payment for the unused sick leave. No pay will be given for sick leave if the staff member leaves employment for reasons other than retirement. A day will be considered eight (8) hours. Partial days will be forfeited.

PERSONAL LEAVE

- Personal leave is granted at the rate of two days per employment year. A day is defined as the average hours worked per day based on the number of hours stated in the offer of employment of each individual classified staff member, (e.g. The average hours worked per day will be determined by dividing the number of hours in the offer of employment per week by five.)
- Unused personal leave will be added to sick leave at the end of the school year.
- Personal leave may be taken in 1/4-hour segments.
- Personal leave may be taken without administrative review to conduct personal business.
- Personal leave shall be submitted to their supervisor three school days in advance of the anticipated date(s) of leave

VACATION

Twelve month employees who work four (4) or more hours every day (20 hours per week) on a regular schedule are granted ten (10) days of paid vacation per employment year. (The anticipated weekly hours shall be divided by five to determine the daily rate). The time of vacation shall be approved by the Director. If a twelve month employee begins employment after July 1, vacation entitlement shall accumulate at the rate of one (1) day per month of employment up to a maximum of ten (10) days. After five (5) years of employment each 12 month employee shall receive fifteen (15) days of paid vacation per employment year.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

A classified staff member may use personal leave for school closings due to weather, sporting events, or other circumstances causing neighborhood school closings.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

Approval to attend any professional development (PD) not sponsored by Marion County Special Education Cooperative must be requested and granted prior to attending the PD activity. The request must be made on a Request for Leave form and submitted to the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office well ahead of the PD activity date.

JURY DUTY

Classified staff members shall be released for jury duty and paid for the average hours worked per day based on their offer of employment provided they forward to Marion County Special Education Cooperative the amount paid to them by the court. The amount paid by the court for transportation expense will be retained by the classified staff member.

FMLA – The Family and Medical Leave Act

FMLA provides certain employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year. It also requires that their group health benefits be maintained during the leave.

FMLA applies to all public agencies, all public and private elementary and secondary schools, and companies with 50 or more employees. These employers must provide an eligible employee with up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year for any of the following reasons:

- For the birth and care of the newborn child of an employee;
- For placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care;
- To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or
- To take medical leave when the employee is unable to work due to a serious health condition.

Employees are eligible for leave if they have worked for their employer at least 12 months, at least 1,250 hours over the past 12 months, and work at a location where the company employs 50 or more employees within 75 miles. Whether an employee has worked the minimum 1,250 hours of service is determined according to FLSA principles for determining compensable hours or work.

Time taken off work due to pregnancy complications can be counted against the 12 weeks of family and medical leave.

A final rule effective on January 16, 2009, updates the FMLA regulations to implement new military family leave entitlements enacted under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008.

HOLIDAY PAY

Paraeducators employed and working before November 1, of the current school year, will receive pay based upon their daily rate (e.g. The average hours worked per day will be determined by dividing the number of hours in the offer of employment per week by five) for one holiday for each year of experience working for Marion County Special Education Cooperative up to a maximum of five days. Employee must be employed through the Winter Break to receive holiday pay. Compensation for all paid holidays will be distributed in the payroll processed in January and paid out on February's payroll. If there is a separation in employment, the Executive Director will determine years of experience.

Twelve month employees shall receive the following paid holidays which could include other days determined at the discretion of the Executive Director:

New Year's Day
Three Days during Spring Break
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving
Friday following Thanksgiving
Christmas Day
Three Extra Days during Winter Break

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, paraeducator staff development requirements will be tiered based on the special education experiences and/or credentials of the paraeducator.

1. 20 Staff Development Hours Required

Paras who have not worked as a Kansas special education para for at least the past 3 years are to complete 20 hours of professional development if employed for 9 months during the school year.

2. 10 Staff Development Hours Required

Paras who have worked as a Kansas special education para for at least the past 3 years as validated through archived Special Education Personnel data must complete 10 hours of professional development if employed for 9 months during the school year.

3. Paras who hold a current Kansas license/certificate in any of the following areas will attend professional development required by Marion County Special Education Cooperative #617 in addition to keeping their license/certificate current.

Teacher
Related service provider, (SLP or OT, PT, etc)
Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA)
Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA) or;
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

4. If a para passes the assessment for becoming Highly Qualified, they do not need any further professional development for the year in which they become Highly Qualified, except for professional development required by Marion County Special Education Cooperative #617. Upon passing approved assessments to attain Highly Qualified status, they will be paid \$150.00. They will not be paid for any hours spent in preparation for or in taking the assessments.

- Para Orientation is still required.
- Professional development activities should be specifically related to the para's job assignment and type of program.
- Professional development hours can be accumulated by documentation in the following three areas:
 - **Knowledge** – this is simply the gaining of information (i.e.; attending a workshop, reading a book, watching a video, observation of process or procedure).
 - **Application** – is implementing the knowledge and information with a student (i.e.; using Mandt training to de-escalate a student with behavior problems, showing a student how to use a graphic organizer or student planner, using differentiated instruction with special needs students, assisting students in using Six-Trait Reading or Writing.)
 - **Impact** – is proving that implementation of an applied process or procedure is positively impacting student performance (i.e.; implementation of Mandt procedure reduces students inappropriate behaviors, implementation of use of graphic organizers or student planners increases students submission of homework, implementation of Six-Trait Reading or Writing improves students reading and writing scores.)

- Requests for Professional Development must be submitted on the appropriate form (knowledge, application, or impact form) unless the Professional Development activity is an on-line course through Infinitec (myinfinitec.org). For an On-line course you are not required to submit the Request form, but you must submit the certificate that you receive upon passing the on-line quiz.

- **Example of Knowledge/Application/Impact Professional Development hours:**

1. Para attends a 3-hour Guided Reading Workshop.
2. Para and supervising teacher develop implementation plan for those strategies learned; supervising teacher verifies the para implemented the strategies – the para can get up to 6 hours (up to 2 times the number of knowledge hours) for this implementation.
3. Para and supervising teacher determine a way to keep track of student progress and can demonstrate the impact on the student; teacher verifies the data exists – the para can get up to a maximum of 9 hours (3 times the number of knowledge for this impact documentation).
4. Result: The para could get a total of 18 hours for following through with the Guided Reading Workshop.

Marion County Special Education Cooperative may require that a paraeducator receive training beyond the state requirement if the paraeducator's duties are deemed to require skills and knowledge beyond those possessed by the individual. Paraeducators will receive pay for completing up to 20 hours (if employed as a paraeducator for less than the past 3 years) or up to 10 hours (if employed as a para for at least the past 3 years) of Professional Development. Approval from the Executive Director is required if Professional Development is required above 20 hours. Sometimes paraeducators are asked to attend district staff meetings such as at the beginning of the year. Paraeducators may be paid for these meetings but this time may not be considered Professional Development.

College hours taken during the year may be substituted for PD hours (1 college hour = 20 professional development hours) following the paraeducator's beginning employment with Marion County Special Education Cooperative but must be pre-approved. A final grade or copy of the college transcript(s) must be submitted to the central office at the conclusion of the course for verification. **However, a para will not be paid their hourly wage while participating in the class.**

When requesting pay for on-line courses and/or other Professional Development activities, please do not exceed 40 hours per week. For example, if you work 30 hours per week, you may only take up to 10 on-line courses during that week.

Use of alternative PD activities (videos, books, etc.) will require prior approval.

All PD activities must be completed by April 1st and all Paraeducator Professional Development Request for Knowledge Level Points forms (or Application or Impact forms, if applicable) turned in to the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office at that time

Driving time to PD activities is not counted on the PD Record Sheet nor is time spent eating a meal while attending a PD activity unless there is a presentation during that meal. Meals are not reimbursed unless paid for as part of the registration, or the professional development involves an overnight stay approved by the Executive Director.

MILEAGE

Classified staff members are reimbursed for approved mileage according to Marion County Special Education Cooperative Board Policy.

Mileage will be paid to travel from one work site to another, to provide necessary transportation to students when no other transportation is available, and to travel to PD activities as previously authorized in writing by the Executive Director.

Each classified staff member requesting reimbursement for mileage must submit a Reimbursement Claim Form to the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office. All mileage reimbursement checks are issued at the Board of Directors meeting on the third Monday of the month. Forms submitted by the 10th day of the month will be reimbursed at the next board meeting.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

The Marion County Special Education Cooperative board has adopted a Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan, which conforms to current Occupation Safety and Health Administration standards and regulations of the Kansas Department of Human Resources.

All staff shall receive the annual training necessary to implement the plan. A copy of the plan is available at the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office.

KANSAS WORKERS COMPENSATION

- A. Notice of Accident – If an employee is injured on the job, the supervisor must be notified immediately. Additionally, the employee (or supervisor if the employee is incapacitated), and any witnesses to the accident, shall immediately report the accident to the MCSEC central office. Employees must notify the employer within ten days of an accident or the claim may be barred. Additional information about your rights and responsibilities under workers compensation may be obtained from the Marion County Special Education Cooperative central office. Employees injured on the job and requiring medical attention must be examined by a physician designated by Marion County Special Education Cooperative.

- B. Coverage – Benefits are for personal injury from accident or occupational disease arising out of and in the course of employment with Marion County Special Education Cooperative. Injuries which occur during recreational or social events under circumstances where the employee is under no duty to attend, and where the injury did not result from the performance of tasks related to normal job duties, are not covered under workers compensation.

Any employee who is off work and drawing workers compensation shall be required to provide the Clerk of the Board with a written doctor's release before the employee is allowed to return to work. In addition, should the employee be released to return to work by a doctor and fail to do so, all benefits under sick leave shall be ended and those benefits under workers compensation shall be restricted as provided by current statute.