

# **Howell Mountain Elementary School District**



**Classified Manual**

**2025-2026**



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## The Basics

### Welcome to Howell Mountain Elementary School

The Howell Mountain Elementary School District (HMESD) is a single-school local education agency (LEA) in Angwin, California, serving children from their entry into Transitional Kindergarten through their promotion from 8th Grade. For more than 100 years, HMESD has been tasked with educating the students of Angwin and has also served the community in various other ways, such as hosting community workshops and town hall meetings. From time to time, the school also supports fundraisers, not only for small local groups, but also for larger, out-of-area non-profits.

Over the years, HMESD has created and fine-tuned a Vision Statement that defines our philosophy about providing an education to the students at HMESD. That Vision Statement reads:

*Howell Mountain Elementary School District provides an environment where all students, staff, and parents are given the opportunity to reach their potential.*

Although teachers are the front-line instructors for our students, a strong support staff is essential to ensuring a functioning school. In other words, we cannot do this without people like you.

Contained in this handbook is information you need to be successful at your job. Please take the time to read it in its entirety and feel free to ask your supervisor any questions you may have.

Good luck, and welcome to Howell Mountain School!

### The Howell Mountain Elementary School District School Board

Because HMESD is a public agency, albeit a small one, oversight is provided by a governing board that is elected by the voters of Angwin. Elections for the five-member Board are staggered in order to prevent the election of an entirely new slate of trustees all at the same time. Standard terms for Board Members is four years, although shorter terms are possible through the process of appointment or resignation.

It is important to note that, over the years, many Board Members have filled dual roles as Board Members and as parents of one or more children at HMESD. Although this has the potential to occasionally create challenging situations, the Board Members are usually extremely adept at separating their roles, and they respect the professionalism of those at HMESD who can do the same.

The Board fills many roles at HMESD. However, they do not involve themselves in the daily operations of HMESD. In fact, individual Board Members have no specific authority unless explicitly granted that authority by the entire Board.

Some of the more important tasks of the Board include:

- Hiring and evaluating the Superintendent/Principal
- Reviewing and approving the HMESD budget
- Approving hiring, layoffs, and terminations
- Providing philosophical direction for HMESD
- Approving new curriculum
- Developing and approving Board Policy
- Setting parameters for negotiations with certificated employee organizations and ratifying collective bargaining agreements

### The Office of the Superintendent and Principal

The daily operations of HMES are the responsibility of the Principal, while HMESD operations are the responsibility of the Superintendent. For many years, HMESD employed a single person for both positions. Then two people began to split the duties of these offices. Currently, HMESD has reverted to a single Superintendent/Principal model.

The Superintendent serves as the Chief Executive Officer for HMESD. Their job is to handle the daily operations of HMESD, carry out the direction of the Board, and provide leadership and supervision to employees.

Some of the duties of the Superintendent include:

- Facilitating Board Meetings
- Conducting certificated union negotiations
- Recommending staff hiring, discipline, and termination
- Serving as community liaison

The duties of the Principal are different. They are aligned more with the structure and function of HMES as they relate to the direct delivery of instruction.

Some of the duties of the Principal include:

- Facilitating staff meetings and staff development
- Researching curriculum and making recommendations about adoptions to the Board
- Overseeing student discipline
- Serving as community liaison
- Leading various school committees

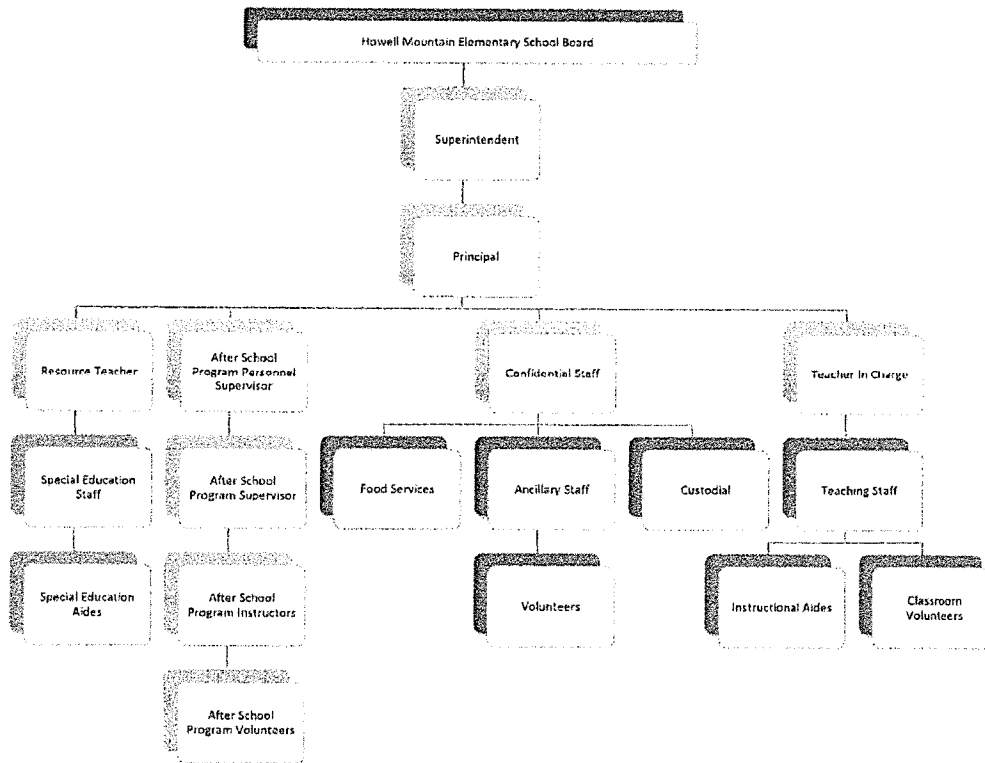
The Superintendent/Principal maintains responsibility for all operations and personnel at HMESD. They conduct evaluations and make recommendations to the Board based on their findings. Although you may be assigned to an immediate supervisor, the Superintendent/Principal is available in the event conflicts arise that surpass your immediate supervisor's ability to resolve.

#### Organizational Chart

The organizational chart below (Chart 1) represents the structure at HMESD. Please review the chart carefully, as you may be required to report to different people depending on your job. Many of the employees at HMESD hold multiple positions, each position having different supervisors. Should you need any clarification on who your supervisor is, or to which person you need to report issues or concerns, please ask one of the HMESD Office staff. They can help point you in the right direction.



Chart 1



### Board Policies/Administrative Regulations vs. Office Policy

Board Policies are documents adopted by the Board that prescribe rules for HMESD and cover mission, values, standards, and necessary procedures, among other topics. Board Policies also hold the Board, employees, and the public accountable. While not always adopted by the Board, the Superintendent is responsible for developing and enforcing Administrative Regulations, which provide details on how to implement Board Policy. It is often helpful to think of Board Policies as the *what* and the *why*, and Administrative Regulations as the *who*, the *how*, the *where*, and the *when*. Administrative Regulations are based on state and federal law and cover topics such as how employees receive their pay and sick leave, can be disciplined, and more. Every employee is encouraged to read the Board Policies and Administrative Regulations because you will be held accountable for following them. Board Policies and Administrative Regulations are also useful resources for answering questions you may have about the operation of HMESD and helping you make informed decisions while at work. Board Policies and Administrative Regulations can be found [here](#) on the HMESD website.

Information contained in this Handbook is intended to supplement Board Policies and Administrative Regulations. To the extent any information in this Handbook conflicts with Board Policy or Administrative Regulation, the Board Policy and/or Administrative Regulation shall be controlling.

Office Policies are less formal and consist of the operating procedures designed to make the systems at HMESD run smoothly. These policies address filling out required forms, creating requests before making purchases, following the dress code, and so on. Many of these policies are discussed later on in this Handbook. For example, the Dress Code can be found under BP 4119.22/4219.22/4319.22 and BP/AR 5132.

### HMESD Website

The HMESD website, which can be found [here](#), contains a wealth of information for employees, parents, and students. Please take some time to visit the site and explore it. The site contains a link to employee email (for when you are off campus), links to Aeries (our student information system), and links to downloadable forms, as well as calendars for the year and menus for the month.

The website resides off-campus (as does our email), which allows HMESD to maintain effective communications with the public regardless of whether the campus is having problems with the internet or issues with the electrical grid. During an emergency, it is possible to update the site remotely, thus assisting parents and staff with making informed decisions.

#### *Website Content*

Occasionally a need arises for an individual or a department to place information on the website. This information should be sent to the Webmaster, who can obtain approval for the posting and enter the information as requested. The request for the posting, containing the reason for the request, should be emailed to the Webmaster to upload it to the website. Any pertinent images should be sent along with the request.

#### *Forms*

HMESD staff keep many regularly used forms on the website to assist staff, parents, and the public with their needs. The forms that are currently online are comprehensive but by no means complete. If you feel a form should be included online, please send a request and the form in either Word or PDF format in the same way you would a content request.

Please use the website to search for a form before you ask office personnel to find and print one for you. This simple effort on your part greatly reduces the workload on the office staff.

#### *Website Links*

Additional content links can be requested using the same method as above. Many links exist now to increase the productivity of staff, parents, students, and the public by providing shortcuts to complicated web addresses that are used daily. Many of these links are found in the relevant sections along the top navigation bar.

## **Employment**

### 11-Month vs. 12-Month Employees

Most employees at HMESD are 11-Month employees. 11-Month employees work the full school year, from the first day until the last day. This usually equals about 180 days, although some employees may work a few additional days for preparation and training. 11-Month employees hold various jobs, such as Classroom Teacher, Paraeducator, Food Service Supervisor, and Yard Duty Supervisor.

A few people are considered 12-Month employees, who work year-round. These employees include the Superintendent, the HMESD Secretary, the Business and Operations Manager, and some custodial and maintenance support personnel.

When you are hired by HMESD, you will be informed of your work schedule, both in hours per day as well as days per year. HMESD will develop a work calendar for you that will allow you to schedule much of your year and plan for your daily workload. Of course, issues may arise that require HMESD to ask that you put in additional hours or days throughout the year. Although your willingness to fulfill the needs of HMESD is always appreciated, it is completely up to you whether you decide to work additional hours. HMESD will not penalize you for deciding that you cannot accommodate the request for additional hours.

### Classified vs. Confidential vs. Certificated

Classified Employees are staff members who are not teachers and who are not HMESD management. Classified Employees make up many of the support services at HMESD, such as office support, paraeducators, translators, custodial services, food services, and additional ancillary staff. Certain jobs, such as paraeducator, require completion of the equivalent of two years of college or pass a certifying test. Almost all Classified Employees are considered 11-Month Employees. Although there are many districts where the Classified Employees are part of a union, there is currently no union for Classified Employees at HMESD.

Confidential Employees are staff members who work in management positions for HMESD and support the Superintendent/Principal in the operation of HMESD. These management positions often provide supervision of Classified Employees, providing a system of intervention short of the administrators. Confidential Employees may be consulted by the Superintendent/Principal on a wide variety of matters, including employee evaluations.

Certificated Employees make up the teaching staff and include the Superintendent/Principal. Certificated Employees include classroom teachers, special education teachers, physical education teachers, Title I teachers, and more. Certificated Employees hold credentials issued by the State of California, allowing them to teach in a multi-grade classroom or to teach special subjects. Certificated Employees are represented by the California Teachers' Association (CTA), specifically the Howell Mountain Educators' Association (HMEA).

### Hourly (non-exempt) vs. Salary (exempt) Employees

An hourly employee has a pay rate that is directly related to hours worked. Most Classified Employees are hourly employees. Hourly rates are determined by the HMESD School Board (School Board), based on recommendations from the administrative team. Historically, when the School Board negotiates raises in pay or benefits for Certificated Employees, similar raises are also afforded to Classified Employees. However, this is not always the case. Likewise, if Certificated staffing reductions must be made, there are often similar reductions for Classified Employees.

A salaried employee is a staff member who has an annual pay rate that is commonly divided equally over 12 months. There are both Certificated and Confidential Employees who are considered salaried, as is the Superintendent/Principal. Certificated Employees negotiate pay raises and benefits through HMTA. The Superintendent/Principal are contracted employees, and they negotiate new contracts directly with the School Board.

Over the past several years, Classified Employees have been able to take advantage of an *Equalized Pay Schedule*. This is explained later in the Payroll Section of this Handbook.

### Probationary vs. Permanent Status

A probationary Classified Employee is one who has been employed by HMESD in paid service for less than six months or 130 days, whichever is longer. Once a Classified Employee has been employed by HMESD for six months or 130 days of paid service, whichever is longer, that employee shall be re-classified as a permanent employee. During the probationary period, the Superintendent/Principal can terminate the Classified Employee's employment without the consent of the School Board. Specifics regarding probationary and permanent status can be found in Board Policy 4216: Probationary/Permanent Status.

A permanent Classified Employee who accepts a promotion and fails to complete the probationary period for that promotional position, shall be employed in the classification from which the employee was promoted. (Education Code 45113.)

During the probationary period, Classified Employees can be evaluated many times, each time with the intention of helping the employee reach permanency. After a Classified Employee becomes a permanent employee, it is most likely that they will be evaluated only once per year. The Superintendent/Principal may evaluate any Classified Employee more often with the intention of providing needed support.

#### Fingerprinting and Tuberculosis Testing Requirements

Every employee, Classified, Confidential, and Certificated, including the Superintendent/Principal, must submit to a fingerprint clearance check from the State of California and the Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as obtain a clean tuberculosis (TB) screening. TB screening replaces the traditional skin test. Based on the results of the screening, a doctor will determine if the skin test is required.

Both the fingerprint clearance check and the TB screening are paid for by HMESD. You will be given a form for the fingerprint clearance check and can go to either the Calistoga Police Department - call 707-942-2810 ahead for times - or another vendor such as Photo Pro in Napa (707-255-0772). Any vendor that conducts the Live Scan fingerprinting clearance check can accommodate you. Please keep your receipt, and HMESD will reimburse you for your fingerprint clearance and TB test costs.

#### Pay Schedules

Pay schedules are maintained for every position within HMESD. Pay is solely based on experience and time working for HMESD.

The following pay schedules are maintained by HMESD and are readily available on the HMESD's website:

- Classified Employees - Regular
- Classified Employees - Speech Pathologist and Nurse
- Classified Employees - Special Education Specialist
- Confidential Classified Employees
- Certificated Employees - 183 Days

Classified Employees' pay schedules range from the initial year of service (Step 1) to the ninth year of service (Step 9).

Pay increases may be provided annually as experience is gained and the employee moves horizontally on the pay schedule from step to step. Once an employee has reached the highest step, their pay is frozen, and they are reliant on the School Board to increase the pay scale based on many factors, one of which includes the financial health of HMESD. Increases to the pay schedule may be approved by the School Board in conjunction with negotiated raises by HMTA or independently if the School Board determines an adjustment is required.

#### Benefits

HMESD offers several benefits to employees depending on their employment status. From health insurance to wellness stipends to life insurance, the benefits are dependent on how many hours the employee is scheduled to work in an average week.

HMESD prorates all employee benefits based on the percentage of FTE, or Full Time Equivalent employment. For example, if an employee works 20 hours per week, they are considered a 0.5 FTE. No health and welfare benefits are provided for Classified Employees who work less than 0.75 FTE, or 30 hours per week. Chart 2 shows the proration of benefits provided by HMESD. Life insurance is provided only for full-time employees.

*Chart 2*

Hours/Week	% of Employer Paid Benefit Allowance
30.0	75%
32.5	81%
35.0	88%
37.5	94%
40.0	100%

Health care benefits are provided through CalPERS, and your choices are either Blue Cross, Kaiser, and other vendors. The annual cap on health and welfare benefits is currently Single at \$14,000, Single +1 at \$16,000, and families at \$18,000. However, this is subject to change based on annual negotiations. Please confirm these amounts with HMESD staff. These amounts are the maximum combined amounts HMESD will pay for your medical, dental, and vision. Should you add family members to your plan, you may exceed the cap, at which point the difference will be deducted from your monthly paycheck.

For full-time employees, HMESD provides a \$50,000.00 life insurance policy at no charge.

#### Vacation and Sick Leave

**All** employees are entitled to sick leave. Classified Employees who are employed five days a week are entitled to 12 days of sick leave per fiscal year. Employees who work less than a full fiscal year or fewer than five days a week (part-time employees) are granted sick leave in proportion to the time they work. However, part-time employees who are entitled to less than 24 hours of paid sick leave per fiscal year due to the amount of time worked are granted sick leave pursuant to [California Labor Code Section 246](#), if they are eligible. This leave can be used for medical reasons, such as illness or doctor's appointments. Sick leave can be rolled over from year-to-year, with the unused balance accruing as time passes. If you leave HMESD and go to work at another public school, your sick leave can be transferred to your new place of employment.

In order to use sick leave, a leave request **must** be filled out, if possible, prior to your absence. If the circumstances prohibit requesting leave before the absence, a leave slip must be completed and submitted to the office no later than three business days after your return to work. For absences lasting longer than three days, a doctor's note will be required.

Vacation accrual depends on whether an employee is a 11-Month or a 12-Month employee. Because 11-Month employees are expected to perform their jobs for the entirety of the school year, vacation days are earned (according to the proration schedule in Chart 2), but they are paid out monthly on their paycheck. 12-Month employees accrue vacation hours, which can roll-over from year-to-year. 12-Month employees may take their vacation at any time, assuming the proper forms have been submitted and approved by the Superintendent/Principal. It is requested that no vacation leave be applied for within the first two weeks or the last two weeks of the school year.

#### Workplace Injuries

Although HMESD is considered a low incident workplace, injuries can occur. Any employee who is injured in the workplace is **required** to report the injury to their supervisor **immediately**.

#### Disability

HMESD employees do not pay into the State disability system. It is important to understand what this means. Although there is always workers' compensation if you are injured on the job, injuries that result from activities outside the workplace are not eligible for coverage by State services.

HMESD currently engages American Fidelity as an option for employees who wish to purchase a third-party disability plan. Should you wish to purchase such a plan, please speak to the HMESD Admin Assistant.

#### Family Medical Leave

Both the State and the federal governments provide for advanced medical leave to care for yourself or a family member. In California, the law is known as the California Paid Family Leave program, or CPFL. The federal law, known as the Family and Medical Leave Act, or FMLA, coexists with the CPFL and provides additional rights to employees.

Both laws are complicated and are intended to protect employment when an employee is forced to take an extended leave of absence due to exigent family needs. If you are presented with such a situation or emergency, you are urged to consult the Admin Assistant in order to plan your time away from work. The specifics of the programs can be explained at that time.

#### Unpaid Leave

Although 11-Month employees receive vacation payouts on a monthly basis and are expected to work every day throughout the year (illness leave excluded), HMESD recognizes there are times when an employee may need to take unpaid time off for a variety of reasons. When these situations occur, employees may formally request unpaid leave. This request is preliminarily approved or denied by the Superintendent/Principal. If preliminary approval is granted, the request is placed on the next School Board agenda. The School Board makes the final decision regarding the leave request.

#### Mandated Reporters

Every employee who works at a public school is considered by the State of California to be a mandated reporter of child abuse. The law requires every employee to be trained within six weeks of their initial employment and subsequently retrained on an annual basis within six weeks of the start of the school year. You were given, as part of your new hire packet, a form to sign acknowledging this requirement.

Online training can be accessed through Vector Solutions. Select the "Educator" link and begin the training. Please keep track of the time your training takes on your timesheet. HMESD will pay for a maximum of 1 hour to complete the training, although it is expected that the training will only last an average of two hours. Under **no circumstances** will HMESD pay overtime for your participation in this mandated training.

#### Disaster Service Workers

All public employees, including public school employees, with the exception of legally employed non-citizens, are considered Disaster Service Workers and are required to take an oath attesting to this fact. Included in your new hire packet was an oath form that should be signed and returned to the HMESD office along with your other employment documents.

Being a Disaster Service Worker, in essence, requires you to render assistance at HMESD in the event of a disaster until such time as you are released by a supervisor. In addition to not being able to leave campus without specific permission while you are working, you may also be required to report to work even if you are not currently scheduled to do so.

During a disaster or emergency, you may be required to fulfill job duties that you normally do not. Although you may be uncomfortable with this idea, you will not be asked to complete a task for which you have no specific knowledge, experience, or skill. An example of this would be asking someone with no first aid experience to administer emergency medical care.

Angwin has a strong emergency services system in place, and, in the event of a large disaster, they would be spread thin and need as much support as possible. If you have a desire to advance your emergency skills in order to serve HMESD and the Angwin community in a more effective way, please talk to someone

in the HMESD office. They can assist in finding resources and supporting your efforts to increase your education.

### Children of Employees

Although HMESD's mission is to serve children, generally a student must be enrolled at HMESD if they are to be on campus during the school day. Our liability insurance will not cover children on campus who are not enrolled or who are not part of an organized event such as a sports event or other program. Community events such as back-to-school night and our annual field day also present exceptions to this rule.

We understand that from time to time employees may wish to bring their children with them to work. However, HMESD does not allow this practice and asks that you make alternative childcare arrangements.

## **Payroll**

### Mandatory Forms

HMESD uses several forms to ensure that payroll accounting is done accurately. In this section, we will discuss those forms and how you can minimize any additional work by HMESD staff while maximizing your pay and benefits. There are many laws that govern the payroll system, and you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with this Handbook section to avoid mistakes at a later date.

### Pay Periods

Payday comes once a month at HMESD, on the last working day of the month. Although everyone is paid on the same day, there are two pay periods for employees at HMESD.

If you are a salaried employee, your pay period runs from the first of the month to the end of the month. Hourly employees are paid based on hours worked from the 11th of the month through the 10th of the following month. HMESD prefers that all employees sign up for direct deposit. However, employees who do not use direct deposit may collect paper checks at the HMESD office on the last working day of the month. Direct deposit takes two pay periods before it is active. In the meantime, you will receive a paper check.

### Equalized Pay

Equalized pay allows employees to receive pay in 12 monthly installments evenly throughout the year. To determine the monthly payment amount, HMESD looks at the total number of hours you will work for the year and determines a yearly salary. This salary is then divided by 12 (or the remainder of the school year, whichever is greater), and you will receive a paycheck each month that is the same amount. This provides relief to hourly employees when large breaks occur during the school year, such as Winter Break, Spring Break, and Summer Break. Using Equalized Pay assures receipt of a similar amount year-round.

Additional hours worked create an exception to this rule. Any hours worked outside your normal schedule must be recorded on a timesheet and will be added to the applicable paycheck. This will ensure you are paid for all hours worked during the pay period. ***Only*** additional hours should be recorded on the timesheet. For example, if your normal schedule calls for you to work four hours, and you work six, you would only record two hours on a timesheet.

### Timesheets

Timesheets are required if you work additional hours outside of your normal schedule. All timesheets are due to the HMESD Admin Assistant by the end of business on the 10th day of each month. This deadline ensures that you are paid on time. Timesheets turned in after the 10th day of the month may not be paid until the following month. Please note, you do not need to fill out a timesheet for your equalized pay.

Timesheets are available on the HMESD website under "Staff Forms." Please do not ask the office to print out timesheets as they are easily accessible from anywhere on campus and from home.

Great care should be taken in filling out your timesheet. If you have any questions, please ask the Admin Assistant in the HMESD office. It is better to fill the timesheet out correctly than to delay getting paid due to errors. Take notes, if necessary, so that you can repeat the steps in the following pay period. As part of your orientation, you will be shown how to properly complete a timesheet. You will also be asked to sign an acknowledgement that you received this training.

Hours are recorded in decimals denoting 15-minute increments. If you work 2½ hours, it would be recorded as 2.5 hours. If you work 2 hours and 14 minutes, it would be recorded as 2.25 hours. Accuracy is critical for both your bottom line and our County and independent audits. Repeated failure to properly fill out a timesheet can result in disciplinary actions.

### Leave Requests

Leave requests are important for many reasons:

- They ensure accuracy on your paycheck and prevent future problems such as overpayment reimbursements.
- They ensure your absence is covered by other staff.
- They allow for proper accounting of your sick leave and vacation banks (where applicable).

As discussed in the Leave Slips section of this Handbook, if an employee is planning a vacation or leave of absence, a leave slip should be submitted as soon as possible. If the employee is planning an absence of more than three business days, a leave slip request should be submitted a minimum of a week in advance. If a leave request is submitted for a planned absence of more than three days with less than a week's notice, the request may be denied, pending extenuating circumstances.

Leave slips for illness should be filled out as soon as possible, but no later than three days following a return to work. If your leave needs to change, such as moving from vacation to sick leave, please use two different leave slips to note the dates and times of your absences.

Leave requests should be submitted for the following:

- Personal Necessity
- Jury Duty
- Illness
- Vacation
- Bereavement
- Unpaid Leave
- Military Leave
- Industrial Accident Leave

### Leave Slips

Filling out a leave slip is important for several reasons. For those individuals who are on salary, leave slips ensure that sick leave and vacation are properly recorded and accounted for in the payroll system. For those who are on equalized pay, sick leave needs to be deducted properly from the system and unpaid leave needs to be deducted from your paycheck.

All leave slips should be filled out and approved in advance of the absence unless circumstances prohibit doing so. In the event a leave slip is not approved prior to the absence, it must be filled out within three



business days of returning to work. Employees who turn in leave slips beyond the deadline may be subject to disciplinary action. See the section on *Leave Requests* in this Handbook for more information.

### Questions and Changes to Payroll Status

There are times when employees may need to change their payroll status. Whether changing direct deposit information, home address, IRS withholding, or something else, you should check with the HMESD office to determine to whom you should address your concerns. This is especially important in the event of payroll errors.

Over the years, HMESD has handled its own payroll and benefits services, but it may also contract out payroll and benefits services to the Napa County Office of Education or other third parties. All payroll inquiries should be directed to the HMESD office.

Questions can be asked in person or over the telephone, but asking payroll questions via email will help ensure accuracy and guarantee that there is a record of the details. It is always a good idea to ask direct questions in order to get the answers you need.

***Please remember.*** It is always better to ask questions first than to fix mistakes later.

## **Security**

### District and School Keys

HMESD has a system of keys with access levels appropriate for various jobs and duties. Not all employees are provided keys to all areas of HMESD. Key distribution depends on the role of the employee and the need as dictated by their assigned duties. If you are assigned a key or keys, you will be required to sign them out. Signing for the keys assigns responsibility to you for their safety. Should the keys be lost, you will be responsible for the cost of rekeying the areas affected. Lost keys should be reported to the HMESD office immediately.

If you are not assigned a key and believe you need reasonable access to an area of HMESD, please request a key for that area from the HMESD Secretary.

Keys ***shall not*** be loaned to students or parents. If a student or parent has permission to access a part of HMESD for which you have a key, they must be escorted and the area must be secured after the student or parent has departed. Please exercise care when allowing a third party into someone's classroom or private area. The third party should be observed during their time in the area.

### Alarm Codes

If you are tasked with job duties that require opening HMESD, closing HMESD, or working in the off-hours, you will be given an alarm code to access the facilities. Along with the alarm code, you will be given a passcode that must be provided to our alarm company should you accidentally set off the alarm. The alarm company will call the school and ask for the code. Please stay by the HMESD office telephone until they call.

Every employee has a unique alarm code. Much like the school keys, these codes are your responsibility and should not be given to anyone. In the event someone does obtain your code, please report it to the HMESD Admin Assistant immediately. Changing the code is simple and costs nothing. The cost of not changing the code can be quite high.

The alarm covers the entire school and is either armed or disarmed for the entire school at once. Be aware of others who may be in a different part of the school before you set the alarm. Checking the parking lot is usually a good indicator of other employees being on campus.

### Facility Security

The gates around the campus are kept closed and locked in an effort to funnel all traffic in and out of the front office corridor. If you see a gate standing open, please close and lock it. If you do not have the necessary key or the lock is missing, please contact the HMESD office staff.

Most areas of the campus are kept secure and locked at all times. In addition to campus gates, if you find an unlocked area that should be locked, please check with surrounding staff and, absent a valid reason for the door(s) being unlocked or open, secure the room.

### Visitors to Campus

All visitors to campus must check in with the HMESD office prior to touring or conducting business on school grounds. All visitors must wear a visitor badge unless they are accompanied by an HMESD employee. Please familiarize yourself with our visitor badges so you may accurately assess those who present as visitors to HMESD. If you happen to see someone you do not recognize who does not have a visitor's badge, you should politely question them as to their identity and then direct them or escort them to the HMESD office for a badge.

Badges are not simply for identification of visitors who are allowed on campus. Students realize people with visitor badges have been approved by the HMESD office to be on campus, and they feel safer knowing people cannot wander around campus without question.

### Weapons on Campus

With very few exceptions, weapons are not allowed at HMESD. This rule is not limited to students but is extended to staff and visitors. Please read the following sections carefully to make informed decisions about what you bring with you to work. This section covers several types of weapons but is by no means complete. If you have any questions about whether you can bring an item to work, please check with the HMESD Superintendent before you bring it.

#### Knives

California Penal Code Section 626.10 prohibits any person, with few exceptions, from bringing a knife with a blade longer than 2.5 inches and any locking blade knife, among other weapons, to school. If your job duties require the use of a knife you may only use one that has been provided or approved by HMESD.

Parents will often bring a utility knife or something similar on their person when dropping off and picking up students. Parents who inadvertently bring a utility knife or other prohibited object on campus should be instructed to leave the item at the HMESD office.

It should be noted that a violation of California Penal Code Section 626.10 can result in disciplinary actions and possible criminal charges.

#### Pepper Spray

Pepper spray is allowed on campus under certain circumstances pursuant to California Penal Code Section 22810. The pepper spray must meet the requirements laid out in California Penal Code Section 22810, including that it contain no more than 2.5 oz. of net weight of aerosol spray.

Administrative Regulation 4258: Employee Security also requires:

1. *The pepper spray shall be used only in self-defense.*
2. *An employee who uses pepper spray other than in self-defense shall be subject to disciplinary action by HMESD and, in accordance with law, a fine and/or imprisonment.*
3. *Employees shall ensure that the pepper spray is stored in a secure place and not accessible to students or other individuals. An employee who is negligent in the storage of pepper spray may be subject to disciplinary action.*

*Employees wishing to carry pepper spray on HMESD property or to an HMESD-related activity shall submit to the Superintendent/Principal or designee a written request setting forth the need for the pepper spray. Should the Superintendent/Principal or designee determine that the employee may not carry pepper spray, the employee shall receive a written statement of the reason for this determination.*

It should be noted that a violation of [California Penal Code Section 22810](#) this section can result in disciplinary actions and possible criminal charges. Although it is not the intent of HMESD to create an issue where there is not one, situations such as this can be exacerbated by a third party and spiral out of our control.

### Firearms

All manner of firearms are prohibited from HMESD, with very few exceptions, as set forth in [California Penal Code Section 626.9](#). Possession of a firearm on a school campus is allowed if carried by a duly appointed peace officer, a member of the military forces of this State or of the United States who is engaged in the performance of their duties, or a security guard authorized to carry a loaded firearm.

If you need further clarification on this matter, please consult the HMESD Superintendent or review Board Policy 3515.7: Firearms on School Grounds.

A violation of [California Penal Code Section 626.9](#) can result in disciplinary actions and possible criminal charges.

## **Howell Mountain School Standards**

### Attendance

All employees of HMESD have a set schedule. Each employee is expected to be at their post by the time their shift begins.

Students, staff, and parents count on your prompt attendance at work. Being on time allows the programs to function effectively and the students to make the most of their educational opportunities. It also reduces disruptions to classrooms and other programs.

Failure to show up on time creates problems with the programs we offer, whether during the school day or during the after school program. If you cannot make it to work on time or meet the obligation for which you have been hired, you should contact the HMESD office as soon as possible. Should you repeatedly show up for your shift past the time you are required to report, HMESD may take disciplinary action against you.

### Communications

HMESD uses several forms of communication, ranging from face-to-face meetings to email. Each form of communication has special requirements and nuances with which you need to be familiar. The following

sections describe many of the various communication methods that you might use at work and some of the issues surrounding them.

### *Email*

The most common form of communication at HMESD is email. HMESD expects that all employees will check their HMESD email at least once per day and preferably more often. The only way to stay fully informed is to check your email.

When you are hired at HMESD, you will be given an email address associated with HMESD. This email address is specific to you, but it is owned by HMESD. You must abide by HMESD rules regarding its use.

Email at HMESD is not private. Although HMESD administration has little time to monitor the email of its staff and HMESD assumes the email system is being used properly by all staff, the administration reserves the right to monitor or review staff emails. In addition, emails sent or received on HMESD accounts, servers, or devices, and emails relating to HMESD business sent on personal accounts or devices, may be subject to the California Public Records Act (CPRA) or subpoenaed during legal proceedings. For this reason, the following protocols should be followed:

1. Names of students: For most email communications, initials and room numbers should be used to identify students. In some instances, a student identification number may be required. If you need assistance with a student identification number, please contact the HMESD office. They can provide the appropriate student identifier, also known as the SSID.
2. Social Security Numbers: Never send these by email, whether it is yours or someone else's.
3. Subject Line: All emails should contain a descriptive subject line. In order to protect student privacy, the subject line should never contain student names or other confidential information. Generic subject lines such as "Student Illness" are best for emails regarding a particular issue with an individual student.
4. Professional Tone: Every employee of HMESD is required to use an appropriate professional tone in each and every email. Harassment, insults and foul language are unacceptable.
5. Email to Parents: Parents should not be copied on email regarding internal or confidential matters. Please use your judgement when deciding who to include in an email chain. If you have any doubt, please check with your supervisor prior to sending the email.
6. Requests: Requests for tech support, payroll help, or other matters are best submitted through email. Please include as many details as you can about the issue, as well as deadlines and the level of importance, so that the issue may be properly prioritized.

Email use is most often a matter of simple common sense. If you have a question as to email use, it is better to ask someone than to make or perpetuate a mistake. Failure to abide by HMESD email policies can result in disciplinary action.

### Radios

All personnel who regularly work outside the classroom (e.g., yard duty, after school program, etc.) should carry a radio with them at all times. You will be shown the location of the radios during your orientation, and you will also be shown how to use them. Radio communication is not only important for efficiently fulfilling job responsibilities; it is crucial in the event of an emergency. If you find that your radio is not working, please exchange it for one that does work.

It is also important to be aware of the volume of your radios. The volume needed outside during recess is different than that required for inside a classroom.

### Telephone System

The HMESD telephone system is based on an internet protocol structure. This means our telephones are reliant on our internet and power to run the system.

Although there are emergency landlines on campus that do not depend on the internet or power, the majority of telephones may stop working during a blackout or disaster.

Each regular staff member should have an assigned telephone line as well as a voice mailbox. If you need an extension reprogrammed or a voice mailbox, please contact HMESD tech support. All telephones should be answered professionally, with HMESD appropriately identified, by using the following script:

*"Howell Mountain School/Howell Mountain Elementary School District. This is \_\_\_\_\_ . How can I help you?"*

If you receive a call and are unable to assist the caller directly, place the call on hold and attempt to locate someone who can answer the questions.

HMESD allows personal calls within reason. Local outgoing calls are allowable on breaks, as are any incoming calls. Long distance personal calls are prohibited unless previous permission by a supervisor is obtained. This permission should be documented in an email or on paper for your protection.

### Technology (BP/AR 4040)

HMESD uses quite a bit of technology in its daily operations. Whether in the classroom or in the office, technology is how we complete many of the jobs that we need to accomplish. Because of this, employees are tasked with taking precaution with the items in their care and making sure that the equipment is treated appropriately. In the event computers, iPads, and other items are handled with excessive roughness or used in a manner not intended by HMESD, the user may find their access restricted and they may be subject to disciplinary action. This section applies to staff and students alike.

Because these devices and accounts belong to HMESD and not the individual, it should be assumed that any activity conducted on HMESD equipment or using HMESD resources is subject to monitoring. Please bear this in mind as you make choices regarding your activities. There is no expectation of privacy when using HMESD resources.

### Internet Use

The amount of traffic an internet connection can handle is called bandwidth. Although HMESD has sufficient bandwidth to support the educational endeavors of the classrooms and the business of HMESD, there are limitations that must be addressed.

Providing sufficient bandwidth for classrooms is HMESD's first priority. If teachers and students cannot access needed sites, their lessons suffer. To ensure appropriate speed is available to classrooms, the following protocols should be observed:

- Do not stream music, movies, television, and news feeds, etc. during the school day
- Restrict uploads and downloads to school business at all times
- Limit video conferencing to school business

For a complete list of acceptable and unacceptable internet practices, please review the Employee Technology Agreement that is included in your new hire packet.

### Content Filter

HMESD employs a content filter intended to provide a safety net for students from certain areas of the internet. Limited filtering is also applied to staff accounts. No student or staff member should attempt to circumvent this filter.

For student safety, and because funding for the district can be dependent on our effective filtering of student access to the internet, it is imperative that students do not use staff accounts. If you need to let a student use your computer or device, you should log off and let the student log on. Content filtering is based on user account, not by computer.

If, in the course of your duties, you find a blocked website that you need to access, please email the URL to the Technology Coordinator with the reason behind the request. Once your request has been approved, the URL will be unblocked, and you will be notified.

### Campus WiFi Access

HMESD maintains campus-wide WiFi access. This access is provided to facilitate laptops, iPads, certain other resources, and staff personal devices, such as cell phones and computers brought from home. WiFi access is not provided for parent or student personal devices. Although you may be given a WiFi password so that you may access the system, this password should be guarded and under no circumstances should it be provided to anyone else.

If the WiFi password is shared with students, or others who are unauthorized use the system, the password will require changing. This is a disruptive and labor-intensive process that is completely preventable.

### Dress Code

"The Board of Trustees believes that appropriate dress and grooming by district employees contribute to a productive learning environment and model positive behavior. During school hours and at school activities, employees shall maintain professional standards of dress and grooming that demonstrate their high regard for education, present an image consistent with their job responsibilities and assignment, and do not endanger the health or safety of employees or students. All employees shall be held to the same standards unless their assignment provides for modified dress as approved by their supervisor.

The district shall allow employees to appear and dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. (Government Code 12949)

In addition, the district shall not dismiss an employee, discriminate against an employee in compensation or in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, or refuse to hire a job applicant on the basis of religious dress or grooming practices. (Government Code 12926, 12940)"

### Professional Behavior

Every employee of HMESD represents HMESD in their interactions with other staff, parents, students, and the public. It is expected that employees will exhibit professional behavior at all times during their workday. The following are in keeping with professional behavior:

- Arrive to work and meetings on time
- Greet people with a smile
- Be polite
- Treat everyone with respect
- Answer the telephone by identifying the school and yourself
- Refrain from roughhousing
- Refrain from cursing or using offensive language

This list is provided to serve as an example. Although representative of what professional behavior looks like, it is by no means complete or exhaustive. HMESD is confident that our employees understand what professional behavior is and how it can best be demonstrated. How you act at work is an important part of your employment and is rated on your evaluation(s).

### Etiquette

There are many aspects of staff's daily work interactions that require proper protocols and tact. From working with students to contacting vendors, staff must be professional and appropriate at all times.

### Confidentiality

Working at a school requires maintaining confidentiality both on and away from campus. Student data and personally identifiable information is subject to strict protections under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). As an employee of HMESD, you may have access to large amounts of information about staff, students, and parents that needs to be kept private.

Keeping confidentiality is usually as simple as doing the following:

- Know your audience: Should the person with whom you are talking have access to the information? Just because the person may be involved in a situation, or be the subject of the information you have, does not mean they have a right to know what you know.
- Know your surroundings: Is the area where you are appropriate for a confidential discussion? It is very easy to stop someone in a hallway or out on the playground to tell them something "confidentially." It is also very easy to be heard in these surroundings. You are better off using an office or a vacant room to discuss your topic.
- Using email: Are you sending your email to the appropriate people? Be sure that your email not only contains an appropriate tone but is only sent to those who should have the information you are enclosing.

Angwin is a very small community, and, as such, is often ripe for rumor and gossip. It is not unusual to find yourself at a social event and be questioned about something happening at HMESD. As a custodian of confidential information, you should carefully judge what you can say and what you cannot say. Your obligation to maintain confidentiality does not end when your shift is over and you leave campus.

Misuse of or intentionally revealing confidential information can lead to disciplinary action. More importantly, the information you may reveal can cause damage to the people and programs involved. All staff should act accordingly.

### Civility

HMESD has a civility policy (Board Policy 1313: Civility) that requires everyone who is on campus - staff, parents, vendors, etc. - to act civilly and be well mannered. This policy prohibits yelling, acting out, engaging in abusive behavior, or otherwise disrupting HMESD.

It is important that employees lead by example and refrain from being drawn into any campus disputes. When confronted by a disruptive situation, it is the job of HMESD employees to attempt to diffuse the situation and move all parties to a more secluded area away from students and other groups in order to resolve the situation.

### Sex-Based Harassment

Sex-based harassment is not tolerated at HMESD. Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 4219.11: Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment set forth the position of HMESD on this topic. Both of these documents are included in the new hire packet.

Although often people believe they understand the concept of sex-based harassment, many do not fully realize the scope of the evolving laws that cover this topic. In light of this, and pursuant to California Government Code Section 12950.1, the Superintendent/Principal must ensure that, every two years, supervisory employees receive at least two hours, and nonsupervisory employees receive at least one hour, of classroom or other effective interactive training and education regarding sex discrimination and sex-based harassment. If you would like additional information, you may request that more training be provided. If you are unsure whether your actions or words could be considered inappropriate and possibly a form of sex-based harassment, the safest thing you can do is refrain from saying or doing what you had planned.

Sex-based harassment has the ability to damage students, staff, visitors, parents, HMESD's reputation, and HMESD's financial bottom line. It can create massive disruptions to the operations of HMESD, create animosity amongst coworkers, and create disruptions that affect every aspect of the campus. The administration and the School Board take reports of sex-based harassment extremely seriously.

### Lunch Periods and Leaving Campus

The breakdown of allowed breaks is as follows:

- 3.5 hours or less - One 10-Minute Break
- 5 hours or more - One 10-Minute Break, One 30-Minute Meal Period
- 6 hours or more - Two 10-Minute Breaks, One 30-Minute Meal Period

Please note that if you qualify for these breaks, you are expected to take them. Breaks cannot be added up to allow you to leave early from your position.

### Leaving Campus

If you leave campus for any reason during your shift, you are required to inform the District Secretary or Admin Assistant that you are leaving and again when you return. This is required whether you leave during a break period or are running an errand related to your job.

Notifications can be made in person, by telephone, or in an email. If you email the office, please copy the entire office staff on your message so that someone is aware that you have left campus.

Letting people know when you are off campus serves several purposes:

- Prevents attempts to locate you when you are not on campus
- Allows HMESD to make informed decisions during an emergency
- Provides critical information for staff in the event you are being contacted about an emergency situation outside of campus

Please take the time to notify staff of your absence from campus to ensure HMESD knows where you are at all times during your shift, within reason.

## **Purchasing**

### How to Purchase

Many employees may have to make purchases of various items in order to effectively do their jobs. Unfortunately, accounting standards prohibit simply running to the store with cash and buying whatever you need at the time.



When purchases are made, a process must be followed that includes an informal or formal request and an approval. Once you have received your approval, you may purchase the item requested. Any item that needs to be purchased with school funds needs to receive an approval from the Superintendent.

All requests should be made through email or in writing to the Superintendent and Admin Assistant. Requests should include the following:

- Name of the person requesting the purchase
- Item to be purchased
- Company from which the item would be purchased
- Stock number, ISBN number, or other identifying number for the item to be purchased
- Price of item
- Identified need for item

Once the request has been submitted to the office, staff will request approval from the Superintendent/Principal and then generate a Purchase Order (PO). Once the PO is complete, you or the office can submit it to the company.

#### Personally Purchased Goods

Although times may arise when a staff member wants to purchase an item and apply for reimbursement from HMESD, without prior approval there is no guarantee that the purchase will actually be reimbursed. If you are in a situation such as this, it is recommended that you attempt to contact an HMESD Superintendent or Admin Assistant to obtain approval via email. This is for your protection. If you cannot obtain approval, you are discouraged from making any purchases in the name of HMESD.

#### Packing Slips

Packing slips are required for all goods received. Please do not remove any boxes from the office unless you have been directed to do so by office staff. They will review the shipment and ensure all items ordered have been received. Even if the package has your name on it, if it was ordered through HMESD, it must not be removed from the office until released. If you open a box that has been released to you, and it has a packing slip in it, please deliver the slip to the office as soon as possible.

#### Services

There will be times when HMESD will need to hire contractors or service vendors to repair problem areas. If these cases, please contact the Admin Assistant in the HMESD office through email or in writing, providing the following:

- Name of the person requesting the service
- Item to be repaired
- Preferred company for repair service
- Reason for repair
- Price of repair (if known or quote obtained)
- Priority for repair

The office will obtain approval and generate a PO authorizing the repair. This must be done before any work is begun.

#### Necessity

It is always better to plan ahead than to try to catch up. Keeping this in mind, if you can possibly order things in advance, it will be less work, less stress, and usually less costly. As we attempt to streamline operations at HMESD, we try to "work smart."

Although it is never the intention of HMESD to needlessly place obstacles in the path of staff attempting to do their job, the ramifications of purchasing items contrary to this section of this Handbook are serious, including negative audit findings and cases of missing funds. HMESD's goal is to ensure the security of HMESD and the integrity of our employees.

If a staff member repeatedly fails to plan ahead, creating additional work for others, the employee may find their purchasing ability revoked. If this revocation affects their ability to perform their duties, employment may be reevaluated.

## **Record Keeping**

### *Understanding Your Responsibilities*

Nearly every job at HMESD has a record keeping component. Knowing the record keeping requirements for your specific job and your obligations to meet these requirements is important to keeping HMESD running smoothly.

When you are trained for your specific job, you will be shown how to complete required paperwork and maintain appropriate records. In education, there are often annual reports that need to be completed, or the paperwork may change and take on a different format. Because we cannot anticipate or train for all these possibilities, if you are confronted with a report with which you are unfamiliar, ask for help. Failure to understand the paperwork or timelines is not a valid excuse for the work going undone.

### *Meeting Deadlines*

Whether it is a deadline for providing lunches for a field trip or sending a report to the State, failure to meet the deadlines can result in problems ranging from fractured relationships to the loss of funding.

Deadlines are more easily met when you prepare in advance for the project. If you need items to organize your projects, please contact the office with a request.

If you are having trouble meeting a deadline, please ask your supervisor for support. There is nothing wrong with needing help from time to time. It is much better to ask for help than to lose a funding opportunity because you did not ask for assistance.

### *Importance of Accuracy*

Almost all paperwork you submit, whether it is to the office, the State, or parents, will be double checked for accuracy. How well you complete your forms, your flyers, and other documents reflects either positively or negatively on HMESD and our staff. Please be sure you are well informed about the topic on which you are working and are able to complete the task well.

As with everything else, it is better to ask for help than to do a poor job and have to fix mistakes. HMESD has an amazing staff with a wide array of knowledge. Most will be willing to lend a hand if there is a need.

### *Falsifying Records*

While we all prefer to not make a mistake, it does happen to everyone from time to time. When a mistake is made, we correct it, identify the reason for the mistake, and work to ensure it does not happen again.

While accidents and errors sometimes happen, because many of the records and forms with which we deal are official and regulated by law, the consequences of being intentionally misleading can be severe. Falsifying records - using incorrect information with the intent to deceive - is not allowed at HMESD regardless of the reasons behind the action.

Employees who falsify information will be disciplined - regardless of employment status - with varying actions, starting with suspension and extending to dismissal. Severity can be based on many factors. The best course of action is honesty at all times. If you are uncertain about how to report negative or damaging information, please discuss the matter with your supervisor.

### Public Records Act and Transparency

The CPRA makes many documents, emails, and basic information kept by public entities available to the public. Regardless of the reason for the request, your files, information, and pay records may be subject to inspection.

Although there are many records that must be disclosed, there are some records that need not be released. If you receive a records request based on the CPRA, please direct them to the HMESD Superintendent to make a determination regarding the status of the documents being sought.

The CPRA provides a strong argument for using proper protocols and etiquette in emails, correspondence, and other communications. As you communicate with others, please consider that unintended parties may someday read what you are writing.

### Cash Handling

HMESD has rules for how employees handle cash at HMESD. From donations to cafeteria payments and beyond, cash received should be recorded promptly and accurately, with receipts provided every time. In addition, money should only be stored in the office. You will receive a receipt for all monies left with HMESD staff.

As part of good accounting practices, you are asked to record each and every transaction, sale, and receipt of money. When handling cash, to the extent practicable, you should be in possession of a cash box or cash register and a double copy receipt book. You should also count all cash with a second person present. This practice will help maintain a proper accounting of the money you give and get. If you regularly handle cash, the items noted above should be part of your regular inventory. Should you have any reservations or questions, please ask your supervisor prior to beginning any activity involving the handling of cash. You are responsible for the money you receive.

## **Complaints and Conflict**

HMESD takes all complaints seriously and encourages you to follow the complaint procedures to have your complaint resolved. (e.g., BP/AR 0410, 4030, 4031, 4219.12, 4219.24, 4244).

### If You Have a Complaint

HMESD has a wonderful group of employees. However, issues can occasionally arise that require more intervention to find a reasonable solution. In these cases, it is important that certain guidelines be followed to solve the problem instead of making it worse.

### Lowest Level of Resolution

All problems should be resolved at the lowest possible level. This means you should address the problem with the person or people with whom you are having difficulty, if possible and warranted under the circumstances. Find a time where you can sit down and have a meaningful conversation outside the presence of students and your peers.

If your attempts are unsuccessful, you should address the concern with your supervisor. They may be able to assist in mitigating the problem, offer solutions, or provide mediation. This should be your immediate next

step if your initial attempt to solve the problem fails. Please be prepared to discuss the problem in depth with your supervisor.

There are times when the problem cannot be effectively addressed with your supervisor or the issue you have is with your supervisor. In these cases, you should schedule an appointment with the administrator and discuss your concerns. The administrator may be able to resolve the issue directly or may try to schedule a subsequent meeting with all parties and resolve the problems collaboratively.

HMESD is very small, and we do not have a personnel department. Because of this, if your problem is with the Superintendent/Principal, you should address your complaint to the School Board.

Please be aware that, for complaints or problems involving the Superintendent/Principal that are taken to the School Board, the first question you will be asked is whether you have discussed the problem with them. If you have not, and it would be appropriate to do so, the School Board will most likely request that you do so before coming to them.

### Complaints Involving Parents

Complaints about parents can be a touchy matter. If you have complaints about a student's parent or guardian, you should discuss the matter with your supervisor prior to discussing the matter with the parent. Your supervisor may know the person or the situation better than you do and can provide insight that might lead to a resolution.

Please remember that parents are our customers and can be with us, daily, for 10 years. It is important in many ways that our relationships with parents be professional and congenial at all times.

### Conflict in the Workplace

Conflict sounds like a bad thing, and it can be, if handled improperly. Handled correctly, conflict can lead to an impressive exchange of ideas and result in solutions that possibly would have been left unexplored. Handled incorrectly, conflict can damage not only relationships in the workplace but also lead to a breakdown in systems and protocols.

### Conduct at Meetings

If you work at HMESD, you will find that you may be required to attend meetings. These meetings can be informal or formal, and their importance is usually apparent and presented in the invitation to attend or in the posted agenda.

The fact that you are asked to attend a meeting means that people value your input and believe you have something to offer at the meeting. Your contributions can be as simple as your being a good record keeper or as involved as explaining specific knowledge. Regardless of your role at the meeting, the following points will make you a more effective contributor:

- Review the agenda and prepare for the discussions in advance.
- Develop talking points on issues you wish to discuss.
- Be on time to the meeting.
- Actively listen to others and speak when appropriate.
- Practice diplomacy when you speak. Be direct, but kind.
- Stay on topic for each discussion, regardless of your desire to discuss something else.
- Understand that everyone at the meeting is an adult. Treat each individual and their ideas with respect.
- Speak from a place of knowledge rather than a place of emotion.

- State your position on issues clearly. If you feel you were misunderstood, rephrase your position to clarify. Restating the original position exactly as you did the first time can be perceived as condescending.
- Be prepared to compromise. This is the key to effective meetings.
- Vote your conscience on action items.

## **Specific Job Duties**

### Introduction

Every job at HMESD has a specific job description that spells out the duties, skills, and qualifications for applicants and employees. For the daily specifics of your position, please consult your specific job description. The following sections help to explain the expectations HMESD has for employees who fill certain positions and to note some of the more important aspects of the job.

### Yard Supervisors

Staff that serve on yard duty either during recess or students' lunch break provide for the safety of students during their time out of the classroom. The basics of being a yard duty supervisor are as follows:

- Always have a radio for communication.
- Be on time and in place when recess or lunch begins.
- Carry your whistle with you.
- Carry your first aid packets with you.
- Position yourself in a place where students can see you and you can see your area of responsibility.
- Do not carry on conversations with other yard duty staff or adults while supervising students.
- Do not respond to emails or split your focus while supervising students
- Do not use your cell phones while supervising students.

### Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals work with students in the classroom, in the library, in special education settings, and in other important areas where support for programs or teachers is required. Many of these employees have special skills. For this reason, HMESD adheres to Education Code 45330, 45344.5, and 45361.5 requiring paraprofessionals who will be assigned to assist in instruction to demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics equivalent to or exceeding the proficiency required for high school seniors in the district or, if the district does not maintain high schools, in the high school district that includes all or a portion of the district. Pursuant to Education Code 45330, the district must ensure that any educational qualifications or proficiency exam established by the district is appropriate to the responsibilities to be assigned to the paraprofessional. According to the California Department of Education's (CDE) web site, many districts use the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) for the purpose of determining proficiency of paraprofessionals

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (P.L. 114-95) repealed 20 USC 6319 which contained additional requirements pertaining to the qualifications of paraprofessionals working in programs supported by federal Title I funds and required the principal to attest to the school's compliance. However, 20 USC 6311, as amended by P.L. 114-95, requires that the state plan implementing ESSA include requirements addressing qualifications of such paraprofessionals. According to the CDE, the only requirement applicable to Title I paraprofessionals for the 2016-17 school year is the requirement to demonstrate proficiency on a local proficiency exam. Thus, requirements for Title I paraprofessionals are the same as for all other paraprofessionals.

As the responsibilities of paraprofessionals differ somewhat from setting to setting, we have listed each position and some of their duties here. Many paraprofessionals find they work in more than one specific

area, so reading through the entire list is recommended. Paraprofessionals work under two supervisors: Their certificated teacher and a classified manager.

### Classroom Paraprofessionals

A Classroom Paraprofessional is assigned to support the educational methodologies of the certificated teacher. Classroom Paraprofessionals can be asked to perform the following duties:

- Assist the certificated teacher with classroom management
- Assist students with assigned work individually or in groups
- Help the certificated teacher prepare lessons
- Assist in the grading of assignments

During a Classroom Paraprofessional's time in the classroom, they are directly supervised by the certificated teacher to whom they are assigned. Although the duties enumerated above are illustrative, the list is by no means complete or exhaustive.

### Special Education Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals in the Special Education Department often have advanced skills that make them more suited to working with students who exhibit special needs. From behavioral training to advanced technological knowledge, Special Education Paraprofessionals help the Special Education Department serve specific students in a more targeted manner than Classroom Paraprofessionals. In addition to the skills of a Classroom Paraprofessional, Special Education Paraprofessionals may need to be skilled in:

- Child Behavioral Strategies
- Possible Medical Training (testing for blood sugar, etc.)
- Restraint Techniques
- Sign Language
- Toileting
- and more...

The above list is not comprehensive, and the skills required often depend on the students currently enrolled in the program. If you do not have the required training, training can be provided to ensure you are successful in your job. Please contact your supervisor if you are in need of additional training.

Although the standards of employment at HMESD apply to all staff, they are even more important in the Special Education Department. Students with special needs require consistency of care and attention. Showing up late does a disservice not only to HMESD but also the students. Please be sure you are present as required to support the students and staff.

### Title I Paraprofessionals

The Title I program is a federally funded educational support system for students who need additional help in Language Arts or Mathematics. At HMESD, we concentrate our efforts on Language Arts to bring all students up to grade-level standards.

Title I Paraprofessionals work under the supervision of the Title I Coordinator, usually with small groups of students in the classroom or the Resource Room. Many of these students are in different grades with varying skill levels, requiring the Title I Paraprofessionals to have a strong understanding of the topics being taught.

Title I Paraprofessionals, in addition to fulfilling the duties of a Classroom Paraprofessional, should be able to demonstrate superior skills in Language Arts, have a strong command of the English language, and understand the methods of differentiated instruction.

### ESL Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals who work in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program work mostly using their English skills, although it often helps to have skills in other languages as well. At HMESD, Spanish is the most common language of our ESL students.

ESL Paraprofessionals have the challenging task of facilitating learning through a fundamental language barrier. This can be complicated for both the ESL Paraeducator and the student. Above average patience and perseverance are welcomed skills for this position. The ESL Paraprofessionals works under the supervision of the classroom teacher.

### Office Support Personnel

Office Support Personnel work under the direct supervision of Classified Management and HMESD administrators. Working in the front office has often been described as being in a fishbowl, and the analogy fits. You are the person parents and staff most identify with the nonteaching side of HMESD. Your professionalism and demeanor carry much further than most people suspect and set the tone for future interactions. Although it is difficult to balance the work you are assigned with constant interruptions, you must remember that people come before paperwork.

### Confidentiality in the Office

As the central hub for HMESD, an incredible amount of information passes through the Office Support Personnel's desks, much of which is confidential to varying degrees. Accordingly, paperwork will often be restricted to individuals or groups, such as:

- School Staff
- Office Staff
- Special Education Staff
- Confidential Staff
- Administration
- School Board
- Any combination of the above

It is important that you are continually mindful of the documents and files within your control. Documents you are not working on should be covered, turned over, or put away. When you leave your desk for an extended period of time, lock your computer and place files where they are less likely to be looked through.

Beware of leaving confidential documents in or near the copier when making copies.

### Professionalism

Although each of us is held to a standard of professionalism at HMESD, Office Support Personnel are held to a higher standard due to their proximity to the public. HMESD is a small district with a distinct rural atmosphere, but that does not mean we do not expect professionalism from Office Support Personnel at all times.

Office Support Personnel should be:

- Polite and affable
  - Greetings should be professional and given with a smile
  - All effort should be made to answer questions or solve the problems of guests
  - Resolve issues with co-workers as appropriate and as they arise to maintain a strong work environment

- Presentably dressed and groomed
  - Clean and untorn jeans are allowed
  - Modest sleeveless tops are permitted
  - Shorts and skirts should be within the limits of the standard dress code
- Professionally behaved
  - Gossiping is not permitted
  - Harassment is not allowed
  - Raised voices should be used only when required
  - No profanity
  - Confidential conversations should be held in private areas rather than in the lobby or the hallways

### Time-on-Task

The amount of time Office Support Personnel spend involved in the tasks to which they are assigned can become an issue in the office. Because of the sheer number of interruptions and of people who pass through, it is easy to become entrenched in conversations or problems presented by others.

The jobs Office Support Personnel are asked to complete require time and focus, and the proper amount of resources should be set aside to complete assignments correctly and on time. If you are having difficulty maintaining time-on-task due to the actions of others, please consult your supervisor prior to a point where your inability to complete your tasks becomes problematic. By keeping conversations and distractions to a minimum, you will help others remain productive.

### Food Service Personnel

The Food Service Supervisor and Food Service Substitutes make up the Food Service Department. Food service staff prepare meals, place food orders, qualify families for Free and Reduced Meals, submit State paperwork, and more. In addition to the daily paperwork, meal prep, and clean-up, there are annual reports and audits for which the Food Service Department is responsible and for which it must plan far in advance. Food Service Personnel are supervised by Classified Management.

Food Service Personnel are required to be trained or have prior knowledge in several areas in order to successfully do the job assigned.

### Custodial and Maintenance Staff

Custodial and Maintenance Staff are responsible for keeping the campus clean and functional. Custodial and Maintenance Staff usually have access to the entire campus and assume the responsibility associated with having that access. Custodial and Maintenance Staff are often tasked with locking up the campus and setting the alarm at the conclusion of their shifts. As the last person at HMESD on any given day, it is a custodial responsibility to check all doors to ensure the campus is secure from intrusion.

The Custodial and Maintenance Staff regularly work several types of shifts. These shifts can best be classified as follows:

- Regular Shift - Your scheduled, equalized pay applies. No additional timesheet required.
- Extended Shift - Working prior to your start time or past your usual end of shift. These hours should be recorded on a timesheet.
- Extra Shift - Covering for another person. These hours should be recorded on a timesheet.
- Emergency Shift - Due to a facility emergency, there is a need to work an additional shift. These hours should be recorded on a time sheet.

Please Note: All additional shifts/hours must be approved by a supervisor, in writing, prior to working the additional hours. Working additional hours without prior approval is grounds for disciplinary action.



Custodial and Maintenance Staff are required to wear appropriate protective gear at all times and take precautions when working in hazardous situations, such as slippery floors or ladders. If appropriate protective gear is unavailable, Custodial and Maintenance Staff should not perform the job until the proper equipment is acquired. If an injury occurs, it should be reported to a supervisor immediately.

#### After School Program Personnel

The After School Program (ASP) is driven by a grant from the federal government. The grant, called the After School Education and Safety Program (ASES), provides supervision and enrichment classes for all HMESD students from the time school lets out for the day until 6:00 p.m.

The ASP is often fast paced and chaotic, as students leave their school days behind and head into classes like art, fencing, and sports. Because of the dynamic nature of the ASP, ASP Personnel require high energy and preparation in order to be successful. In addition, it is important to be sure each class ends 10 - 15 minutes prior to the start of the next class to facilitate cleanup. It is the responsibility of ASP Personnel to ensure supplies and equipment are cleaned up and put away.

All ASP Personnel must report on time. Repeated failure to do so can result in disciplinary action, even if you have contacted your supervisor. Once you make a commitment to the job, it is important that you keep it, both for the sake of continuity for the students and the integrity of the ASP.

Supervision and classroom management must be a priority for ASP Personnel. Being able to constructively and creatively teach lessons and keep students engaged is important not only for students' investment but for the morale of instructors as well.

ASP Personnel not only report to the ASP Supervisor as their direct manager but also answer to Classified Service Managers and the HMESD administrators. ASP Personnel should report issues, concerns, and complaints to the ASP Supervisor prior to moving up the chain of command if at all possible.

ASP Personnel are regularly evaluated. Regular evaluations are not meant to be punitive but should rather be seen as supportive. Once an evaluation is complete, it will be discussed with you by the ASP Supervisor. If deficiencies are identified, a plan will be developed to correct them. The goal is to make you successful in your job.

#### Confidential Classified Management Staff

Confidential Classified Management Staff work year-round, and supervise the entirety of the Classified Staff. The Confidential Classified Management Staff serve as support to HMESD administrators in all aspects of HMESD operations.

The Confidential Classified Management Staff work in a variety of areas, from payroll to human resources to technology. In addition to their daily duties, they are expected to be available to the Classified Staff for consultation, questions, and concerns.

As discussed, every two years, all members of the Confidential Classified Management Staff are required to take Sexual Harassment Awareness for Supervisors that complies with SB 1343 (2019). Failure to comply with this requirement places HMESD at risk.

Confidential Classified Management Staff are consulted by administrators when preparing formal evaluations for the Classified Staff. On occasion, members of the Confidential Classified Management Staff may be asked to attend the evaluation of a Classified Staff member if the administrator feels the attendance will be valuable to both the employee and HMESD.

The Confidential Classified Management Staff are held to the highest standard of behavior and are expected to set an example for proper protocols and behaviors for the rest of staff members.

## **Disability Information**

### State Disability Insurance

HMESD does not subscribe to State Disability Insurance (SDI), which means you pay nothing into the system from your monthly check. Although this increases the amount of your check each month over what you might earn somewhere else, it also means that if you suffer an injury or become disabled outside of work, you may not be able to participate in the SDI system. Even though this was mentioned previously in the Employment section of this Handbook, it needs to be emphasized, as this has the potential to impact our employees in a significant manner at a time when they are least able to find an appropriate solution. Please consider this when planning your future here at HMESD. Disability insurance is available, at a cost, through third party vendors. Should you have any questions about this, please contact the HMESD Admin Assistant.

### Reasonable Accommodations

HMESD is committed to working with people regardless of their disability status. As such, if an employee with a disability is hired or becomes disabled during their time as an employee of HMESD, HMESD will work to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made in accordance with our policies and all applicable laws. Because every disability is different and there are various ways of addressing each issue, it would be impossible to effectively define what a reasonable accommodation may look like in this Handbook. For more information on the subject, please consult Administrative Regulation 4032: Reasonable Accommodation.

If you have a disability currently, or you find yourself suddenly coping with an injury, illness, or condition that affects your ability to work, please notify your supervisor immediately so HMESD can help you mitigate any issues you may be having at work as a result. It is impossible for HMESD to offer accommodations to an employee unless we know there is a problem.

## **Evaluations**

### Purpose of Evaluations

Employee evaluations are designed to qualify the relationship between employer and employee. Evaluations are not designed to be punitive in nature but, rather, are written in such a way as to identify strengths that can be maximized and weaknesses that can be addressed. Evaluations should be approached positively by all parties to ensure that everyone receives the most benefit.

As with many things, employees get out of an evaluation what they put into it. If an employee approaches an evaluation as a learning and growing experience, allowing people who see them from a perspective other than how they view themselves, they will be able to take what they learn and apply it in a positive way.

### How Often Will Classified Employees Be Evaluated?

Evaluations for classified employees happen, on average, once per year. They can, however, happen more frequently if the administration decides there is value in doing so.

Evaluations are conducted by the Superintendent/Principal, at times with the assistance of the Confidential Classified Management Staff. The evaluation process begins several weeks prior to a classified employee's anniversary date, with a sit-down meeting scheduled around the same time.

As noted above, in certain circumstances, the administration may decide that more frequent evaluations are necessary to assist you in addressing issues identified at prior evaluations. Please take advantage of this opportunity to grow as an employee rather than see it as a punitive event.

### *Preparing for Your Evaluation*

The best way to prepare for your evaluation is to be knowledgeable about your job, your duties, and the procedures and processes of HMESD, and be able to express how you incorporate that information into your daily work. You should be able to easily explain to your evaluator what you do, how you do it, and why you do it.

In addition to the above, please bring an open mind and a collaborative attitude to your formal evaluation meeting. It is imperative that you accept the constructive criticism offered by the administrators and concentrate on a plan for improvement, if deemed necessary, rather than become defensive and untrusting of the process. You have the opportunity to work one-on-one with your supervisors at this point to correct procedural issues that make your job difficult and address concerns others may have about your handling of a specific task.

### *What You Can Expect*

The written evaluation form provides feedback on key performance areas. You are ranked as follows with respect to each performance area:

- Exceeds Requirements
- Meets Requirements
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Included for each performance area is a section for "Commendations/Recommendations." Although designed mostly for small notations, each item can be expounded upon on additional sheets of paper if necessary. It is suggested that if there is an area of concern, you, the employee, request as much remedial direction as can be afforded. This will clarify issues and allow for more targeted correction.

If you are a probationary employee, and this is your annual evaluation, you may see that you have been recommended for permanency, or that your probation has been extended pending further review. Again, being receptive to what you are being told and asking for as much detail as possible about problems will help immensely as you go through the process.

### *Your Right to Respond to the Evaluation*

You will have the opportunity to address the information contained in every evaluation. If you choose to do so, you should prepare your written response as soon as possible and deliver it to the administrator who conducted your evaluation. This will allow for timely review and filing of all documentation in your personnel folder.

Although you can respond to anything within the evaluation, positive or negative, please be sure that your comments are factual, on point with regard to the comments made by your supervisors, and do not stray from the subject at hand. The response should be clear and concise with emotion removed.

## **Leadership Opportunities**

### *School Site Council*

The School Site Council (SSC) is an advisory committee that directs many of the offerings at HMESD. Composed of parents, community members, teachers, Classified Employees, and the Superintendent/Principal, the SSC works throughout the year on matters such as:

- The Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
- Curriculum Adoption
- Campus Beautification
- Fundraisers
- School Plan
- Policy Development
- Procedural Review
- Personnel Hiring Panels
- and more...

The SSC and its subcommittees meet several times per year as needed. Their goals are to allow for collaboration on HMESD initiatives and to ensure that all segments of the community have a voice in how HMESD is run.

Members of the SSC usually learn the ins-and-outs of public schools during their first year, increasing their value not only to HMESD, but also to the community they serve. It is a great way to get involved and meet other like-minded people.

Elections to the SSC for Classified Employees are made by the Classified Employees themselves. If you are interested in membership, please inform your supervisor. Do not wait for an election! You never know when circumstances may create a vacancy and you will be needed. Even if you are not a voting member of the SSC, the meetings are open to the public, and you are encouraged to attend.

#### Ancillary Committees

There are many opportunities to help HMESD and meet new people or just learn about HMESD. Joining the Wolf Pack - HMESD's Parent/Teacher Group - can be both rewarding and enriching. Working with the Howell Mountain Education Foundation in putting on the annual Taste of Howell Mountain fundraising wine auction is another activity that greatly benefits the operation of HMESD and provides money for student enrichment activities.

If you have an idea for a committee that could assist HMESD with achieving its mission, please feel free to discuss it with your peers and supervisors. HMESD is always looking for ways to improve the programs here at HMESD and encourages involvement from all sectors within Angwin.

## **Termination of Employment**

#### Involuntary Termination

Involuntary termination can look different from classification to classification. For Short-Term or Probationary Employees, the Superintendent/Principal can terminate without cause. Permanent Employees are granted additional rights, such as remediation conferencing (in some circumstances), formal notice of charges, and appeal/hearing options.

For a complete list of actions that can result in termination, please consult Administrative Regulation 4218: Dismissal/Suspension/Disciplinary Action. If you are given charges related to termination proceedings, you are encouraged to discuss these with the Superintendent/Principal as soon as possible and determine what rights you have as an employee of HMESD.

#### Resignation

If you need to resign your HMESD position, we ask that you follow this process in an effort to protect both your interests and the interests of HMESD students and staff.

### Written Letter

A formal written letter should be submitted to the Superintendent/Principal noting the following:

- Your job position
- The date of your final day at work
- Reason for leaving

The Superintendent/Principal has the ability to accept resignations and will forward your letter to the School Board for acknowledgement. Please be as clear and concise as you can and include anything important that you feel the School Board should know.

### Two-Weeks' Notice

It is expected that all departing employees provide HMESD with a minimum of two weeks' notice prior to their departure date. This will assist HMESD in locating a replacement for your position and maintaining a consistency for students and HMESD. Failure to provide two-weeks' notice may affect any recommendations you ask from HMESD.

### Exit Conference

All departing employees will have an exit conference scheduled with the Superintendent/ Principal. During this interview, you will be given the opportunity to reflect on your time at HMESD, note your challenges and accomplishments, offer suggestions for changes that will improve operations, and more. Please take the time to prepare and make the most of this interview. We value you as an employee and look forward to any suggestions you may have for us.

## **Nondiscrimination Statement**

HMESD complies with all applicable provisions of State and federal law that prohibit discrimination in employment, or in admission or access to its educational or extracurricular programs, activities, or facilities, on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information, or any other characteristic identified in [Education Code Section 200 or 220](#), [Government Code Section 11135](#), or [Penal Code Section 422.55](#), or based on association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.. Questions about the scope of any such protections should be addressed to the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator and/or the on-site administrative representative for the particular program at issue. The Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator coordinates HMESD's efforts to comply with any and all federal and State laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of one or more of the protected characteristics listed above. Discrimination complaints are processed in accordance with the procedures set forth in HMESD's Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy.

More specifically, HMESD designates the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (Title IX). In general, Title IX prohibits discrimination in educational programs on the basis of sex. Prohibited sex discrimination includes sexual harassment and sexual misconduct (including sexual assault), as defined by HMESD's policies. The Title IX Coordinator's responsibilities include overseeing all Title IX complaints and identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic problems that arise during the review of such complaints.

HMESD's Business and Operations Manager serves as the Title IX Coordinator for purposes of overseeing sexual misconduct and related retaliation complaints under Middlebury's Policy Against Sexual Misconduct, Domestic and Dating Violence and Misconduct, and Stalking. Further, the Business and Operations Manager serves as the person responsible for the purposes of coordinating sexual harassment training and education and overseeing investigations and adjudicating sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and related retaliation complaints under HMESD's Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy and HMESD's Policy Against Sexual Misconduct, Domestic and Dating Violence and Misconduct, and Stalking. HMESD's Superintendent/Principal serves in a similar capacity as the Title IX Coordinator when the Business and Operations Manager is unavailable or has a conflict of interest.

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to HMESD's Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator or to the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

HMESD hereby designates the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Section 504 generally prohibits discrimination in educational programs and employment against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability.