

Decorah Community School District



CERTIFIED STAFF Employee Handbook 2026-2027 School Year

Article I: PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

A. OTHER DEDUCTIONS

- a. Upon appropriate written authorization from the employee, the Board shall deduct from the salary of any employee and make appropriate remittances for annuities, credit union(s), savings bonds, charitable donations, contractual insurance, and other programs, all as approved by the Board and the Association. Any written authorization for a new deduction or for a change in deductions shall be filed with the Board Secretary by the first day of the month in which it is to take effect.

B. INDEMNIFICATION OF THE BOARD

- a. The Association agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Board, each individual Board member, and all administrators against any and all claims, costs, suits, or other forms of liability and all court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees in any way arising out of application of the provisions in the Agreement between the parties for dues deductions and other deductions, whether same are caused by the negligence of the indemnified parties or otherwise.

Article II: REDUCTION IN FORCE

When, in the judgment of the District, there is a necessity for a reduction in staff, the District shall accomplish the same by attrition where possible. In the event such reduction cannot be accomplished by attrition, the following policy shall be followed:

A. NOTIFICATION

- a. The Board shall provide written notice to the Association and to each employee who may possibly be affected by staff reduction by March 1, where possible, but no later than April 30.

B. CATEGORIES

- a. As determined by level and subject area being taught, certified staff shall be placed into one of the categories listed, and the employee shall retain their placement in the category(s) for at least five (5) years.
 - i. PK-5 classroom teacher and Title 1 teacher with elementary certification
 - ii. 6-8 with appropriate certification for these grade levels
 - iii. 9-12 classroom teacher with secondary certification/subject area by department of current teaching assignment(s): agriculture, business education, language arts, industrial technology, family and consumer science, foreign language, health, mathematics, science, and social studies.
 - iv. K-12 Art
 - v. PK-12 English Language Learner
 - vi. K-12 Gifted and Talented
 - vii. K-12 Guidance
 - viii. K-12 Media
 - ix. K-12 Music
 - x. K-12 Physical Education
 - xi. PK-12 Special Education
 - xii. PK-12 TLC
- b. The Literacy Coach and Technology Integrated Specialist will retain their placement in the category from which they transferred.

C. RIF POINTS

- a. Each certified staff member shall be allotted one point for each full year of service in the Decorah Community School District, whether they are serving as a continuing contract employee or, retroactively, to a long-term substitute employee who is subsequently given a continuing contract with the District. Part-time certified staff shall be allotted pro-rated points on the fraction of time for each year's contract.
- b. An additional one (1) point shall be allotted for service earned in another school district (a maximum of three (3) points).

- c. An additional six (6) points shall be allotted for horizontal placement on the salary schedule for educational attainment beyond the B.A. level. The points shall be allotted as follows:

BA+12	1 point	MA	4 points
BA+24	2 points	MA+12	5 points
BA+36	3 points	MA+24	6 points
- d. The sum of years of service in the Decorah Community School District, up to three years of service in another school district, and horizontal placement on the salary schedule shall determine the certified staff member's RIF points.

D. PROCEDURE

- a. The **RIF points** of all certified staff in the above category where the reduction shall occur shall be compared, and the employee with the least number of RIF points in the category shall be the employee who shall be reduced from employment. However, if the employee with the fewest RIF points is necessary for the District to maintain an existing educational program, the employee with the next-lowest number of RIF points is not necessary to maintain the District's existing program and shall be the employee reduced from employment. An educational program is defined as any individual course currently being offered by the district for which students receive graduation credit.
- b. If RIF points for two certified staff members in the same category are equal, the following criteria shall be used in this order to determine which staff member shall be retained:
 - i. **Training:** The certified staff member has most recently participated in coursework or workshops in his/her area of assignment.
 - ii. **Co-Curricular Assignments:** The certified staff member holding a co-curricular contract.
- c. Articles XIII (Voluntary Transfers) and XIV (Involuntary Transfers) may not be used to circumvent the effect of this article.

E. RIF POINTS LIST

- a. No later than December 1 of each school year, the Board shall provide to all employees and the Association a list showing each employee's RIF points, area(s) of certification, job category, and building assignment(s). Employees will have ten (10) school days to notify the Board of any inaccuracies in this list. This list, as corrected, will be used for any reduction-in-force or recall during the contract year.

F. RECALL RIGHTS

- a. Employees who have been terminated because of a reduction in force shall be recalled in reverse order to the category from which reduced. In recall, the Board may override RIF points if necessary to maintain an existing educational program. The right to recall shall be in effect for one (1) year following the effective date of the resulting contract termination.
- b. Written notice of recall shall be sent to said employee at his/her last known address by certified letter using restricted delivery service with delivery receipt requested. It will be each employee's responsibility to notify the Board of any change in address. A copy of said notice shall be sent to the Association.
- c. Failure of the employee reduced pursuant to the provisions of this Article to respond affirmatively to a notice of recall from the Board within five (5) calendar days after date of receipt of notice shall result in termination of the employee's right to recall.
- d. An employee may, without losing recall rights, refuse or otherwise fail to respond affirmatively to an offer of recall involving a position which is less than the FTE position from which the employee was reduced. If the employee accepts recall to a position of lesser FTE, he/she shall retain a one-time recall right to a position of greater FTE, not to exceed the FTE position from which the employee was reduced, unless the employee is subsequently laid off.
- e. An employee reduced pursuant to the provisions of this Article and re-hired by the Board shall be given a contract and credit for the years of experience held as an employee of the District prior to reduction. An employee who has qualified for advancement to a higher educational lane shall also move to the corresponding incremental step on the higher lane. No employee shall be retained or re-hired for a position for which he/she is not legally certified.
- f. The Board shall provide the Association with a list of those employees reduced pursuant to the provisions of this Article.

Article III: EMPLOYEE EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A. NOTIFICATION – Assigned Employees

- a. The administrator will discuss the philosophy and procedure of evaluation with all the faculty members at the beginning of the school year. Faculty shall receive information related to the Individual Career Plan, Evaluation Materials for Teachers, and the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria. No formal observation shall take place until such orientation has been completed.

B. NOTIFICATION – Unassigned Employees

- a. An employee not assigned to a single building will be notified by the administrator who will conduct his/her performance review. The administrator will discuss the philosophy and procedure of evaluation with him/her at the beginning of the school year.

C. PROCEDURES for Tier I Teacher Evaluation – Teacher with Initial License

- a. The evaluation cycle will consist of formal observations and other sources of evidence collection.
- b. At least three (3) observations will be conducted before March 30. Further, one observation will occur by the end of the first semester unless circumstances prevent this to take place within the first semester. (The observations will be spread over a period of time to allow for professional growth.) Two of the observations will be termed “formal”, requiring a pre-observation conference for initial license teachers.
 - i. **Formal Observations**
 1. Each teacher will complete the District’s written pre-observation form prior to the scheduled Formal observation. A pre-observation conference between employee and administrator will be mandatory for those teachers holding an Initial Teaching License.
 2. Each formal observation will be at least thirty (30) minutes in length.
 3. Within ten (10) contract days, a conference will be scheduled to discuss the observation. Included in the conference will be the teacher’s self-reflections, as well as the written reflections of the evaluator. This time may be extended by mutual agreement.
 - ii. **Informal Observations**
 1. An informal observation is a random observation including, but not limited to, an administrator walkthrough or other unscheduled visit used to assist in gaining familiarity with the teacher and to provide continuing professional support.
 - iii. **Summative Evaluation**
 1. A summative written evaluation reflecting the teacher’s current performance will be held with the first-year teacher on or before March 30. The conference will provide the teacher feedback and explanation based on evaluation activities conducted during the year. The administrator will identify in writing which of the eight (8) Iowa Teaching Standards have been met and if and where remediation needs to be addressed in the second year. Following year one (1), the district reserves the right to terminate employment.
 2. All summative evaluations will be held with the second-year teacher on or before April 30. The comprehensive evaluation of the second-year teacher must include either:
 - a. The administrator’s recommendation for the teacher regarding Standard I Licensure for the teacher; or,
 - b. A continued participation in the District’s mentoring and induction program for a third and final year with a request for a one (1)–year extension of the teacher’s Initial License; or,
 - c. A recommendation for no licensure and termination of employment.
 - d. A school district must use the comprehensive evaluation form provided by the Iowa Department of Education.

D. PROCEDURES for Tier I Teacher Evaluation – Career Teacher New to the District

- a. This section covers the procedures for a career teacher with a standard license but in his/her first year in the district. Teachers new to the district, but not new to the profession, who meet the expectations relative to the Iowa Teaching Standards may have their second year in the Tier I Beginning Teacher Evaluation Program waived. A teacher whose second year in Tier I is waived will be moved to the Tier II Career Teacher Comprehensive Evaluation Program.

i. PROCEDURES

1. The evaluation cycle will consist of formal observations and other sources of evidence collection.
2. At least two (2) observations will be conducted before March 30. Further, one (1) observation will generally occur by the end of the first semester unless circumstances prevent this to take place within the first semester. (The observations will be spread over a period of time to allow for professional growth).

ii. FORMAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Each teacher will complete a written pre-observation form prior to the scheduled formal observation. A pre-observation meeting may be conducted upon request of either the teacher or the administrator.
2. Each formal observation will be at least thirty (30) minutes in length.
3. Within ten (10) contract days, a conference will be scheduled to discuss the observation. Included in the conference will be the teacher's self-reflections, as well as the written reflections of the evaluator. This time may be extended by mutual agreement.

iii. INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS

1. An informal observation is a random observation including, but not limited to, an administrator walkthrough or other unscheduled visit to assist in gaining familiarity with the teacher and to provide professional support.

iv. SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

1. The career teacher new to the district will be evaluated based upon the eight (8) Iowa Teaching Standards. All written summative evaluations will be completed and discussed with the beginning career teacher on or before April 30. At that time the administrator will advise the teacher of one of the following steps:
 - a. Teacher meets all Iowa standards and district expectations and will be moved to Tier II;
 - b. Teacher has some areas to improve upon and will remain in Tier I for one additional year;
 - c. Teacher is not meeting at least one of the Iowa standards and/or district expectations and is not recommended for contract renewal.

E. PROCEDURES for Tier II Teacher Evaluation – Career Teachers Not New to the District

- a. The evaluation cycle will consist of formal observations and other sources of evidence collection. In addition, other sources of supporting documentation will be identified through conversations between teacher and administrator. Organized evidence of the eight (8) Iowa Teaching Standards must be presented. At least one formal observation with specific feedback will be conducted before April 30. Due to extenuating circumstances, teacher and administrator may agree on a later date.

i. FORMAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Each teacher will complete a written pre-observation form prior to the scheduled formal observation. A pre-observation meeting may be conducted upon request of either the teacher or the administrator.
2. Each formal observation will be at least thirty (30) minutes in length.
3. Within ten (10) contract days, a conference will be scheduled to discuss the observation. Included in the conference will be the teacher's self-reflections, as well as the written reflections of the evaluator. This time may be extended by mutual agreement.

ii. **INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS**

1. An informal observation is a random observation including, but not limited to, an administrator walk through or other unscheduled visit used to assist in gaining familiarity with the teacher and to provide continuing professional support.

iii. **SUMMATIVE EVALUATION**

1. The career teacher will be evaluated based upon the eight (8) Iowa Teaching Standards. This will occur at least once every third year. All written summative evaluations will be completed and discussed with the career teacher on or before the last day of school. This conference may be delayed and held at a time mutually agreed upon.
2. All Summative Evaluations will be submitted to the Central Office by June 15th.

F. RESPONSES to Tier I and Tier II Formal Summative Evaluations

- a. If the employee feels his/her formal written evaluation is not accurate or is incomplete, he/she may put his/her objections in writing and have them attached to the evaluation. The file copy of the teacher's response shall be signed by both parties to indicate awareness of the contents. The response must be submitted within ten (10) calendar days following the summative conference.

Article IV: VOLUNTARY TRANSFERS

A. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Transfer.** The assignment of an employee to a different job classification, grade level, subject area, or building shall be considered a transfer.
- b. **Voluntary Transfer.** A voluntary transfer is a transfer requested by the employee.
- c. **Vacancy.** A vacancy is any assignment that an employee leaves for reason of long-term leave, staff reduction, reassignment, resignation, termination, transfer, or other reason which remains partially or entirely in existence within the District or that is caused by a new position created by the District.

B. PROCEDURE.

- a. **Posting.** The superintendent/designee shall post in all buildings vacancies as they occur. Such notice shall be posted for at least ten (10) calendar days to allow an employee who has not previously filed a written request for transfer to request a voluntary transfer to said vacancy. Notice of vacancies that occur after May 1 will be sent to each employee who has submitted a request to transfer to that position, posted in each building, and mailed to the Association President.
- b. **Filing Request.** An employee who desires a transfer may file a written request for the same with the Superintendent/designee, identifying the job classification, grade level, subject area, or building to which the employee wishes to be transferred, in order of preference. Such general requests for transfer shall be submitted not later than May 1 for the following school year or by December 1 for the second semester of the same school year.
- c. **Interview.** The Superintendent/designee shall consider all requests for transfer on file and shall interview those wishing to transfer to the vacancy. No request for transfer will be denied or made for wholly arbitrary and capricious reasons. Current employees will be interviewed for vacancies prior to the interview of any non-employee applicant.
- d. **Decision.** The Superintendent /designee shall determine which, if any, of the transfer requests for the vacancy shall be granted, based upon the needs of the District as determined by the Superintendent/designee and shall notify requesting employees of the decision.

Article V: INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS

A. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Transfer.** The assignments of an employee to a different job classification, grade level, subject area, or building shall be considered a transfer.
- b. **Involuntary Transfer.** An involuntary transfer is a transfer not initiated by the employee's request.
- c. **Vacancy.** A vacancy is any assignment that an employee leaves for reason of long term leave, staff reduction, reassignment, resignation, termination, transfer, or other cause, which partially or entirely remains in existence within the District, or when a new position is created by the District.

B. PROCEDURE

- a. An involuntary transfer shall be based upon the needs of the District. An employee involuntarily transferred shall be entitled to a meeting with the Superintendent/designee, at which time the employee shall be given reasons for the transfer.

Article VI: NEW PROFESSIONAL MENTORING PROGRAM

A. DEFINITIONS

- a. **DCSD Mentoring and Induction Program:** Decorah Community School District provides a program of support, professional learning, and assistance to teachers new to the profession and new to the district.
- b. **DCSD Mentoring and Induction Handbook:** A handbook that delineates the roles and responsibilities of teachers involved in the Mentoring and Induction Program. The handbook is under the authority of the TLC Advisory Committee, which includes DEA representation.
- c. **Beginning Teacher:** Any licensed individual in their first or second year within the teaching profession (initial license).
- d. **Veteran Teacher New to the District:** Any licensed teacher with more than two years within the teaching profession that is new to the Decorah District.
- e. **Mentor Teacher:** A veteran teacher assigned by the building principal to mentor a beginning teacher or a veteran teacher new to the Decorah District according to the requirements of the DCSD Mentoring and Induction Program.

B. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Teachers who are involved in the mentor teacher program should refer to the DCSD Mentoring and Induction Handbook for detailed roles and responsibilities.

C. WAGES

- a. Each mentor shall receive compensation as determined by the DCSD TLC Advisory Committee and as outlined in the job description for the mentor position. The conditions of mentorship are likewise determined by the DCSD TLC Advisory Committee.

D. MENTOR TEACHER APPLICATION AND EVALUATION

- a. Mentor teachers must apply for a mentor position to serve in the position. Mentor teachers serve either a one-year or two-year assignment based on the District's need.
- b. Mentor teachers shall have an annual performance review. The review shall include administrator review and peer feedback on the effectiveness of the teacher's performance of duties specific to the mentor's role as outlined in the job description.

E. RELEASE TIME

- a. If mentor or mentee need to request release time for collaboration, they should contact the building principal.

Article VII: ACTIVITY PASS

All faculty and staff are encouraged to attend and participate in the management of school activities when possible. Attendance and help is necessary for the management of events and more importantly creates opportunities for positive interactions with students and their families outside of the classroom to support the social-emotional needs of students.

A. TICKET TAKER RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. A ticket taker is stationed at assigned locations depending on the sport (gym door, football gate, softball gate, soccer gate, etc.) to collect the tickets that are sold. Individuals are responsible for collecting money and/or tickets and checking passes and providing the appropriate mark for each patron.
- b. Workers typically are asked to report to their assigned location 45 minutes prior to the start of the contest and are free to go when dismissed by the administrator on duty when their money/tickets are collected.
- c. Payment for all day events is adjusted appropriately depending on the length of the working shift assigned for the all-day event.

B. EVENT WORKERS

- a. Event workers are assigned different responsibilities depending on the event, ranging from scoreboard operation to announcing.
- b. Typically, event workers are asked to report 30 minutes prior to the start of the contest to begin performing their duties and are dismissed at the conclusion of the contest.
- c. The appropriate administrator and/or activities director will provide proper opportunities to inform and train the worker in relation to their responsibilities.

Article VIII: SUPPLEMENTAL PAY

A. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- a. **Approved Activities.** The co-curricular activities listed in Schedule B: Supplemental Salary Schedule are official school-sponsored activities.
- b. **Rates of Pay.** Employee participation in co-curricular activities shall be compensated according to the rate of pay in Schedule B: Supplemental Salary Schedule. The Supplemental Salary Schedule B will be indexed off a generator base. The generator base is \$31,768.
- c. **Non-Contracted Pay.** Co-curricular activities not included in Schedule B shall be assigned or voluntary and compensated all according to past practice.

B. EXPENSES OF TRAVELING EMPLOYEES

- a. **Personal Vehicle.** An employee who is requested to use his/her own personal vehicle in the performance of their duties and/or an employee who is assigned to more than one (1) school per day shall be reimbursed for all travel in the performance of duty and between multi school sites as noted in the following chart:
 - i. Between High School/John Cline campus and Middle School/Carrie Lee campus -
.7 mile per daily trip times 178 days
 - ii. Between High School/John Cline campus and West Side campus -
.9 mile per daily trip times 178 days
 - iii. Between Middle School/Carrie Lee campus and West Side campus -
1 mile per daily trip times 178 days
- b. **Liability Coverage.** The Board shall provide liability insurance protection for employees when their personal vehicles are used as provided in this section, according to the terms specified in Article XVIII: Insurance.

C. HARD TO FILL POSITIONS

- a. Each year the district may identify hard-to-fill positions that are eligible for additional compensation. In the event that Iowa's proposed SF 392 becomes law and part of the Iowa Code, then the district will adjust this incentive to match the wording of the law in order to be eligible for use of management funds. Besides the amount and length of the incentive, the district will also follow the provision that an incentive for recruitment and retention will not be offered in the same years as a retirement incentive.

D. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR ADDITIONAL ENDORSEMENTS

- a. If the school district requests that a teacher obtain an additional endorsement and the staff member agrees, the district will reimburse the teacher for the costs associated with the additional endorsement (including coursework, materials, adding endorsement to license application fees). This agreement will be documented with a separate agreement.

E. PAYMENT OPTION

- a. Employees contracted on the supplemental pay schedule shall have the option to receive payment of salary for such duties during the period covered in the supplemental contract in equal bi-monthly installments or during the entire year in equal installments selected for the teaching contract salary.

Article IX: INSURANCE

A. COVERAGE

- a. Insurance programs provided by the Board for continuing employees shall be for twelve (12) consecutive months beginning September 1. Employees new to the District shall be covered by the District's insurance plan beginning the first day of the month following the first contracted work day unless first contracted work day is the first day of the month.

B. DESCRIPTIONS

- a. Descriptions of all insurance coverage provided by the Board shall be attached to this Agreement and made part thereof by this reference.

C. CONTINUATION

- a. In the event that an employee, absent because of illness (excluding maternity leave) or injury, has exhausted sick leave accrual and FMLA leave, the employee's health insurance (up to the negotiated limit), shall continue by board contribution until the end of the current semester. The employee has the right to continue coverage beyond that point at his/her expense until the limitations stated by law. A semester for purposes of this section shall be defined as either September through February or March through August.

D. CONTINUATION DUE TO SERVICE LEAVE

- a. An employee on unpaid leave of less than a one (1) year duration, shall have the option to continue health insurance coverage by paying the premiums himself/herself to the Board by the beginning of the month in which the premium was paid to the carrier and shall be notified of the amounts and the billing date(s) by the Board at the commencement of his/her leave and at the time of any change in premium rate or billing date. Health coverage for service leave will be considered 6 months for the first semester (September through February) and 6 months for the second semester (March through August).

E. INSURANCE PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE BOARD (to be part of the settlement package)

- a. **Health and Major Medical.** Employees will be provided \$833 per month to be applied towards health insurance. Employees can choose to either:
 - i. Have the \$833.00 applied toward Plan A with the remainder to be paid by the employee;
 - ii. Have the \$833.00 applied toward Plan B with the remainder to be paid by the employee;
 - iii. Have the \$833.00 applied toward Plan C with overage to be paid back to the employee in the form of cash, H.S.A. or towards a family plan.

- b. **Tax Sheltered Annuities.** The payment of annuities may be deducted from the salaries of certificated personnel provided that written application for such deductions shall be on file with the Board Secretary. Termination of an annuity will occur after the receipt by the Board Secretary of a written request for termination by the employee.
- c. **Life.** Each employee shall be covered by a term life insurance program, fully paid by the Board, that provides the benefits specified in past practice with a face value of \$35,000.
- d. **Disability.** Each employee shall be covered by a long term disability insurance program, fully paid by the Board, that provides the benefits specified in past practice.
- e. **Worker's Compensation.** Each employee shall be covered by worker's compensation fully paid for by the Board. All fringe benefits shall continue to remain in full force and effect for the duration of such absence.
- f. **Dental.** Each employee and his/her dependent family members shall be covered by a dental insurance plan according to the benefits and other conditions specified in past practice.
- g. **Liability.** Each employee shall be covered by liability insurance covering job-related performance of duties, fully paid for by the Board, that provides the benefits specified in past practice.
- h. **Vehicle Liability.** Each employee requested or required to use his/her personal vehicle in his/her assigned duties shall be covered during the requested and required use by auto liability insurance fully paid for by the Board, that provides the benefits specified in this section: the minimum amount of coverage shall be \$100,000.00 coverage per person, \$500,000.00 coverage per accident, \$100,000.00 property damage per accident, \$100,000.00/\$100,000.00 per accident for uninsured drivers and underinsured driver.