

# PERSONNEL HANDBOOK



## CANYON-OWYHEE SCHOOL SERVICE AGENCY

109 Penny Lane  
Wilder, ID 83676  
(208) 482-6074  
Fax (208) 482-7904

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*COSSA does not discriminate or deny services on the basis of age, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, and/or disability. Appropriate consideration shall be given to veterans in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations.*

*COSSA No discrimina ni niega los servicios por motivos de edad, etnicidad, religión, color, origen nacional, género, orientación sexual y/o discapacidad. Se dará la consideración adecuada a los veteranos de acuerdo con las leyes y regulaciones Estatales y Federales aplicables.*

# CANYON-OWYHEE SCHOOL SERVICE AGENCY

## PERSONNEL HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the COSSA Personnel Manual (a copy of the Personnel Handbook is posted on the COSSA website for all employees and stakeholders review). I realize that the manual contains agency policies and procedures, but is not intended to be a complete and exhaustive explanation of the same. I also understand that said policies and procedures are subject to change; that I am to familiarize myself with its contents; and that I am to abide by the policies and procedures stated herein, and of all of the policies of the agency. Complete COSSA Policies are available for review at the COSSA Administrative Office and are additionally posted on the COSSA website.

I further understand and agree that this manual does not constitute a contract of employment.

SIGN THIS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY ACCESSING THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://forms.gle/yF2bKZdBexpp5jLk8>

***Please sign this acknowledgement within two (2) weeks from the date of the beginning of each school year or upon hiring (if hired during the school year).***

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## CANYON-OWYHEE SCHOOL SERVICE AGENCY (COSSA)

COSSA is a five-school-district cooperative that began in 1969. It serves the rural communities of Canyon and Owyhee Counties in southwest Idaho. Member school districts include: Homedale, Marsing, Notus, Parma, and Wilder. Services provided include: Special Education, Alternative, and Career and Technical Education (CTE). The collaboration enables the member school districts to pool resources and provide enhanced programs and services that would not individually be feasible as individual districts. Most Special Education programs are housed in member districts' schools. The Agency headquarters, alternative school, most CTE programs of study, and special education administrative services are provided in the COSSA Regional Technology and Education Center (CRTEC), which is located in Wilder, Idaho.

COSSA is governed by federal, state and local regulations and a Board of Trustees that includes one superintendent and an elected trustee from each member school district. COSSA employs an administrative team of Chief Executive Officer, Special Education Director/CRTEC Assistant Director, Academy Principal, CTE Coordinator, Short-Term Training Coordinator, Maintenance Department Heads, Food Service Coordinator, and Business Manager. COSSA employs almost 110 certified and classified staff who provide direct services to students.

The Agency annually serves, on average, over 600 students who are eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Students identified as at-risk may attend the COSSA Academy Alternative Junior/Senior High School program, which maintains an annual enrollment of approximately 120 students. On average, approximately 300 students participate in career and technical educational opportunities in a variety of programs.

### **STATEMENT OF HANDBOOK PURPOSE**

This manual has been developed in an effort to streamline communication within the COSSA organization and to provide consistency in practice. All references to COSSA staff members include, but are not limited to, all certified and classified personnel employed by COSSA.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

In accordance with COSSA's Bylaws, the mission of the Canyon-Owyhee School Service Agency is to provide educational services for all eligible children and to develop cooperative efforts that enhance the effectiveness of the individual districts.

"Educational services" include: alternative education provided by the COSSA Academy Alternative Junior/Senior High School, Career and Technical Education (CTE) provided by the COSSA Regional Technology and Education Center (CRTEC), and Special Education services – the majority of which are provided at the students' home schools.

### **POLICIES**

The COSSA Board of Trustees has established policies governing all COSSA activities,

including those outlined in this and other handbooks and manuals. COSSA administration collaborates with member school districts to ensure alignment on policies affecting shared students. All COSSA staff are expected to be familiar with, adhere to, and implement both COSSA policies and applicable policies of member school districts.

# SCHOOL DAY/SCHOOL PROCEDURES

## SCHOOL HOURS

Certified staff hours are directed by the school/district/building to which staff is assigned. The work calendar for certified staff includes additional time (before and/or after school) that is required to fulfill the duties of the position. These duties may include: faculty meetings, parent/teacher conferences, IEP meetings, remedial instruction for struggling students, and instructional planning.

Classified staff hours are directed by the school/district/building to which staff is assigned, allowing a thirty (30) minute unpaid lunch break. Part-time classified staff will follow the hours of assignment.

Certified and classified staff will have an annual work calendar developed and approved by their program & building administrator.

The COSSA Administration Office (administrators and clerical staff) is open from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday - Thursday (except holidays) for conducting business.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Periodically, COSSA Administration will schedule staff meetings or provide staff development that a specific department or the entire staff is requested to attend. It is extremely important that staff be in attendance at scheduled meetings or in-services. Staff will be held accountable for information that is disseminated on these occasions. Certified staff are required to attend staff meetings or staff development scheduled by their district or school of assignment, as well, which may extend beyond the school day. Employees should not take pre-arranged personal, professional, or sick leave during calendared staff development. Exceptions must be approved by the program administrator.

## **DRESS STANDARDS FOR EMPLOYEES**

Employees are expected to maintain a professional appearance that supports a safe and effective learning environment. Attire should be neat, clean, and appropriate for the employee's role, work setting, and assigned duties, and should align with standards generally accepted within the profession and community.

Dress is considered inappropriate if it creates a safety concern; disrupts or detracts from the learning environment or assigned tasks; or is likely to cause distraction, disciplinary issues, or diminish respect for the employee, the agency, the district, or the profession. Examples of inappropriate attire may include, but are not limited to, clothing with holes or excessive wear, pajama-style pants, or clothing with inappropriate language, images, or messages.

Visible tattoos and body piercings should not interfere with the learning environment or assigned duties. Employees may be asked to cover tattoos or limit visible piercings if they are determined to be disruptive or inconsistent with professional expectations.

COSSA staff are responsible for adhering to applicable dress standards established by COSSA as well as any additional requirements of the assigned district or school.

### **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**

Program Administrators approve leave, receive reports and grievances, and directly supervise groups of COSSA employees across school district boundaries. Program Administrators currently assigned are:

Career and Technical	-	Dr. Kelsey Williams or Shelby Cloward
COSSA Academy	-	Dr. Kelsey Williams or Terry Rothamer
Special Education	-	Tammie Anderson
504 Compliance	-	Tammie Anderson

### **SECOND JOBS**

COSSA employees are paid based on a calendar. COSSA employees will ensure that any other employment they undertake does not interfere with their COSSA employment calendar. COSSA employees are not to "leave early" in order to make a second job's start time, nor miss scheduled in-service or other training in order to participate in their second job. Second-job restrictions do not normally apply to part-time employees on their non-COSSA calendar time. What the employee does on their evening or weekend is their business, but should not interfere with completing the responsibilities of their COSSA assignment in accordance with the expectations outlined in this handbook.

## **COSSA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (CEA)**

The COSSA Education Association (CEA) represents the employees of COSSA. Membership is voluntary and open to all employees. The CEA administers the Sick Leave Bank per COSSA Board Policy 5400. The CEA is the most appropriate vehicle for the observance of births, deaths, birthdays, etc, of COSSA employees.

Related Board Policy: Policy 5295. COSSA Educators Association (CEA)

# LEAVES & ABSENCES

## EMPLOYEE ABSENCE

Staff members who are unable to work contracted days/hours must notify the COSSA office, their building (*through the school office staff*), and the COSSA Teacher or Assistant (*as applicable*) in their program prior to the arrival of students. This includes absences, late arrivals, and/or leaving early. Note: This is a mandated procedure.

To report an absence to the COSSA Office, (208) 482-6074, please leave a detailed message when calling outside of business hours. When reporting absences, please indicate the following:

- Name
- Date of absence
- Leave that will be used to claim day(s)
- School(s) of assignment
- Request substitute or indicate arrangements that have been made, and
- Length of absence

Notify the COSSA office as soon as possible, but no later than 7:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. If COSSA is not responsible for securing a substitute, follow the substitute request procedures for the assigned building and still notify the COSSA office of the absence.

Itinerant staff assigned to more than one site are to notify the COSSA office of any changes in their regular schedule. Emergencies may occur where an individual may need to be reached immediately, and the inability to locate that person presents an unprofessional and frustrating situation.

Certified staff and Hourly Exempt Staff are exempt employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act and are not required to keep time sheets. It is the responsibility of all staff to report leaves (e.g., sick, personal, and/or professional) appropriately.

Claims for Leave should be requested using the CLAIM FOR LEAVE FORM. This form can be accessed [here](#) or on the COSSA Website under Employee Forms. All staff are required to submit a leave request form prior to taking planned time off. In cases of unexpected illness or emergency, we understand that advance notice may not be possible. In these instances, staff will have up to 72 hours upon returning to work to complete and submit the required leave form. Leave may only be taken in full-day, half-day and quarter-day increments.

Employees of the Canyon-Owyhee School Service Agency (COSSA) shall not donate leave days to any COSSA employee, except as allowed under the sick leave bank policy. Employees who exceed allocated leave may be recommended for termination of employment to the COSSA Board of Trustees.

### **SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE**

All full-time COSSA employees earn one (1) paid sick leave day for each month and one (1) paid personal leave day for each three months of employment, up to a maximum of 9 sick days and 3 personal days for full school calendar year employees, and 12 sick days and 4 personal days for year-around employees. Part-time employees who work at least twenty (20) hours per week but less than full time earn one-half sick day for each month and one-half personal day for each three months of employment. A month shall mean one-half or more of the working days of a given month. Sick Leave is defined as an absence from work permitted because of illness. Sick or personal leave should not be taken on days scheduled on the calendar for staff development, nor in the first or last week of school, unless the employee is, indeed, sick. Proof of illness such as a doctor's note may be required for any leave exceeding 3 days and/or taken during the first or last week of school or before/after a school break. Employees may not take more leave than they have accrued, except with prior approval from the program administrator or when using Sick Leave Bank leave.

### **SICK LEAVE BANK**

COSSA maintains a Sick Leave Bank for employees who have exhausted their accrued sick leave due to a catastrophic illness or injury, as determined by the COSSA Sick Leave Bank Committee (see below).

To be eligible to apply for Sick Leave Bank benefits, an employee must have been employed by COSSA for at least one year, be an active member of the bank, and have contributed days from their own sick leave in the current year. Staff contribute days at the beginning of the school year or upon hire through a written Sick Leave Bank designation.

### ***Related Board Policy: Policy 5400. Sick Leave Bank***

Personal Leave is defined as leave to attend to matters of a personal nature. Such matters need not be disclosed to the program administrator. Personal Leave requests must be arranged in advance (minimum of 5 days prior), through the appropriate Program Administrator. not be used immediately prior to nor immediately following a regularly scheduled vacation or holiday break unless authorized by the program administrator. In addition, personal leave should not be taken on days scheduled on the calendar for staff development, nor in the first or last week of school. Unused personal days may be carried over to the following school year, provided that the total number of personal days does not exceed five (5) for any given year.

### **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE**

Professional Leave may be granted when it is necessary for an employee to be away from his or her assignment during the school day while conducting school business such as attendance at a conference or other staff development. All professional leave must be pre-approved by the appropriate COSSA Program Administrator and verified by submitting a completed Claim for Leave Form prior to the event (minimum of 5 days prior).

### **FAMILY/MEDICAL LEAVE**

Please reference Policy 5410 and Idaho Code Section 33-1216 (2025) for information pertaining to Family and Medical Leave.

### **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Employees may be granted up to three days of leave upon the death of an immediate family member. Employees are responsible for notifying the appropriate Program Administrator of the need for bereavement leave prior to taking such leave.

For the death of a non-immediate family member, employees may use personal leave in accordance with Personal Leave policies. The Human Resources Department may request verification of death.

(i.e. death certificate or funeral program)

“Immediate family” is defined as: parents, step-parents, siblings, spouse, children, step-children, foster children, in-laws, grandparents, step-grandparents, grandchildren, step-grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and first cousins.

### **JURY DUTY**

Employees will notify their COSSA Program Administrator if they receive a summons for Jury Duty. Employees must complete a Claim for Leave form and submit a copy of the summons for absences due to active Jury Duty. Any Jury Duty stipend that the employee receives must be surrendered to COSSA in order to receive the employees’ regular rate of pay for day(s) of absences due to serving Jury Duty.

### **CLAIM FOR LEAVE FORM**

#### **Certified & Classified Staff:**

A Claim for Leave form must be turned in to the COSSA Human Resource office no later than three (3) days after the date of absence. If a Claim for Leave is not received within this time period, the employee will be considered absent without leave and pay will be docked. There will be no reminders. Claims for Leave should be sent to COSSA Human Relations office using the online form, found [here](#) and on the district website.

Should an employee exceed allocated leave days, they must continue to call and turn in a Claim for Leave form for each absence. Days missed should be marked as “leave without pay” on the Claim for Leave form. All absences from that point will be docked from the employee’s paycheck.

## **WORK STATUS REPORT**

Upon returning to work following an illness, accident, or injury, if the employee's physician has deemed that the employee requires restrictions on his or her activities that affect the ability to perform the assigned job duties to the fullest extent, the employee must submit a COSSA Work Status Report, completed and signed by the attending physician, to the COSSA office upon return to work. COSSA Work Status Report sample form is attached as Appendix B to this manual. Please see the COSSA HR Staff for official form.

## **SUBSTITUTES**

Substitutes will be hired, or arrangements for coverage will be made, for Certified Staff and Special Needs Assistants. Substitutes for other aide positions may not be filled until after the employee's third consecutive day of absence. The full COSSA Board of Trustees' policy on substitutes may be found in the COSSA Substitute Manual.

## **UNUSED SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE**

Unused sick leave rolls over from one year to the next. Upon retirement, unused sick leave falls under the guidelines of PERSI.

Unused personal leave may be carried over to the following school year, provided that the total number of personal days does not exceed five (5) for any given year.

## **ACCIDENTS / INJURIES**

In the event of a student or staff injury it is the duty of COSSA staff to follow appropriate procedures.

In the case of an emergency, it is important to first attend to the immediate needs of the individual.

After the emergency has been resolved, the COSSA staff member must report the incident to the district site administrator using the appropriate school form and notify the assigned COSSA Program Administrator. Because each district's insurance provider requires its own specific documentation, staff may need to complete forms for the school or district of assignment in addition to COSSA forms. It is essential to follow all school procedures regarding reporting requirements, timelines, and forms.

A copy of the report needs to be submitted to the COSSA office, as well as to the appropriate person at the assigned school site within 24 hours of the event.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 3540. Student First Aid***

## WORKDAYS & PAY INFORMATION

### CALENDARS

Calendars outlining staff work days and holidays will be dispensed at the beginning of each school year or as soon as they become available.

**Certified staff** will follow the calendar of the school to which they are assigned. A COSSA calendar will also be dispensed for itinerant personnel assigned to multiple districts that will indicate their assigned work days. **Certified staff may be required to make up emergency closures in their assigned districts, unless assigned duties are given on that day by the assigned districts.**

**Classified staff** calendars are developed by the appropriate COSSA Program Administrator and indicate paid work days as well as paid holidays and unpaid days. Classified staff work calendar, will prioritize assigned work days based on when there are students in attendance. **Any deviations from scheduled work days indicated on the classified staff calendars must be pre-approved by the appropriate COSSA Program Administrator. Classified staff may be required to make up emergency closures in their assigned districts, unless assigned duties are given on that day by the assigned districts.**

### PAYMENT OF PERSONNEL

Direct deposit notices will normally be issued on the 25th day of each month. If the 25th falls on a holiday or during a weekend or a school vacation, pay will be distributed on the last COSSA Administration working day before that holiday, weekend, or school vacation

**Certified staff** are paid their contracted salary amount on a salary schedule approved by the COSSA Board of Trustees. Monthly pay is calculated by dividing the yearly salary amount by 12 months. Contracted days for staff include five paid holidays.

**Classified staff** are paid an hourly rate from a salary scale approved by the COSSA Board of Trustees. Monthly pay is calculated by multiplying the hourly rate by hours worked per day by the number of instructional days per year, and dividing by 12 months.

All COSSA employees must participate in the direct deposit system. COSSA does not mail direct deposit notices during the regular school year; they are emailed to the employee's COSSA email.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 5210. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Policy***

## **CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL**

By way of Board resolution, Classified Personnel are “at will” employees and as such, both employee and employer reserve the right to terminate employment without prior notice and without cause. If terminated, the employee’s rate of pay will be prorated to the date of termination.

All classified personnel fall under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Most classified staff are not required to track their time on the Hourly Time Claim form, though some positions may be required to do so. Classified employees who submit Hourly Time Claim forms need to keep track of the exact times (in and out) that they work. It is important to realize that classified staff are being paid by these hours even though they receive a fixed amount each month.

All hours worked by classified staff above regularly assigned hours per day must be pre-approved by the appropriate Program Administrator and initialed by the supervising teacher. COSSA Office must receive Hourly Time Claim forms by the 15th of the following month.

According to the Idaho Department of Labor, school employees who have a “reasonable assurance of returning to the district (COSSA)” each year cannot be granted state unemployment benefits during school breaks (i.e., summer break). COSSA employees, who do not work a twelve-month contract, have their pay pro-rated over twelve (12) months to enable continuous and uninterrupted health benefits. All employee requests for state unemployment benefits filed through the Idaho Department of Labor due to school breaks will be processed by COSSA as “employee having reasonable assurance of returning to the district”, unless employment has been terminated by COSSA.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 5210. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Policy***

## FINANCIAL REQUISITIONS & REIMBURSEMENTS

### REQUISITIONS

Requests for purchases of supplies and materials must be made by completing a requisition form found in the COSSA office. Include the following information when completing the form:

1. Name, address, telephone, FAX and e-mail address of the vendor;
2. Item numbers, complete descriptions, and quantity of items requested;
3. Amount or percentage of shipping cost (this can usually be found on the order blank in the catalog or on the company's website);
4. Employee's signature;
5. Signature of the assigned COSSA Program Administrator.

Following purchase approval by the assigned COSSA Program Administrator, a copy of the requisition form will be returned to the employee when the order has been received. If an employee will be responsible for taking the purchase order and receiving the merchandise, that employee must obtain a copy of the invoice or packing list for the merchandise and return the same to the Purchase Order Clerk. Failure to do so may result in the employee being held responsible for payment of the item.

Use of another program's equipment, materials/supplies, or perishables (food) requires a requisition that indicates a "transfer of funds" between the two programs.

### REQUESTS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

It is highly recommended that supplies and materials be procured by following the requisition/purchase order process. However, in a few rare exceptions when that is not possible, a request for reimbursement may be made by completing the Statement for Reimbursement of Expenditure form available at the COSSA office. All requests for reimbursement must be pre-approved through submission of a requisition prior to the purchase, and approved by the assigned COSSA Program Administrator, unless there is a demonstrated exigent circumstance.

For supplies or services to be reimbursed, include the place of purchase, the items' description or purpose and the amount. A copy of the receipt must be attached to the statement in order to receive reimbursement. Copies of canceled checks are not acceptable in lieu of a receipt.

Requests for reimbursement must be turned in for payment no later than 60 days, from the date of purchase and will be scheduled to be paid on the next payment schedule.

Meals will be reimbursed or advanced based on the [IRS per diem rates](#). To request per diem in advance, employees must complete the necessary [form](#) at least 10 days prior to travel.

## **MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENTS**

Travel must originate at the employee's first place of work or the COSSA office and terminate at the last place of work. Reimbursement may be claimed only for travel between the regular place of work and another approved site, as required to complete assigned duties. Reimbursement is paid at a rate determined by the COSSA Board of Trustees. Mileage claim forms are available in the COSSA office. Claims must be submitted by the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month to be included in the payment schedule for that month. Mileage claims need to be submitted on a regular monthly basis and not accumulated over a period of time to conform to IRS regulations.

## **TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS**

Reimbursement for travel expenditures is made for employees whose attendance at professional development activities requires an overnight stay. Staff attendance and request for reimbursement for expenses must be pre-approved by the assigned COSSA Program Administrator. All anticipated expenses must be submitted on a requisition form prior to the professional development event. Submitted requisitions must also include a copy of the brochure or flyer for the event. Once approved, COSSA administration will assist the employee in arrangement for pre-payment for: conference registration, hotel, car rental, etc., through the purchase order process.

Reimbursement for mileage will adhere to Board of Trustee policy and must be submitted on the COSSA Mileage Claim Form.

Meals will be reimbursed at the IRS per diem rate. In-state meals are not to exceed \$35.00 per day, which would be the full reimbursement rate for three (3) meals per day (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner).

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 7430. Mileage Allowance and Reimbursement***

## **CELL PHONE USAGE**

COSSA may provide cell phones for use by authorized employees to facilitate effective communication.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 5495. Use of Agency Provided Phones***

## PERSONNEL INFORMATION

### PERSONNEL FILES

From time-to-time items are placed in employee personnel files. Employees have the privilege and responsibility of inspecting their files; to do so access must be requested from the Business Manager to see and/or copy any items in the file. The access log within the file must be signed, dated and reason for access indicated whenever a file is opened.

**Related Board Policy:**     ***Policy 8605. Custody of Agency Records and Files***  
  ***Policy 7237. Retention of Records for Federal Grants***

### VERIFICATION OF CREDITS

A Verification of Credits form is kept in your personnel file. Please contact the Business Manager to add your new credits to this form. This will keep a continuing account for easier record keeping. Official transcripts are required for credit verification.

### SUPERVISION

Supervision is not synonymous with evaluation. Supervision is a process that the administration uses to oversee, manage, and direct school staff. Just as a teacher oversees the work of students, the administrator oversees the work of educational staff. In addition to overseeing staff, administrators have oversight of curricula and instructional programs. The goal of supervision is the improvement of teaching and learning. Supervision will be based on the mission and purpose of COSSA. The goal is to improve student achievement.

### EVALUATION

The purpose of staff evaluation is to enhance the instructional process and improve student achievement.

**Certified staff** evaluations will be completed in accordance with state mandates (Title 33-514, 33-515, Idaho Code).

**Classified staff** evaluations will be completed prior to the end of the school year. Educational Assistant evaluations are completed by the supervising teacher at the program where they are assigned and reviewed by the designated COSSA Program Administrator.

**Related Board Policy:**     ***Policy 5340. Certified Staff Evaluation***  
  ***Policy 6320. Administrator Evaluation***

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

COSSA has a grievance procedure policy in place that is designed to secure equitable solutions to the problems which may from time to time arise. In the event of a grievance, the employee should, within six (6) days following knowledge of the act or condition which is the basis of the complaint, present his or her complaint to his or her immediate supervisor, or appropriate immediate administrator. Employees are advised to contact a member of the COSSA administrative team for further grievance procedures.

***Related Board Policies: Policy 5250. Certificated Grievance Procedures  
Policy 5800. Classified Grievance Procedures***

## **SOLICITATION**

All employees are to refrain from solicitation which interferes with the primary purpose of the organization, which is the education of students. Solicitation includes distribution of materials, outside fund raisers, and conducting personal businesses.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of COSSA employee and student information is the responsibility of every employee. This means that certain information developed or acquired while performing your job may not be disclosed to persons outside of COSSA. You should not disclose information that is proprietary to COSSA. This includes any personal and/or confidential information regarding staff, students and patrons.

COSSA protects the privacy of the individual and the right to privacy. You may not make use of confidential information acquired in the exercise of your job to further personal interest or otherwise.

## **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

In compliance with Title 33-524, Idaho Code, school districts shall provide information to their employees (all certificated and noncertified staff) regarding professional liability insurance for educators. The information which must be made available is: the names of possible providers, business mailing address, telephone number and website information. Verification of all employees indicating that they have been provided this information must be maintained for three (3) years. Districts shall encourage employees who have interaction with students to have such insurance although no employee is required to carry such insurance.

## **RETIREMENT/RESIGNATION SURVEY**

All staff who are leaving employment with COSSA, for any reason, will notify their immediate supervisor and human resources office. An exit survey may be given to the employee for confirmation of resignation/retirement.

## COMMUNICATION

### COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

All written communication from the classroom to parents must be pre-approved by the COSSA Program Administrator (as applicable) before being sent, or must be part of a pre-approved communication process, such as forms, “good job” notes, daily communication logs, etc.

Oral and written communication regarding students is the responsibility of the teacher or administrator unless specifically directed to a designated individual (staff member) by the teacher or administrator.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 4260. Public Records Requests***

### COMMUNICATION WITH MEDIA

All press releases, including honor roll lists and graduation announcements, must be approved by the applicable COSSA Program Administrator before being sent. A signed parent release must be secured prior to any photographs or identifying information on any child to be used for publication.

### COMMUNICATION WITH BOARD MEMBERS

Any written communication between staff members and members of the COSSA Board of Trustees, if sent under the auspices of COSSA, CRTEC, or COSSA Academy, must be disclosed to the COSSA Chief Executive Officer before being sent. Materials intended for inclusion in a Board of Trustees report must be received by the Clerk of the Board at least 10 days before the regularly scheduled Board meeting. Personal appearance before the Board requires 5 working days’ prior notice.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 4105. Public Appearance at Board Meetings***

### COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER DISTRICTS

Any written communication between COSSA staff members and the COSSA member districts and other districts, if sent under the auspices of COSSA, CRTEC, or COSSA Academy, must be disclosed to the applicable COSSA Program Administrator before being sent.

### COSSA LETTERHEAD

COSSA’s official letterhead is meant for official correspondence by and for the benefit of the COSSA organization. What is placed onto official letterhead is “from COSSA”, and obligates COSSA as assuredly as a contract. Accordingly, only those individuals identified by position on the letterhead “standard” may sign correspondence without any further explanation of their position or without permission. All other users of letterhead need to identify their “role” in the COSSA organization, beneath their typed name, and then have their correspondence approved by one of the individuals identified on the letterhead “standard”.

Individuals may not create their own letterhead, and there should be only one “official” letterhead for all official correspondence. Employees may receive an electronic copy of the official COSSA letterhead by contacting the COSSA administrative office.

### **COSSA EMAIL**

COSSA uses Google Gmail as their email provider. The COSSA IT Department manages the COSSA Gmail account for all employees. New employees will be issued a COSSA Gmail address as part of their check-in process.

## **SUPERVISION & DISCIPLINE PROCESSES**

The best discipline tool is a well-planned, purposeful, and stimulating lesson. All teachers must have a clear classroom discipline plan that teaches and reinforces expected behavior. Expectations, routines, and consequences should be explained, practiced, and used consistently.

Teachers are expected to manage most student behavior in the classroom using strategies such as redirection, reminders, reteaching expectations, and appropriate consequences. Ongoing or serious behaviors should be documented along with steps taken to address them.

Sending a student out of the classroom should be a last resort and only used after classroom strategies have been tried, unless there is a safety concern.

A consistent discipline plan helps create a safe and productive learning environment for all students.

### **CLASSROOM RULES AND CONSEQUENCES**

Classroom rules and consequences, which are stated clearly, concisely and in positive language, should be posted in the classroom. Be consistent in enforcing consequences and inform parents to gain their support in your classroom management plan. Student discipline procedures should follow the district process, as each district may have a different policy. COSSA teachers are advised to contact their school site administrator in the event of a student discipline problem.

### **BEHAVIOR SUPPORT /STUDENT BEHAVIOR PLANS**

Some students may require individualized behavior support programs/behavior plans. Positive, rather than negative, measures shall form the basis of behavior support programs. Behavior support programs include a variety of techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance an individual student’s opportunity for learning and self-fulfillment. The types of intervention chosen for a particular student or young child shall be the least intrusive necessary and will not include punishment for a manifestation of a student’s disability. Behavior plans for students who require individualized behavior support programs will be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The use of **aversive techniques** - deliberate acts designed to establish a negative association with

a specific behavior - **are not appropriate** and will not be supported.

### **SUSPENSION / EXPULSION**

Only the Superintendent, Principal or Designee has the authority to suspend a student from school. Only the Board of Trustees has the authority to expel students from school. Please review the discipline policy that has been adopted at each district and refer behavior problems of this nature to the school site principal.

### **SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS**

Each school staff member carries responsibility for supervision and control of pupils when needed, not only in the classroom setting, but whenever and wherever students are on the campus. In large measure, excellent standards of behavior are the result of the cooperation of all staff members.

**Students are not to be in any classroom or instructional setting at any time without direct adult supervision.** If there is a need to leave the room for any reason, ask the Educational Assistant (if assigned to the program) or a dependable colleague to watch the class or notify the office at the assigned site. Direct instruction and oversight of the instructional program for students by the certified staff is of primary importance. In some settings, Educational Assistants may be assigned to work independently with individual or small groups of students with or without direct certified staff oversight at all times. However, emphasis in instructional planning needs to focus on maximizing the student's accessibility to the certified staff.

Use of classroom phones, computers (e-mail, social media, web, or any other computer applications not directly related to student instruction) or cell phones (including text messaging) for personal business during work hours interferes with the instructional process and appropriate supervision of students. **COSSA staff will refrain from use of personal cell phones during instructional time and at all times during student supervision, unless with prior approval of the program administrator, or if extenuating circumstances occur.** Office staff members are instructed to take phone messages unless it is a non-instructional time or an emergency.

### **COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE**

Computer usage provides a valuable resource for teachers and students. In addition to computer software for educational usage, teachers and students may have access to the Internet. The Internet provides access to information in millions of files worldwide. Its proper use can open new opportunities to information, research, and communication. With these opportunities come the disadvantages of access to information that may not be appropriate in the schools. Any individual user has the ultimate responsibility to use Internet resources appropriately. Staff members must instruct and monitor students' use and application of computers when used within the school setting. All Internet users are expected to use the network and computers provided at the school sites for purposes consistent with the policies, purposes, and objectives of the school districts.

**Due to licensing laws, staff are not to install personally owned computer programs on school computers.**

Canyon-Owyhee School Service Agency reserves the right to monitor the use of computers. This includes documents, e-mail and Internet usage.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS**

All communication between staff and students will be professional and for official use only. All communication between staff and students must concern school business only. Social Media should not be utilized as a messaging platform to communicate with students.

<h2><b>SPECIAL ACTIVITIES</b></h2>
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### **FIELD TRIPS**

A field trip is defined as any curricular activity that would require students to be away from the school facility. This includes trips that would require transportation arrangements and/or walking trips off school campus facilities. An Activity Approval Request (available at the COSSA Office) must be submitted for approval one month prior to the scheduled activity. Approval must be obtained from the assigned COSSA Program Administrator prior to any activities requiring students to leave school facilities. All students must have a signed **Field Trip Permission Form for each scheduled field trip** from their parent/guardian before they will be allowed to attend a field trip. Field trips that are listed in a course syllabus for which parents sign acknowledgement do not require a separate permission form. Special arrangements for regularly scheduled off campus activities such as Community-Based Instruction may be made through the assigned COSSA Program Administrator.

### **FUND RAISERS/GRANTS**

The school site Administrator and the assigned COSSA Program Administrator must approve all fundraising/grant application projects and activities before applications and agreements can be made with outside parties or before materials may be ordered. The teacher will be responsible for the supervision of fundraising activities and accounting for all materials and funds involved. All money collected in connection with fundraising projects must be deposited with the COSSA Business Manager.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 3420. Fund Raising Drives***

## SAFETY & PROTECTION ISSUES

### CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Any teacher or other person having reason to believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18) years has been abused or neglected, or who observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, shall report or cause to be reported within twenty-four (24) hours such conditions or circumstances to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Health and Welfare (Chapter 16, Title 1619, Idaho Code). Appendix A, Report of Possible Child Abuse, will be used to alert Program Administrators within COSSA.

It is the duty of the COSSA staff to follow district guidelines regarding child protection procedures. COSSA employees suspecting child abuse/neglect shall first report to the local school principal and the assigned COSSA Program Administrator and then follow-up reporting procedures with submission of the Report of Possible Child Abuse form to the COSSA office within 24 hours.

The disclosure, by a student to school personnel, of intent to commit suicide must be treated as a serious matter. COSSA staff will immediately report this incident to the school site administrator and follow district procedures. Do not leave the student unsupervised before someone (preferably COSSA Academy school counselor or one of the COSSA school psychologists if counselor is unavailable) conducts a "suicide risk assessment" of that student. COSSA staff will notify the assigned COSSA Program Administrator of the incident as soon as possible.

### DRUG FREE WORKPLACE / SCHOOL POLICY

#### **Employees:**

It is the policy of COSSA that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispersion, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol is prohibited in the workplace. It is a condition of employment with COSSA that employees comply with this policy. If a violation has taken place, disciplinary action against the offending employee will follow. Appropriate action may result in termination. Any employee who is made aware of or suspects a prohibited incident is taking place shall report the matter to his/her supervisor. As required by federal law, employees must notify their program administrator of any criminal drug or alcohol statute conviction occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) calendar days after such conviction. **In addition, employees who are convicted under any criminal drug or alcohol statute violation not occurring in the workplace must notify their program administrator within five (5) calendar days after such conviction and are also subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.** This policy complies with the requirements of P.L. 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D, Section 5115.

Employees will follow the tobacco use policy of the district in which they work. In general, tobacco products are prohibited from use at any school or on any school property and COSSA employees will refrain from tobacco use while on school grounds. This includes smokeless tobacco and electronic cigarettes.

**Students:**

A student shall not possess, use, transmit, traffic in, or be under the influence of any illegal/controlled substance including, but not limited to: tobacco in any form, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, narcotic or hallucinogenic drugs, alcohol or intoxicants of any kind while on the school grounds, or while off the school grounds attending a school activity, function, or event. COSSA policy and regulations are based on the laws of the State of Idaho and recognize that the violation of those laws can subject violators to due process of law. COSSA staff members are to report student violations of these policies to the school site administrator immediately.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 5320. Drug Free Workplace***

**HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING**

No student or staff member shall intentionally commit, or conspire to commit, any act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying against another student or staff member.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is defined as misconduct by an individual(s) in an attempt to exercise control over the victim and is generally characterized by aggressive or intentionally harmful behavior, which is carried out repeatedly over time. Harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying include any intentional gesture or any written, verbal, or physical acts or threats against another person that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

Harming; or  
Damaging a person's property; or  
Placing someone in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person; or  
Placing someone in reasonable fear of damage to his or her property; or  
Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational or work environment for a student or staff.

An act of harassment, intimidation or bullying extends not only to actions taking place on school grounds or workplace but also actions originating at a remote location and carried out via any technology, including, but not limited to, the use of a landline, car phone, or wireless telephone, or through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network; including social media such as Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, etc.

It is the duty of the COSSA staff to follow district policies and guidelines regarding staff or student harassment, intimidation and bullying.

**Related Board Policies:    *Policy 5240. Employee Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures*  
*Policy 5250. Certificated Grievance Procedures*  
*Policy 5800. Classified Grievance Procedures*  
*Policy 5245. Title IX Policy and Procedures***

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The policy of COSSA is to maintain an environment that is free from sexual harassment and sexual violence. COSSA prohibits any form of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee or student to sexually harass or be sexually violent to a student or employee. Sexual harassment refers to sexual overtures or conduct that is personally offensive and affects morale, thus interfering with the individual's work or school performance.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

Verbal harassment or abuse, including sexually degrading words used to describe an individual;

Displaying in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;

Subtle pressure for sexual activity;

Any sexually motivated touching;

Graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body or clothing;

Intentional brushing against an individual's body;

Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or educational status;

Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment or education;

Sexual violence, which is a physical act of aggression that includes a sexual act or sexual purpose.

COSSA will act to investigate all complaints; whether formal or informal, verbal or written, of sexual harassment or sexual violence and to discipline any employee or student who sexually harasses or is sexually violent to a student or employee of COSSA. Any person who believes that he/she has been the victim of sexual harassment by an employee of COSSA, or any third party with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment should report the alleged acts immediately to the Title IX Coordinator (the COSSA Special Education Director), and their assigned COSSA Program Administrator.

**Related Board Policy:**     ***Policy 5240. Employee Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures***  
  ***Policy 5245. Title IX Policy and Procedures***

## **WEAPONS CONTROL**

COSSA is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and staff when they are at school, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity. COSSA's commitment includes the prohibition against any weapons or other objects/substances which may pose a threat to the health and safety of other students, staff members, or visitors, or could be used to disrupt the educational process. Students attending COSSA programs are prohibited from:

1. Possessing or carrying objects/substances which are manufactured, used, or intended for use as a weapon, or facsimiles thereof, at school, on a school bus, or at any school-sponsored activity without prior permission of school officials.
2. Possessing, carrying, using, and/or threatening to use, any normally non-dangerous object or substance with the intent or result of causing harm to another individual at school, on a school bus, or at any school-sponsored activity.
3. Knowingly assisting other student(s) to possess, carry, or use a weapon at school, on a school bus or at any school-sponsored activity

If any student is discovered bringing a weapon on his or her person, or in his or her vehicle, to any COSSA class or onto COSSA-owned or -rented property, the student shall surrender the weapon immediately. Safety of the students and staff is of utmost concern. The appropriate COSSA Program Administrator is to be called, the administrator of the home school district, and law enforcement as appropriate. The parent of the student shall be notified at once.

## STUDENT EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES

### POLICY REGARDING PRESENTATION OF ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

The COSSA Board of Trustees has adopted a policy regarding “Advance Directives” [including: Living Will, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, or Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR Order)], presented by or on behalf of a student who has a terminal condition. In the event an Advance Directive for a student enrolled in the district is presented by the adult student or his or her parent/guardian, a copy of the order will immediately be placed in the student’s educational record. The school/district Nursing staff, the school Principal, and the Special Education Director will also be notified and provided a copy of such order. The school Principal and Special Education Director will inform the individual presenting the Advance Directive of the policy.

In the event emergency medical services personnel are called by the district to assist a student, **district personnel knowledgeable of an Advance Directive or identification will make a reasonable effort to inform the medical services personnel of the Advance Directive or identification.** Emergency medical services personnel have statutory authority to follow an Advance Directive order or identification. Medical personnel or health care providers employed or contracted by the district or contracted to provide medical services, if on site at the time of medical emergency, will comply with the Advance Directive order or identification and provide comfort care.

**School staff has a statutory duty to protect the health of all students enrolled in the district, which would require seeking medical attention (following procedures as outlined in each of the COSSA member schools) on behalf of a student who is sick or injured.** Staff should contact school nurse staff for guidance, if available, or seek emergency medical services through the school office, when a medical emergency arises. When a student’s parent/guardian arrives on the scene, the parent/guardian may override staff decisions previously made to seek medical attention and/or emergency transportation.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 3540. Student First Aid***

### EMERGENCY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION POLICIES

It is the duty of the COSSA staff to follow district/program guidelines regarding emergency medical procedures. Staff in the COSSA Regional Technology and Education Center (CRTEC) will follow CRTEC accident reporting procedures. Staff assigned in consortium districts will follow the accident reporting procedures of their district. A copy of the district’s accident report will be faxed or delivered to the appropriate COSSA Program Administrator.

**Related Board Policy:    *Policy 3540. Student First Aid***

**Appendix A**  
**Canyon-Owyhee School Service Agency (COSSA)**  
**Report of Possible Child Abuse**

Refer to COSSA Personnel Handbook – Safety & Protection Issues, Child Protection Procedures

To: \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_  
COSSA Program Administrator Individual Submitting Report

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ School/Program of Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_ District of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Incident (Attach additional page if necessary):

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Name of Witnesses: (Indicate only persons who were actual witnesses, if the incident was witnessed)

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_

€ School District Principal/Designee informed of this incident:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

€ Assigned COSSA Program Administrator informed of this incident:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

€ The Department of Health and Welfare – Child Protection, was notified by telephone.  
Report was made within 24 hours of the Incident:

Person Notified: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

The Central Intake number is: (208) 334-5437 or toll free (855) 552-KIDS (5437)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

White Copy – COSSA File

Yellow Copy – Teacher File



**Appendix B**

**Canyon-Owyhee School Service Agency  
109 Penny Lane  
Wilder, ID 83676  
(208) 482-6074, Fax: (208) 482-7904**

**SAMPLE Work Status Report (Please see HR for form)**

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax#: \_\_\_\_\_

Off Work – Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to work WITHOUT restrictions (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Return to work WITH THE FOLLOWING RESTRICTIONS  
(date): \_\_\_\_\_

Limit working hours to \_\_\_\_\_ daily

Position changes whenever necessary

No sitting

No squatting/kneeling

No lifting, pushing, or pulling in excess of \_\_\_\_\_ pounds

No repetitive twisting, bending or stooping

No walking on rough or uneven ground

No driving

No overhead reaching or lifting with:

\_\_\_\_\_ Left arm      \_\_\_\_\_ Right arm

Sedentary work ONLY

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Restrictions applicable until new Physician orders are given.

Return Visit Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_