



## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

Revised June 2017

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## **SSLC Overview and Mission**

Two distinct and very different schools share a common administration. These two schools are Southwest Secondary Learning Center (SSLC) and Southwest Aeronautics Mathematics and Science Academy (SSLC). This Policy Manual is specific to Southwest Secondary Learning Center (SSLC).

The mission of the Southwest Secondary Learning Center (SSLC) is to utilize blended learning, traditional and community-based instruction in an accelerated academic curriculum to sustain a high-performing learning community.

SSLC is comprised of grades 9-12. SSLC utilizes and sustains an environment with accelerated academic curriculum.

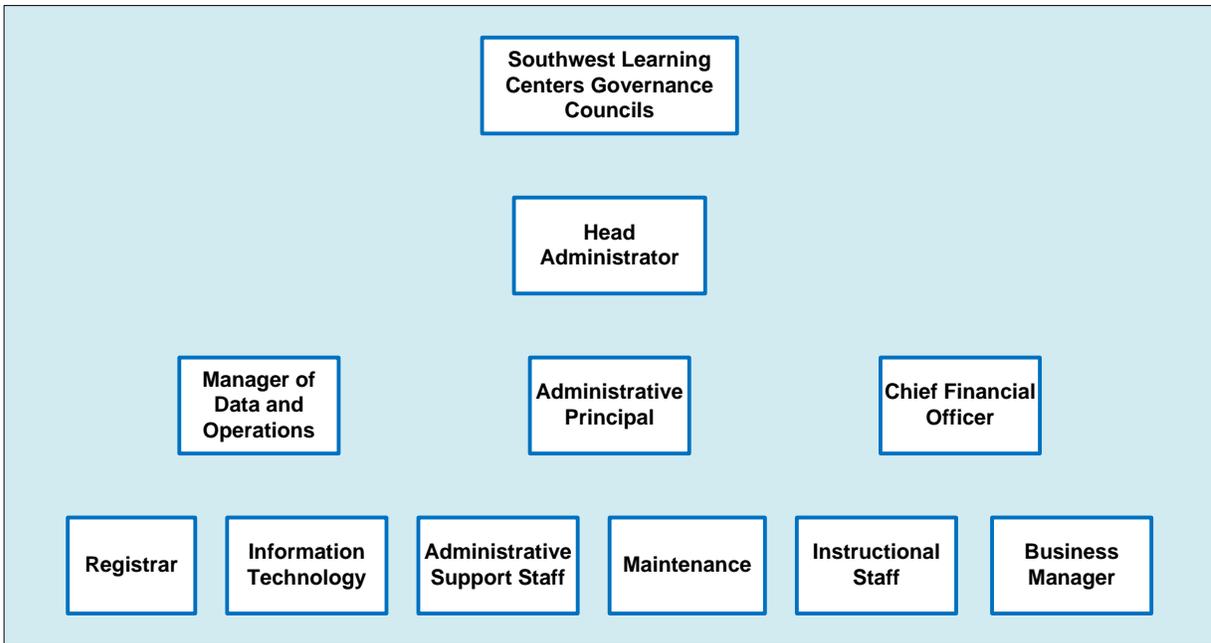
Through a long-term commitment to this mission, we are known as a school that can offer quality alternative learning opportunities for all students. Students, parents, and the community view the school as offering challenging and creative learning environments for students.

## **General School Administration**

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The general school administration is shared by the Southwest Secondary Learning Center (SSLC) and Southwest Aeronautics, Mathematics and Science Academy (SSLC). This practice is utilized to sustain a consistent administrative approach to support an accelerated academic curriculum, a high-performing learning community, a financially stable environment, and a daily operational process to support the mission.

The administrative approach is divided into three components for operational efficiency and control. These components consist of the Administrative Principal for all academic processes; Chief Financial Officer for all financial processes; and the Manager of Data and Operations for all daily operational processes.



## SSLC AUTHORIZER

SSLC is a State Charter school and is “authorized” as a State Charter school by the Public Education Commission (PEC) and managed by the Public Education Department (PED) of New Mexico. From the authorizer, SSLC has a Contract and a Performance Review Framework which contains specific objectives and goals that must be achieved yearly.

### Personnel Policies, Procedures, and Additional Employee Processes

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This section of the Employee Handbook aligns with Section G of the SSLC Policy Manual. This section specifies the specific policies governed by the Governing Body followed by the Procedure used to carry out the Policy through actual actions and activities to be demonstrated. This section also includes additional employee processes.

#### **1. Equal Employment**

The SSLC is an equal opportunity employer. The school prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, religion, age, veteran status and/or any other protected status as defined by law, in all facets of employment, compensation, promotion, transfer, demotion, layoff, termination or selection for School-sponsored training programs. Discriminatory behavior violates state and federal laws and regulations.

#### **2. Employee Relations**

Nothing in this employee handbook shall be construed to limit or affect the right of any employee to express a view or opinion on any matter related to the condition or terms of

employment, so long as the same does not interfere with the full, faithful, and proper performance of the employee's duties or interrupt the educational process for the students.

### ***3. Position Description***

The school shall maintain an adequate job description for each Certified or Non-Certified employee. The job description is based on the duties and tasks that the employee performs at the school.

### ***4. Compensation and Wages***

*\*(See SSLC Internal Controls)*

### ***5. Employee Conflict of Interest***

Employees must not engage in any activities, transactions, or relationships that are incompatible with the impartial, objective, and effective performance of their duties. Public employment is a public trust. Employees must maintain integrity and high ethical standards and may not use their position to advance personal or private interest. All employees must disclose real or potential conflicts of interest, as well as any activities that might be perceived as a conflict of interest, as directed by the Government Conduct Act., NMSA 1978, § 10-16-3.

### ***6. Nepotism***

The school shall comply with all applicable state and federal statutes regarding nepotism. The Governing Body and the Head Administrator shall not engage in nepotism in any of its operations or hiring practices. The School shall not initially employ or approve initial employment in any capacity a person who is a family member of the Governing Body or the Head Administrator. The Governing Body may waive this policy for family Members of employees.

### ***7. Employee Standards of Conduct***

Employees of the school shall maintain the highest standards of conduct and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. Employees must not engage in a) verbal or physical conduct, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment or b) activities which violate federal, state or local laws or which, in any way, reflect adversely on The School.

## **8. Staff Conduct with Students**

The School strongly believes that a part of the schools' mission is to promote moral and ethical behavior by our students. These values are best promoted by "leading by example". The employees of the School are expected to be positive role models for students. In addition, the standards of ethical behavior and professional conduct are set forth in New Mexico Public Education Department regulation 6.60.9 NMAC – Code of Ethical Responsibility. Violation of this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge by the school or up to licensure revocation by the Public Education Department.

## **9. Sexual Harassment**

While all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment are prohibited, it is the policy of the School to emphasize that sexual harassment is specifically prohibited. The School is committed to providing a workplace that is free of sexual or other prohibited harassment. The School has zero tolerance for sexual harassment. Verbal or physical contact by an employee, including sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other conduct that harasses, disrupts or interferes with another employee's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile work environment will not be tolerated.

Every employee has the responsibility to maintain the workplace free of any form of prohibited harassment, sexual or otherwise. No individual is to threaten or insinuate, either explicit or implicitly that submission to sexual advances is a term or condition of an individual's employment, or that refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, compensation, advancement, assigned duties, shifts or any other term or condition of employment or career development. No individual is to favor in any way an applicant or employee because that applicant or employee has performed or shown a willingness to perform sexual favors for the individual. Sexual harassment also includes conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment are:

- Sexual flirtations, touching, advances or propositions;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Sexually graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
- Sexually degrading words to describe an individual;
- The display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures in the workplace, including nude photographs;
- Derogatory gender-based humor;

- Unwelcome touching, patting, pinching or leering; and
- Derogatory or sexually explicit statements about an actual or supposed sexual relationship.

Any employee who believes that the actions or words of a supervisor, fellow employee or non-employee constitute sexual harassment or other prohibited harassment has a responsibility to report or complain about such conduct promptly to his/her supervisor.

All complaints of sexual or other prohibited harassment shall be investigated promptly, impartially and in as confidential a manner as possible by the supervisor/principal. If an employee is not satisfied with the handling of a complaint or the action taken by the investigator, then the employee should bring the complaint to the attention of the Head Administrator. In all cases, the complaining employee will be advised of the relevant findings and conclusions.

Any complaint involving a supervisor should be reported to the Head Administrator. Any complaint about the Head Administrator should be reported to the School Board President.

No employee will be discharged or retaliated against in any manner because the employee complained about sexual or prohibited harassment, or cooperated with an investigation of a complaint of prohibited harassment. However, if the complaint or the information provided in the investigation is found to be false and made in bad faith, the employee may be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Any employee who is found after appropriate investigation to have engaged in sexual or other prohibited harassment of another employee as well as any employee who retaliates against an employee in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### ***10. Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Free Workplace***

The School forbids any employee from possessing, using, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, and from possessing, using, selling, or distributing drug paraphernalia. Use of tobacco by any persons on school grounds is prohibited.

### ***11. Health and Safety***

The policy of the Governing Body is to take all reasonable steps to safeguard employees, students, and the public from accidents and to provide a safe, healthy work and

educational environment. The school will maintain and implement the NMPED School Safety Procedures and the school has the plan located in the Administrative office.

## **12. Employee Insurance**

Pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 22-8B-9(B)(16), The School will participate in the public school insurance authority (NMPSIA) to provide employee health and benefit coverages, other risk-related coverages, as well as Worker's Compensation and other fringe benefits.

## **13. Duty Day**

The Governing Body delegates scheduling authority and responsibility to the Head Administrator. The normal duty day shall not exceed 8 hours inclusive of lunch. In accordance with the school having several sessions per day employees will be afforded a FLEX schedule when necessary as long as instructional employees complete a 35 hour work week and Full Year employees complete a 40 hour work week. The Duty Day is based on hours that are performed at the employee's assigned physical work place.

The normal duty day for an instructional employee is comprised of an 8 hour duty day Monday through Thursday (7:30am-3:30pm), and a 5 hour duty day on Friday (7:30-12:30) – (if a 30 minute lunch is taken, the day ends at 1 PM). A total of 35 hours.

The normal duty day for a non-instructional employee is comprised of an 8.5 hour duty day Monday through Thursday (7:30am-3:45pm), and a 6 hour duty day on Friday (7:30am-1:30pm). A total of 40 hours.

### **1. Leave, Professional Leave, Annual Leave, and Holidays**

The Governing Body does not differentiate between annual leave and sick leave. All Leave is termed "Straight Leave". It is the policy of the Governing Body to allow each classification of employee the allotted days to be used at the employee's discretion, with the pre-approval of the Head Administrator, or their designee. The Governing Body shall annually identify the recognized paid holidays. The school provides its employees annual leave and holidays based upon the terms of their individual employment contracts. Further, the administration will consider long-term and short-term leave for its employees. The Head Administrator or their designee shall approve all leave on an individual basis.

All leave is subject to the approval of the School. Authorized leave from duty is as follows:

Professional Leave

Straight Leave

Extended Illness

Jury Duty

Extended Leave

Bereavement Leave  
Military Leave  
Sick Leave Donation

### Notification

Employees should request leave three (3) days in advance in order to obtain prior approval from their immediate supervisor and the Head Administrator.

Extended Leave: Requests for extended leaves of absence should be requested and approved from the board and will only be granted once the employee has exhausted all of their leave and FMLA Leave.

**Non-Instructional Employees can take up to 10 consecutive days during the school year with approval from an administrator.**

**Instructional Employees can take up to 5 consecutive days during the school year with approval from an administrator.**

Full Year employees will be granted 20 days of straight leave per year. Instructional Year employees will receive 10 days total of straight leave per calendar year. Employees will only be able to carry over a total of 20 days of “straight leave” total per year.

Attendance Reimbursement Account (ARA) - The school will “pay out” five days (5) of unused straight leave at the end of the employee’s yearly contract if so requested by the employee. Principals will create an ARA list of employees from their schools who will receive an ARA payment for that school year no later than May 10<sup>th</sup> of that year that will be submitted after the last day of school to be paid in a separate check based on the employee’s rate-of-pay. The employee can elect to not receive an ARA Payment and have their leave balance carried over into the next year.

### Paid Leave Balances:

Employees must exhaust all paid leave before going to an unpaid status. When on leave provided underneath FMLA (Family & Medical Leave Act), paid leave will count towards the 12 week total.

### Benefits During Leave

During paid leave, all other benefits will remain in force, and straight leave and annual leave will continue to be granted as normal. During unpaid leave the employee is responsible for maintaining health insurance coverage through the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority Eligibility Administrator (NMPSIA). Leave will not be granted during the unpaid leave period.

The school will comply with all FMLA (Family & Medical Leave Act) Regulations.

### Military Leave

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act states: A military leave of absence will be granted if an employee is absent in order to serve in Uniformed Services of the United States for a period of up to five years (not including certain involuntary extensions of service). An employee who performs and returns from service in the Armed Forces, the Military Reserves, the National Guard, or certain public health service positions will retain certain rights with respect to reinstatement, seniority, lay-offs, compensation, length of service promotions and length of service pay increases, as required by applicable federal or state law. Other benefits, such as health insurance, do not continue while out on active service.

An employee participating in annual encampment or training in the US military Reserves or the National Guard will be eligible to receive the difference between what the employee earns from the government for military service and what he/she would have earned from normal straight-time pay on the job.

### Bereavement Leave

Up to four (4) days absence total per year may be granted when there is a death in an employee's immediate family in town and six (6) days absence total per year may be granted for year for a death out of town. Immediate family for this purpose includes spouse, children, parent, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law.

### Jury Duty

Employees are encouraged to serve as jurors when summoned to do so but should advise the Head Administrator of the date of such service immediately upon receipt of notice. Employees will receive their normal compensation and shall be permitted to retain any travel reimbursement received from the court and any per diem received for services rendered the court before or after the employee's regular workday. Any additional compensation will be signed over to the School.

### No Leave All Staff Professional Development Days:

Employees will not be granted leave from an All Staff Professional Development Days except in the case of an Emergency and approved by the Head Administrator.

### Sick Leave Donation

House Bill 403 now requires that employees within the organization have the ability to donate Straight Leave to other individual employees who have severe medical conditions and are unable to work starting July 1, 2015.

Guidelines:

1. Employees can only donate **straight leave or annual leave** that they have accrued over 5 days of straight/ and or Annual Leave and can only donate their days to another employee with the hours they have accrued over those 5 days.
2. The employee receiving the leave must have exhausted all of their straight and annual leave before requesting donated sick leave.
3. The recipient of the donated leave must provide certified medical documentation from a physician that describes the nature, severity, and anticipated duration of the medical emergency condition. This also includes documentation that the recipient is unable to work all or a portion of the recipient's work hours.
4. If the recipient has filed a Worker's Compensation claim then the recipient must also provide the above documentation from a Worker's Compensation physician assigned by Worker's Compensation.
5. The school will do a *straight across* leave between all employees regardless of each employee's **rate-of-pay**.

## **2. Family and Medical Leave Act**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is designed to provide employees temporary job security when faced with certain health-related care responsibilities that preclude them from working. The FMLA compels employers who employ 50 or more employees to grant qualifying employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for:

- Birth and care of the employee's child, or placement for adoption or foster care of a child with the employee;
- Care of an immediate family member (spouse, child, parent) who has a serious health condition; or care of the employee's own serious health condition.
- For an employee to be eligible for FMLA, they must (1) have worked at least 12 months (which do not have to be consecutive) for the employer and (2) have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately before the date FMLA leave begins.

It is the policy of the SSLC Governing Body to comply fully with the requirements and directives of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

## **3. Personnel Evaluations**

SSLC The school will maintain a system of evaluation for all personnel in compliance with the laws of New Mexico and the standards and procedures adopted by the New Mexico Public Education Department, which system will also reflect and support the mission, goals, and

objectives of the school. Each employee will undergo a yearly evaluation based on their performance within the scope of that description by the Principal or Supervisor. The employee will receive an overall evaluation rating each year of:

- Ineffective,
- Minimally Effective
- Effective
- Highly Effective
- Exemplary

The school subscribes by law, just as any other public school in New Mexico, to the NM Teach Evaluation System. Each teacher will receive an evaluation each year conducted by the Principals and Non-Instructional Personnel will also have a yearly evaluation based on their performance within their job description.

### ***17. Staff Development***

The school will provide its employees quality opportunities for continual professional growth and development. Such opportunities shall reflect the mission, goals and educational plan of the school and provide for growth and development based upon an employee's goals and performance. The school will also pay close attention to implementing training that addresses the Performance Contract areas of Academics, Finance, and Organization.

### **SSLC TUITION, BOOK, and COURSE FEES REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

TUITION/ BOOK/ COURSE FEE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Approved by Governance Board on

SSLC encourages and promotes University course work and training, especially coursework that is necessary to obtain or maintain New Mexico state licensure.

To be eligible for reimbursement a course (s) must be pre-approved by the Head Administrator.

SSLC will reimburse SSLC employees up to 100% only for tuition, book expenses, and any associated lab or course fees at an accredited in-state university or college that have been pre-approved as required herein and on the successful completion of the courses with passing grades in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

SSLC will only reimburse up to 100% at the University of New Mexico rate of tuition at an

accredited out-of-state university or college. This would also include correspondence and/ or internet courses.

SSLC will not reimburse audit classes, classes taken on a pass/fail basis, or those classes in which a grade of "C" or better is "NOT" earned. SSLC will not reimburse any university or college tuition, book expenses, or lab/course fees if an employee resigns or is terminated from SSLC before the end of the course (s) or fails to successfully complete and earn credit in the course (s).

**The Governing Board will designate an allotted amount of Professional Development money per year for Tuition, Book, and Course Fees Reimbursement. That amount will be split into the Fall and Spring semesters and divided equally among staff who apply and are approved for Tuition Reimbursement for that given semester. If funds are still available staff can apply for reimbursement funds for the SUMMER semester. The allotted amount FY18 is \$8,000.00.**

**Staff must submit proof of enrollment in the university, registration in the course, and the Reimbursement Application for FALL semester by September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to be considered for approval to receive reimbursement funds.**

**Staff must submit proof of enrollment in the university, registration in the course, and the Reimbursement Application for SPRING semester by January 1<sup>st</sup> in order to be considered for approval to receive reimbursement funds.**

**Staff must submit proof of enrollment in the university, registration in the course, and the Reimbursement Application for SUMMER semester by June 1<sup>st</sup> in order to be considered for approval to receive reimbursement funds.**

**Courses must relate to the employee's current job, job description, and vocation within the school or possible advancement within the school.**

### ***18. Transfer of Employees***

The Governing Body delegates to the Head Administrator the authority and responsibility for transferring employees within all of the Southwest Schools based on programmatic, budgetary, or school need and/or the best interests of the students.

### ***19. Personnel Reduction-In-Force***

The purpose of the school Reduction-In-Force policy is to establish an orderly, non-discriminatory and equitable procedure to reduce the number of employees in the event that the school experiences insufficient or reduced revenues, and to preserve a sound balanced educational program that is consistent with the function and responsibilities of the school's charter. The Head Administrator shall be the final decision-maker on the

content and scope of the Reduction-In-Force plan after giving due consideration to the recommendations of the Governing Body.

## **20. Conflict Resolution Policy**

### **Employee-to-Employee Grievance Procedure**

#### **SOUTHWEST SECONDARY LEARNING CENTER EMPLOYEE-TO-EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

*Aggrieved must always begin with Level I*

#### **Level II**

#### **Principal**

Resolves issue, followed by written response to the employee(s) filing grievance.

Timeline: Within 3 working days. If the Head Administrator is the object of the grievance then the grievance would continue to Level III with the Head Administrator and Principal.



#### **Level III**

#### **Head Administrator-Principal- Aggrieved Employee**

**IF** issue is still not resolved then a meeting with the Lead Principal and Head Administrator will be scheduled after the person filing the grievance files a formal grievance with the Head Administrator and Principal. Timeline: Within 5 working days.



#### **Level IV**

#### **Head Administrator**

If issue is not resolved then it continues with the SSLC Head Administrator who will review all documentation surrounding the grievance and issue a written resolution to the employee filing the grievance. The Head Administrator at their discretion may convene a school Governing Council Sub-Committee in reviewing the complaint. The determination of the Head Administrator is final.

All written documents prior to this step must be available for the Head Administrator's review.

Timeline: Within 5 working days

***Southwest Secondary Learning Center Resolution of Employee-to-Employee***

***Conflicts Procedure:***

A grievance will be defined as a dispute between two employees of any Southwest School. The school's conflict resolution (i.e. grievance) procedure is designed to ensure an employee and the school a fair hearing of legitimate grievances.

***The Head Administrator will determine if the dispute merits exercising the Conflicts Resolution Procedure, and the Head Administrator will determine if the dispute merits exercising the procedure if the Principal or Head Administrator is the object of the dispute.***

An employee should make a reasonable effort to resolve the issue with the other employee before deferring to the grievance procedures.

A written record of each meeting will be made and kept as part of the personnel file of the aggrieved employee.

***21. Staff Participation in Political Activities***

THE SCHOOL prohibits employees seeking political office or participating in a political campaign from conducting campaign activities on school premises during regular working hours, disallows employees from using students in any campaign activity during school hours and bans employees from using school equipment or materials to produce campaign literature.

***22. Background Investigations***

The school recognizes that all applicants for employment with the school are subject to work history, education history, reference checks and criminal background investigations including, but not limited to, applicants for substitute and temporary positions, non-paid volunteers, mentors, and contractors or contractor's employee(s) with unsupervised access to students. Newly hired employees are responsible for the cost of any needed certifications and background checks. The school administration will make a final determination and the action taken if an employee background investigation reveals that an employee has participated in criminal activity that could potentially jeopardize the safety of students.

***23. Records and Certification***

The employee shall furnish the Head Administrator with the following: (a) a valid license for the position to be held; (b) appropriate endorsement(s) for the position to be held; (c) an official transcript showing the education record and training of the Instructor, (d)

suitable evidence of date of birth; (e) such health certificates as may be required by law; and (f) any other documents as may be required by law. Failure to furnish any of the foregoing items at the required time may result in cancellation of the employee's contract by the 40 day of the current school year in accordance with the New Mexico statutes and any applicable rules and regulations of NMPED.

The school will maintain a complete and current official personnel file for each school employee. Employees may review their own files by making a written request to administration. Confidential information obtained prior to an employee's employment, such as recommendations, will not be available for review by the employee.

Employees will be permitted to review and comment on, all information to be placed in their respective personnel files with a business official present. The employee may prepare a written reply to such information, and such reply, if any, will be appended to the information in the file.

All licensed employees are required to supply the school business office with current and complete official transcripts of all college credits as well as verification of previous employment. It is the duty and responsibility of each licensed employee to keep such license current.

All documents within a personnel file are confidential unless considered public information under law, and the school may create such sub-files within a personnel file as are appropriate to ensure confidentiality and efficient use of the file. Access to personnel files will be limited to authorized school business officials and approved personnel as deemed by the Head Administrator. Those who access the files must sign a log when accessing a file on which file they are accessing and for what purpose. Files will returned to the file cabinet at the end of business each day and kept locked at all times in a fireproof cabinet in the school with which they are associated.

Copies of the personnel files also may be stored within a secure digital security system and accessed only by school business officials and administration. Hard copies of personnel files of employees who are no longer under employment with the school will be kept for five years after their departure at which time the file will then only be kept digitally.

Specific information contained in the personnel files may be considered public information under the law and will be released with Head Administrator approval in accordance with the Inspection of Public Records Act, Confidential Materials Act, the Board Policy Manual and relative to the disclosure of the school's public records.

Teaching & Experience (T&E) will be computed off the following records: Official Transcript, License, Verified Work Experience.

Verified Work Experience includes:

- a. If an employee has worked 90+ days for Instructional positions and 115+ days for non-instructional positions, it will be considered 1 year of experience.
- b. College level teaching will not be accepted as work experience.
- c. Verification of Years of Applicable Experience in another state is acceptable.
- d. For Aviation purposes, the FAA accepted Pilot's log is acceptable for student training hours in computing the number of experience hours as it is translated into 240 days per year.
- e. All positions including Non-Instructional positions will need to provide a letter or form from a previous employer verifying the number of years worked full time or part time in the same/similar position being hired for.

#### ***24. Fraud Awareness, Misconduct, and Whistle Blower***

The school is committed to protecting the school from fraud, misuse, misappropriation, misconduct or other irregularities. All employees are encouraged to report any suspicious, irregular, unethical or illegal behavior involving employees, stakeholders, consultants, vendors, contractors or other persons or entities with regard to Fraud. Any activity of suspicious activity should be reported to the Head Administrator and if the Head Administrator is the object of the suspicious activity then it should be reported to the School Board President. The school will not retaliate against employees who in good faith express their reasonable concerns about unlawful use or misuse of, or about other misconduct or irregularities, when reported to the appropriate school authority.

#### ***24. Staff Acceptable Use Internet Policy***

The Governing Body hereby adopts the school's Acceptable Use Policy and the terms and conditions outlined within the AUP.

This policy is to establish what the acceptable uses are for employees of Southwest Secondary Learning Center. It is written to cover the most common circumstances and provide guidelines for what is and what is not acceptable.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "computer" refers to any desktop, laptop, or other mobile computing device owned or issued by Southwest Secondary Learning Center. The term "e-mail" refers to e-mail accounts that are created and maintained by the IT department at Southwest Secondary Learning Center for school business. The term "computer services" refers to software and Internet connections used to conduct school business.

This policy covers the use of computers and e-mail both on and off the school and when accessing school systems from off-site.

Staff will be assigned computers and e-mail accounts as determined by administration.

### **Acceptable Use**

Southwest Secondary Learning Center's computers and computer services are provided for educational purposes, research, and school business that is consistent with the school's educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals.

The accounts provided by the SW Learning Center should be used only for educational purposes. If a staff member is uncertain about whether a particular use of the computer network or the Internet is appropriate, he or she should consult an administrator. E-mail is for school business and is not to be considered private.

Use of personal computer equipment on school premises is subject to the approval of the administration and IT department.

Anytime a staff member suspects that they may have contracted a computer virus and/or malware, they need to report it to the IT department so the system may be inspected and any contamination cleaned.

### **Unacceptable uses**

Unacceptable uses of computers, email and computer services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Accessing or communicating inappropriate materials**  
This includes material that is defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or bullying.
- **Illegal activities**  
Computers, computer services, and e-mail may not be used for any illegal activity or in violation of any Board policy / procedure or school rules.
- **Violating copyrights or software licenses**  
Computers and computer services are provided for school business. Any additional software needed requires approval from the administration and IT department. Unauthorized copying of software is illegal.
- **Using computers for non-school purposes other than incidental use**  
Using computers, computer services, and email for any personal reasons is permissible so long as those uses do not constitute a violation of the acceptable uses, are incidental, and are not interfering with the educational purposes of the devices or consume vital school resources.
- **Misuse of passwords / unauthorized access**

Staff may not share other staff members' usernames and passwords or attempt to circumvent the network security systems or computer services. Passwords to bypass the content filter are to be protected and not accessible to students. Staff members need to report to the IT department any time they suspect that a password has been compromised.

- **Malicious use / vandalism**

Staff may not engage in any malicious use, disruption, or harm to computers and computer services, including but not limited to hacking activities, "jail breaking", and creation or uploading of computer viruses.

## **Violations**

If the administration suspects that there has been a violation of the acceptable use policy then at least two administrators will work with the IT department to inspect computers and e-mails to determine if there has been a violation. The administration will instruct the IT department either in writing or in an e-mail on the scope of the inspection and the procedures to follow if there is a violation or questionable activity.

## **25. Transportation**

Transportation to and from school is the sole responsibility of the parents, guardians, or their designees. The Governing Body directs the Head Administrator to contract with state approved transportation providers on an as-needed basis for school related activities.

## **26. Business Processes and Central Purchasing**

### *a. Travel and Reimbursement*

It is the policy of the SSLC Governing Body to reimburse actual, reasonable travel expenses incurred by employees as a result of travel to conferences, meetings, trainings, or other gatherings away from the school building that were pre-approved by the Head Administrator. The school shall not pay for alcohol. The employee must present receipts and complete a travel reimbursement voucher upon return. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service as amended annually. The Governing Body grants the Head Administrator the right to make determinations on the reasonableness of individual requests.

In accordance with IRS tax code and NM statute, notwithstanding any other regulation issued by the state of New Mexico and as provided by this policy, the standard mileage and per diem travel rates for The Southwest Secondary Learning Center are as follows:

- A. With prior written approval\* every school officer or employee shall receive 80% of the Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate set January 1 of the current

year for each mile traveled in a privately owned vehicle if the travel is necessary to the discharge of the officer's or employee's official duties and if the private conveyance is not a common carrier; provided, however, that only one person shall receive mileage for each mile traveled in a single privately owned vehicle, except in the case of common carriers, in which case the person shall receive the cost of the ticket in lieu of the mileage allowance. Nonetheless the school Principal or Governing Council may approve a maximum reimbursement amount due to budgetary constraints.

B. With prior written approval\* of the Principal or Governing council, a non-salaried school officer or a salaried employee of The Southwest Secondary Learning Center is entitled to either per diem expenses and shall receive the set rate in accordance with NMAC 2.42.2 or, upon written request and approval of the Principal or Governing council, the reimbursement of actual expenses in accordance with NMAC 2.42.2 in cases where overnight travel is required. Upon written request accompanied by a travel voucher, a non-salaried school officer or a salaried employee of The Southwest Secondary Learning Center is allowed to request and receive 80% of the total anticipated costs to be incurred during the course of prior approved travel in accordance with required procurement processes. Upon the employee's return, all appropriate documentation must be submitted and approved by the school's Principal before the remaining reimbursement amount will be paid. Nonetheless, the school Principal or Governing council may approve a maximum reimbursement amount due to budgetary constraints.

*\*Each employee or public officer must document the dates of travel, beginning mileage, beginning location, travel departure time, ending mileage, ending location, travel return time, and purpose of the trip.*

b. *Central Purchasing*

The Chief Financial Officer is the head of the central purchasing office and as its chief procurement officer.

The Chief Financial Officer will purchase, rent, lease, or otherwise acquire on behalf of the school all items of tangible personal property, services, or construction. All purchases will be strictly in accordance with the laws of the State of New Mexico and federal law in addition to applicable policies and procedures of the Governing Body and the State Public Education Department. The Chief Financial Officer shall establish and maintain a manual of purchasing policies and procedures which shall be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body as part of the school's financial policies and procedures.

## **27. Documents Accepted as Policy**

SSLC has adopted the following documents: the Curriculum and Standards Alignment, Educational Plan for Student Success; the CNM, UNM, and New Mexico Tech Dual Credit Agreements; the Parent and Community Plan; the Safe School Plan; the Wellness Plan; the Student Behavior Handbook, Acceptable Use Policy, Student Code of Conduct; Accounting Policies and Procedures; the Mentorship Plan; the Educational Technology Plan; the Special Education Manual and the Student Assistance Team Manual (SAT); and the Employee Handbook.

# **Instruction**

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## **1. Instructional Program**

Instruction in the school will aim to provide maximum opportunity for learning for all students. Learning activities shall be appropriate to the individual needs and developmental levels of the students. Programs of study, aligned to the National Common Core Standards (Edgenuity, Smart Lab, Platinum Learning, Skills Tutor, and others as deemed necessary by the Head Administrator) made available to the students will be consistent with the policies of the Secretary of Education and the Public Education Department. The Head Administrator will make recommendations, in collaboration with the staff and Administration, for improvement in the educational program, including revising, dropping, or adding courses or subjects of instruction.

## **2. School Year and Work Year/ School Calendar**

Annually, as part of the budget approval process, the Governing Body will adopt an official calendar outlining the instructional school year. The Governing Body reserves the right and authority to change the calendar as circumstances warrant. The school will convene a Calendar committee to review and approve the School Calendar before taking the proposed calendar to the Board for approval.

## **3. Treatment of Religious Issues**

The Governing Body adopts a neutral stance in matters involving religion. Students and parents who object to a specific assignment on religious grounds shall make their concerns known to the teacher and the administration within 24 hours after the lesson. The teacher and administration shall design a lesson of equal difficulty and educational relevance to substitute for the original lesson. No student's grade shall be penalized for objecting to a specific lesson on religious grounds.

#### **4. Instructional Materials**

The Governing Body directs the Head Administrator to secure and purchase instructional materials and textbooks that support the instructional program. These purchases will be based on projections for the upcoming year. Instructional material and textbook adoption will be completed in a manner to accomplish timely implementation for optimum student learning and financial efficiency. Each student will have access to instructional materials and textbooks for school and home use that conform to curriculum requirements and state standards.

#### **5. School Volunteers**

Volunteer services augment resources and effect stronger linkages among the school, parents, and other Members of the community. The SSLC Governing Body recognizes the need to identify and utilize volunteers. The SSLC Governing Body directs the administration to conduct background checks on all persons wishing to serve as a regular volunteer at the school.

Employees will pay close attention to Volunteers and at no time leave students alone with a volunteer without a background check unsupervised. It is imperative that in order for a volunteer to be left alone with students they must have had a background check. If volunteers have had a cleared background check, volunteers can be left alone with students. Staff will be given a list of every adult who has cleared a background check on a monthly basis. Volunteers that will be volunteering over 4 (two) events at the school in a school year are considered "Regular Volunteers" and required to do a Background Check with the New Mexico Department of Public Safety.

#### **6. Student Travel: Field trips**

Southwest Secondary Learning Center provides curriculum based off-site activities.

Parent/Guardian permission must be obtained for all trips and students are under the auspices of all school rules during all off campus school related activities.

##### **Educational Day Trips:**

The Southwest Secondary Learning recognizes that field trips are natural extensions of the curricular and extra-curricular programs, including activities. The school board encourages appropriate, carefully planned field trips that lead to new learning or reinforce what has been already learned at school.

Each student shall have an equal opportunity to participate in field trips that are taken by the student group. The availability of field trip opportunities for students is commensurate

with the funds that can be allocated or raised to support such activities. The school will strive to offer field trip experiences with a minimum of expense to the individual students.

### **Extracurricular Day Trips:**

Any trip, which is not directly related to the instructional program but is related to a school-sponsored or connected activity, is considered an extracurricular trip. Participation and competition in extra-curricular activities, including athletics, provides an opportunity to teach in a student-centered environment. Extra-curricular activities enhance the classroom experience by promoting sportsmanship, cooperation, commitment, and respect.

The school recognizes that there may be the potential for conflict between academic commitments and co-curricular activities. All efforts should be made to have as little disruption to the student academic day/year as possible. Students will remain responsible for all academic activities as assigned by their classroom teacher.

### **Justification:**

In planning for a field trip and/or Community-Based Activity sponsor teachers must provide core curriculum justification for the field trip that connects to Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, Fine Arts, or Physical Education. Field Trips must be requested by the appropriate core curriculum teacher who is teaching the content that is being studied on that particular field trip.

The justification will be reviewed and approved by Administration for educational viability with the appropriate:

- Date of Field Trip/ CBA
- Subject Area
- Activity Description
- Activity Connection to the Subject Area
- Transportation
- Assessment for Learning the content of the Field Trip/ CBA

## ***7. Reports to Parents on Student Progress***

A periodic system of grading and reporting student progress to parents will be maintained by the school. Teachers are encouraged to experiment in an effort to discover more satisfactory methods for communicating student progress.

The school shall operate on a semester basis. A minimum of two (2) official reports shall be

made available to parents each year.

### **8. Teaching Controversial/Sensitive issues**

The Governing Body encourages the objective study of controversial issues. The school will provide instruction about the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and related issues in the required health education curriculum. Provisions will be made for review of student or parent objections to presentations or to print or multi-media instructional materials. The Opt-Out Policy shall include, but is not limited to the process for parents to request an exemption from the parts of the health education curriculum that address the sexuality performance standards. Parents objecting to a sensitive or controversial issue may request an alternative assignment and will assume responsibility for meeting the sexuality performance standards for their child.

### **9. Student Internet and E-Mail Policy (Acceptable Use)**

Southwest Secondary Learning Center is deeply committed to technology as a vital tool for its students. As a user of technology, I understand that it is my responsibility to honor the Acceptable Use Policy and uphold the Southwest Secondary Learning Center Technology Values at school. I understand that my actions can affect others and that I will be accountable for my behavior.

Values and Responsibilities:

We value communication; therefore, I will:

- Use language that is pertinent and appropriate when submitting academic work, participating in online forums and working collaboratively.  
Use thoughtful and appropriate language for social postings.
- Be mindful of how my words are interpreted by others.

We value privacy; therefore, I will:

- Be aware of the privacy settings on any website to which I subscribe.
- Understand that anything I do online or electronically is not private and can be monitored.
- Not share personal information about myself, family, friends or faculty.

We value honesty and safety; therefore, I will:

- Not engage in behavior that puts myself or others at risk.
- Represent myself honestly.
- Seek help if I feel unsafe, bullied or witness unkind behavior.
- Communicate only with people I know.

- Follow safety guidelines posted by sites to which I subscribe.

### **7. Pledge of Allegiance**

It is the policy of the SSLC for all students to stand and recite the pledge of allegiance daily. Students may be excused from reciting the pledge for religious reasons by providing a note from a parent/guardian in advance of the school year requesting the excusal. The letter from the parent shall be retained in the student's file and made part of the official school record.

### **8. Distance Learning Policy**

The SSLC Governing Body strives to provide a high quality education for all students that use and develop 21st Century teaching and learning skills. The Head Administrator is authorized to establish distance learning, a process used to provide instruction for credit when the student and instructor are not necessarily physically present at the same time and/or place. The SSLC will assure that students enrolled in a distance learning program have the necessary access to technology for all courses.

### **9. Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities are an integral part of the educational process, providing students with opportunities beyond the classroom to further develop their unique capabilities, interests, and needs. Participation in these activities is a privilege offered to and earned by students. Participation is not a right.

A Student Activity Fee will be collected at Registration for each individual student. The \$40 Activities Fee students pay at the beginning of school goes towards such expenses as:

Student Socials

Pizza Day

Athletic Uniforms

Field Day

Prom

Club T-Shirts

Special Events (such as: Game Night, Spelling Bee, Candy Grams, etc).

## **School Relations**

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### **1. Community Involvement**

The SSLC Governing Body recognizes that constructive study, discussion, and active

participation by citizens are necessary to promote the best program of education in the community.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school throughout the school year. Conferences between such visitors and employees should not interfere with the employee's assigned duties. Visitors should verify their identity and the purpose of their visit.

At the discretion of the school's administration, the school may create Parent-Teacher Organizations, Booster Clubs, Parent Advisory Committees, Parent Budget Committees, or other committees deemed necessary for receiving parental input on particular issues.

## ***2. Use of Community Resources***

The SSLC Governing Body encourages the use of community resources to assist in making learning experiences more realistic.

## ***3. Community Use of Buildings, Grounds, and Equipment***

The Governing Body assigns to the Head Administrator the authority to allow or disallow community groups the use of the school's facilities. The use of a school facility does not constitute an endorsement of any project, service, or organization by the SSLC Governing Body.

## ***4. Advertising in School***

The SSLC Governing Body supports advertising initiatives that enhance the school's goals and objectives. The Head Administrator shall approve agreements on behalf of the school. Advertising requests that promote alcohol, tobacco, gaming, firearms, controversial products or services shall not be permitted. The school will maintain compliance with all federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations.

## ***5. Political Solicitations in School***

The school's Secondary mission is to properly educate its' young people; all else must be secondary. For this reason, appearances of candidates or their representatives will be limited to time outside of the standard school hours except in those instances where teachers invite candidates to visit classes as part of the educational program.

School facilities may be used by any candidates provided expenses incurred as a result of the candidates use are reimbursed to the school and that the candidate does not interfere with the educational process.

## ***6. Relations with Community Organizations***

The Head Administrator may cooperate in furthering the work of non-profit, community-

wide service, civic, or governmental agencies or organizations that support the mission, goals, and policies of the school.

## **7. *Custodian of Public Records***

The official custodian of public records for the school will be the Head Administrator. As required in the Inspection of Public Records Act, this office will be responsible for (1) receiving and responding to requests to inspect public records; (2) providing proper and reasonable opportunities to inspect the records; and (3) providing reasonable facilities to make or furnish copies of the public records during usual business hours – any costs associated with the providing of public records shall be borne by the individual making the request.

It is the policy of the SSLC Governing Body to make available personnel to photocopy record requests at the rate of \$1.00 per page. This rate covers the cost of supplies and materials and employee time. This fee may be waived by the Head Administrator if deemed appropriate.