



***"Your Partner in Educational Excellence"***

# ***Policy and Procedural Help Guide***

## **Our Mission:**

The Midwest Regional ESC serves and supports students, families, and districts as an innovative, educational partner.

## **Procedural Help Guide**

**Revised July, 2025**

**Board approved: July 24, 2025**



Dear MRESC Staff Members,

Welcome to another year of service to the students and districts of Hardin, Logan, and Shelby Counties. I am truly privileged to work with such talented and committed people in service to some of the most precious and vulnerable students in our community.

The following pages outline many of the Midwest Regional ESC's policies and procedures of which employees must have awareness. This document is not intended to be a comprehensive list of agency policies and procedures, but rather a guide for navigating some of the common tasks, questions, and concerns you may come across as an ESC employee. A complete copy of the ESC's Policy and Procedures manual can be found online at:

<https://www.boarddocs.com/oh/midesc/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies>.

As an employee of the MRESC, you are directly responsible to have awareness of and to follow the policies and procedures outlined in this help guide. Please make sure you have read this document in its entirety. It is important that you understand these policies and procedures. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these, please contact me or our Treasurer, Keith Thomas.

Thank you for all you do for the students and districts of Hardin, Logan, and Shelby Counties!

Sincerely,

**Dr. Rick Smith**

Superintendent  
Midwest Regional Educational Service Center

An agency committed to:

**S**ervice  
**T**eamwork  
**A**ttitude  
**R**eliability

## Four Dimensions of **S.T.A.R.** Level Service at the MRESC

At the Midwest Regional ESC, we strive to provide STAR level services to our partner school districts. To achieve this goal, we rely on staff members who possess and exemplify **S.T.A.R.** qualities in their daily work. The following principles represent how we do business at the MRESC and apply to all staff members when interacting with ESC, classroom, building, district, or community personnel.

### **S**erving Others

- Exceed your job requirements by providing quality services, "serving" the needs of children, team members, as well as district and community personnel.
- Provide positive support to all classroom/building/district/community personnel by being friendly, helpful, and working well with others in the best interest of students.
- Be timely and responsive and always be willing to serve.
- Consider the needs, preferences, and viewpoints of others before considering your own.

### **T**eamwork

- Be a team player and support all members of your team.
- Be committed to the team's mission and do your part to achieve it.
- Hold yourself and your team members accountable for their best efforts.
- Address issues and concerns in a professional manner.
- Complement and speak highly of colleagues and the agency when communicating with others.
- Consider the needs, preferences, and viewpoints of others before considering your own.

### **A**ttitude

- Nurture the attitude of a servant.
- Presume positive intentions with regard to the thoughts, comments, and actions of others.
- Be a positive and enthusiastic presence in the workplace.
- Show appreciation for your team members and their talents and contributions
- Consider the needs, preferences, and viewpoints of others before considering your own.

### **R**eliability

- Recognize the significance of your responsibilities and hold yourself accountable to them.
- Exercise good attendance. Nobody can do your job as well as you!
- Be present, on-time, dependable, and available to others when needed.
- Be responsive and follow through when given a request.
- Demonstrate loyalty, honesty, and integrity.
- Exercise confidentiality.
- Consider the needs, preferences, and viewpoints of others before considering your own.

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### **Superintendent**

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**MROLA Coordinator**

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## **MRESC Employee Code of Conduct**

As employees of the Midwest Regional ESC you are responsible for conducting yourself with the highest ethical standards. The quality of the MRESC's reputation requires that persons representing the ESC conduct themselves in a manner that advances and does not diminish the values of the agency. Each employee is responsible for upholding standards of behavior consistent with this policy and for compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

This code of conduct cannot anticipate every possible situation. It does, however, provide examples to guide employees in their daily decisions and actions. The code is not a substitute for the active process of ethical decision-making. In instances of ethical demands or dilemmas where a simple or direct application of this code is not possible, employees should seek clarification and assistance from the superintendent.

All supervisors within Midwest Regional ESC are required to present the following general expectations for behavior to all staff members within their respective departments.

### **All Midwest Regional ESC support staff members will:**

1. Report to work acceptable for duty, and remain so whenever on duty.
2. Prepare for and perform all assigned duties required by one's job description(s).
3. Comply with reasonable directives issued by established lines of authority.
4. Identify, report, and/or attempt to control, if possible, unsafe conditions and/or safety hazards to maintain safe and secure working and/or learning environments.
5. Demonstrate respect and integrity when interacting with students, families, staff, community members, and other stakeholders.
6. Comply with federal laws, state statutes, contractual obligations, Governing Board policies, and/or related administrative guidelines that prohibit coercive, harassing, threatening, retaliating, or discriminating conduct.
7. Communicate in a truthful and timely manner using established lines of authority.
8. Acquire, use, maintain, secure, and dispose of Service Center assets in an ethical and responsible manner in accordance with federal laws, state statutes, contractual obligations, Governing Board policies, and/or related administrative guidelines.
9. Maintain confidentiality of information as required under federal laws, state statutes, contractual obligations, Governing Board policies, and/or related administrative guidelines.
10. Report actions that may represent violations of federal laws, state statutes, contractual obligations, Governing Board policies, and/or related administrative guidelines.
11. Refrain from any activity that may negatively interfere with either one's ability to effectively perform one's duties as assigned or the legitimate operational interests of the Service Center.
12. Comply with all other federal laws, state statutes, contractual obligations, Governing Board policies, and/or related administrative guidelines.

## **INFORMATIONAL DISCLOSURES**

All of the Midwest Regional ESC Board policies and administrative guidelines can be found on the MRESC website or by going to the following link:

<https://www.boarddocs.com/oh/midesc/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies>

Please use the above link to access the NEOLA policies listed below. Board policies are added and revised during the year as indicated by the Board minutes. These additions and changes will be posted to the NEOLA website.

**As an employee of Midwest Regional ESC, you are required to read, understand, and follow the policies listed below. All employees will be asked to verify that they have read and understand these policies through Public School Works.**

- Anti-Harassment #1662
- Network and Internet Use policy #7540.04
- Whistleblower Protection policy #4211
- Drug-Free Workplace policy #4122.01
- Public Records policy #8310
- Ohio Ethics Law information can be found by going to the following link: [www.ethics.ohio.gov](http://www.ethics.ohio.gov)

## **FRAUD REPORTING ORC 117.103 (A)**

The Ohio Auditor of State's office maintains a system for the reporting of fraud, including misuse of public money by any official or office. The system allows all Ohio citizens, including public employees, the opportunity to make anonymous complaints through a toll-free number, the Auditor of State's website, or through the United States mail.

### **Auditor of State's fraud contact information:**

Telephone: 1-866-FRAUD OH (1-866-372-8364)

US Mail: **Ohio Auditor of State's office**  
Special Investigations Unit  
88 East Broad Street  
P.O. Box 1140  
Columbus, OH 43215

Web: [www.ohioauditor.gov](http://www.ohioauditor.gov)

Pursuant to ORC117.103(B)(1), a public office shall provide information about the Ohio Fraud Reporting System and the means of reporting fraud to each new employee upon employment with the public office. Each new employee has thirty (30) days after beginning employment to confirm receipt of this information.

In the case of reporting suspected fraud or fraudulent activity, an employee may file a report using the Auditor of State's system for reporting of fraud.

This reporting mechanism may be used either in addition to or instead of filing a written report with the employee's supervisor or other Educational Service Center authority.

## **MANDATED REPORTER STATUS**

Pursuant to Ohio law — specifically, [Ohio Revised Code 2151.421](#) — **school employees** who are acting in their official capacity **are required to *immediately* report their knowledge of, or a reasonable suspicion of, abuse or neglect.** This duty applies to a school employee who knows or has a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, or faces a threat of suffering, any physical or mental wound, injury, disability or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect.

## **REPORTING INJURIES**

In the event of an injury during work hours, please follow the steps outlined in the First Report of Injury packet detailed below:

1. Inform your Supervisor of the injury immediately. *If needed, go to the nearest Emergency Room for treatment.*
2. If the injury is not life threatening, but treatment is needed, make an appointment with a Bureau of Worker's Compensation covered physician.
3. As soon as possible, complete and return to the Treasurer's Office the First Report of Injury Packet including the Employee Report of Incident and Injury form and the Injury Location Diagram form.
4. An employee who sustains a work-related injury must report the injury and its circumstances to their supervisor and Treasurer, as soon as possible, following the occurrence of the injury. Be prepared to complete a First Report of Injury form available at both ESC offices, in the SWD classrooms, in the preschool classrooms, in the school van, and on the ESC's website under "Staff Links."

## **LICENSURE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain a current license, certification and training requirements as defined by Ohio Law and their respective job descriptions. Some employees need to hold their professional license in their specific field, in addition to an Ohio Department of Education license.

Any lapse with maintaining a valid license and training documentation will result in the employee being temporarily removed from work with no compensation until such time as valid documentation is provided to the Treasurer's Office. One may be terminated by the Board due to the lack of proper licensure.

This will include documentation for State Licensure or Certification, required training, and any other licensed trainings detailed and required in job descriptions. If you have any questions about what training is required for your job description, please consult with your supervisor.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL WORKS COURSES**

Each year, employees are required to take state mandated training courses through Public School Works. **These courses are required and are a condition of your employment with the agency.** Please be sure to complete these courses according to the schedule provided.

There will be one session in the fall to complete your course requirements. You will receive an email from "**MRESC Superintendent**" informing you that you have been assigned courses to complete along with a due date for course completion. Please make every effort to complete your courses by the due date. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

To Access Your PSW Account:

Login to your Midwest Regional ESC email account. Open the email from the MRESC Superintendent with the subject of "Training – new enrollment." Click on the link "click here to start your training." You will be brought to Public School Works. Enter your username (first initial + last name) and password (last four digits of SSN). You will be brought to a screen titled "Your login info". If you do not see the "Your login Info" screen, follow the directions on the Login Help screen. If you have any problems or need further help call 1-866-724-6650, option 4. For each course shown, click on "Enter class." If you fail a test, you can retake the test until you obtain a passing grade.

## **EMPLOYEES ASSIGNED TO SPECIFIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Employees assigned to classrooms in our school districts, working full or part time, are required to follow the policies of that school district. Policies you are expected to follow include, but are not limited to the following:

- Students (enrollment, discipline, attendance, emergency medical, etc.)
- Operations (calendar, school day, food program)
- Property (maintenance, school safety, property inventory)
- Relations (school visitors, relationship with parents)
- Program (class size, field trips, etc.)
- Dress Code

Employees hired by the Midwest Regional ESC at the request of a district **may** be supervised by district administrators rather than by ESC supervisors. This arrangement will be defined in the ESC service agreement with the District. **Employees should follow their Districts school calendars to know what days they will be working and what days are non-working days or holidays.**

## **CALAMITY DAY POLICY**

The board recognizes that certain adverse conditions may occur causing the need for the ESC or its client districts to be delayed or cancelled. In such instances, the following policy shall be in effect whether you are assigned to a specific district, multiple districts, or no districts.

### **Staff members not assigned to work in school districts must adhere to the following:**

- A maximum of 5 calamity days per fiscal year shall be allowable for non-district assigned personnel (central office staff, directors, etc.).
- Use of calamity days will be tracked by supervisors and any days in excess of the five-day maximum must be made up by these employees.
- These staff members should report to work, on time, unless otherwise informed by the ESC superintendent.
- The ESC superintendent **may** delay/close the central office(s) in accordance with the actions of "ALL" of the school districts within each county. All districts in a given county must be delayed or closed before the superintendent will alter the central office schedule for that day.

### **Staff members assigned to a single school district will adhere to the calamity schedule (delay/cancellation) of that district.**

- Any ESC staff assigned to a single district will report to work according to the delay/cancellation decisions made for that district.
- Once a district exceeds the calamity day limit established by its local board of education, ESC employees assigned to that district will be required to make up excess days according to that district's make up schedule.
- Some districts may utilize eDays or Blizzard Bags as a means of making up calamity days. Please make yourself aware of your assigned district's policy.

### **ESC staff members assigned to multiple districts must adhere to the following policies:**

- Staff will not be required to report to work **IF ALL** of the district(s) in which he or she is scheduled to report **on that day** are closed.
- If one or more of the districts an employee is assigned to serve is open on a given day, the staff member must report during the time period in which he or she is scheduled to be in that district.
- After the fifth calamity day taken by one of these staff members, the employee must utilize options for authorized leave, attend work at the ESC office, or receive approval from the supervisor to work from home on any calamity day subsequent to day number five.
- In the event that an MRESC employee is assigned to a district that utilizes E-Days after their five (5) calamity days have been exhausted, the MRESC employee should consult with their supervisor to determine if they are to prepare lessons, or plan to make up the days at a later time. MRESC employees are only allotted five (5) calamity days per school year.

## **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

The Midwest Regional ESC provides tuition reimbursement for its employees who work 30 or more hours per week. The tuition reimbursement guidelines and forms for completion can be found on the ESC's website under "Staff Links." In order to receive reimbursement, **each class(s) must be approved by the Superintendent PRIOR to enrollment.**

Tuition will be reimbursed at a rate of \$50.00 per quarter hour or \$75.00 per semester hour up to a maximum of six (6) semester hours (9 quarter hours) per term for a maximum of twelve (12) semester hours (18 quarter hours) per fiscal year (school year).

**The tuition reimbursement will not be paid if the employee is no longer employed with the Midwest Regional ESC at the time the payment is to be made.** The tuition reimbursements will be made in October of each year.

## **MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT**

Travel, while on assignment during the day, is reimbursed at the Board approved mileage rate. The Board approves the mileage rate in January for the calendar year.

Employees are not reimbursed for travel from home to the workplace or from your last destination of the day back to your home.

Employees can claim mileage for professional development conferences. Staff are able to claim mileage from home to the professional development conference and return home. **There is no mileage reimbursement for the all-staff meeting.**

Staff members who receive mileage reimbursement should make every attempt to organize their travel schedule to minimize distance and the amount of time spent traveling. Trips to the ESC offices should not be made unless necessary.

The on-line mileage form is found under Staff Links on the ESC's website. One would log-in using your SC View username and password. Step-by-step screen shot procedures and/or a video on completing the mileage form are available upon request to the Treasurer.

- After submitting a mileage entry, save it as "Draft" and then you can go back and enter other days as needed. It will only be "submitted" after you have submitted all entries for the entire month. If you accidentally hit submit, you can click the "Recall" button and it will return the form to you and not the supervisor.
- Please enter the mileage month (i.e. "June Mileage") in the Description box of the form.
- If your location is not in the dropdowns, then one would enter the location address in the "From" and "To Destination" boxes. It will then calculate your mileage automatically using Google Maps. **Generic entries are not acceptable, i.e., Kenton. We need precise addresses.**
- When you review mileage and the Total Miles box is highlighted, this means you have changed the calculated miles.
- It is not required to use the Comment box for mileage. However, if you want to give explanation of the trip or if you're getting paid from different grants, you will want to use the Comment box. So it's nice to use the Comment box.

- Everyone must complete their own mileage form. Once it is submitted, the form will go to the supervisor for approval.

The mileage form **MUST** be submitted in the system no later than the last day of the following month of expected mileage reimbursement. For example, April mileage form must be turned in by May 31st. No mileage will be paid for late forms. If multiple months' mileage sheets are turned in (on a form that is submitted late), only the mileage form for the previous month will be paid. Mileage forms are subject to review. Any falsification on the mileage form is subject to the employee discipline policy.

## **PROCUREMENT / PURCHASE ORDER PROCEDURE**

1. All employees are to utilize the on-line requisition system ([myscview.com/login.aspx](http://myscview.com/login.aspx)), which is found under Staff Links on the MRESC website. The username is the first letter of your first name and last name (i.e. John Doe's username is jdoe). The password for the first-time user is Welcome19 (case sensitive). The database on the log-in screen is MRESC (case sensitive). Once logged in, one will create a new password.
2. **The vendor should be person or company to whom the ESC will make payment.** For example, if one is going to Walmart and using the ESC American Express, the vendor is American Express. If one is ordering on-line from Amazon, the vendor is American Express. Incomplete requisitions will be emailed back to the requestor to complete.
3. The completed requisition will be submitted to your supervisor. One can see under the "status" bar where the requisition is.
4. The approved requisition will be submitted to the Superintendent.
5. The Superintendent approved requisition goes to the Treasurer.
6. The purchase order will be emailed to the requestor as a PDF attachment. Once the requestor (employee) has received the purchase order, one may order or purchase the item/service. The purchase order is the "ok" and indicates that prior funds are available.
7. If the employee receives the invoice, it should be promptly submitted to the Treasurer's office for payment.
8. The Treasurer's office will request your approval to pay invoices. This means that you agree on the quantity received, you have received the items indicated, or that the proper service was rendered as indicated on the invoice.

### **Frequently Asked Questions regarding On-line Requisitions:**

1. **"It's my first time logging in and I received an error message."** About half of the users will receive an error message upon first entry. You need to completely click out of the website and re-enter the website address. Then try your username and new password. If this does not work, please contact the Treasurer.
2. **"I can't find my vendor?"** This would be a new vendor. Please contact Laurie Leach with the vendor information and she will add it. We will also need a signed and completed Form W-9 from the vendor. Laurie can provide you the Form W-9.



3. **"When will my supervisor approve the requisition?"** The supervisor will receive an email around 9am and 2pm each day if they have something waiting for them. However, all supervisors should check more often on their own. One can see who the requisition is waiting on under the Status column.
4. **"How do I know when the P.O. is ready?"** You will receive an email with the purchase order as a PDF attachment just as in the past. Always review the P.O. prior to ordering/purchasing as the vendor or amount may have changed.
5. **"I can't find the specific budget account needed."** Go ahead and use another budget account in order to submit your requisition. Please tell me the account (supplies, equipment, etc.) you want to use and could not find in the "internal notes" box. I will add the account if need be.
6. **"I have a large order or conference registration paperwork."** Please scan this documentation to your computer. Then click "Attach" to attach the papers to the requisition. The Attach button is on the far right. One can add multiple attachments and delete them if need be. Do not click "Send with P.O." unless it actually needs to be sent to the vendor.
7. **"I clicked submit, but my requisition did not go through."** Scroll to the top of your requisition. A red error message will show at the top indicating which dropdown was not chosen or which box was not completed.
8. **"Can I have someone else do my requisition? Can Laurie do my requisition?"** No to both, only you can do your requisition. If someone else does your requisition, it will go through a different workflow of approvals. Another employee will not have your budget codes. If someone else does your requisition, it will show it is from them and not you. If someone else does your requisition, the system will not send you the purchase order.
9. **"Can I still use the paper requisitions for emergencies?"** No, once you are trained on creating requisitions, you need to use the on-line requisitions. We will no longer be using paper requisition forms. In addition to Laurie and Keith, your supervisor should be able to help you with creating on-line requisitions.
10. **Description Box** – this box must be filled in or the requisition will be returned. The "internal notes" box is only optional and will not be on the P.O.

**Note:** The requisition and purchase order are not the same. Employees complete a requisition. The requisition is the "request" to purchase. One must have a purchase order to actually place an order or make a purchase. Also, one must have a purchase order to use the ESC credit card.

**If you order or purchase an item/service without an approved purchase order, the ESC is not obligated to pay for anything without a purchase order.** Thus, the employee will be held responsible for the cost of the item/service. Per Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(D), the Treasurer must give prior certification of funds available, which is reflected on the purchase order.

*Questions regarding the procurement procedure should be directed to the Treasurer or Financial Assistant.*

## **USE OF CREDIT CARDS**

Please review the Board policy 6423 in regards to use of credit cards. The Board approves the credit cards and their limits annually. The credit cards are under the supervision of the Treasurer. One must have a purchase order to obtain a credit card. The credit card must be signed out, dated, and the reason indicated. The credit card should be returned promptly to the Treasurer. When the credit card is returned, it must accompany a signed receipt from the credit purchase. The card will then be signed back in. Treasurer reserves the right to suspend or prohibit usage for those employees who do not follow the credit card procedures and Board policy #6423.

## **TECHNOLOGY PURCHASES**

If a staff member needs new equipment (laptop, printer, i-pad, etc.), the first step is to contact Rich Valerio at [support@pro-stratus.com](mailto:support@pro-stratus.com) to look at the problem. To be cost efficient, we will always try to "fix" the problem before purchasing new equipment. The treasurer maintains a rotation schedule of new technology among each service area. If it is determined new equipment is necessary, Rich will notify the Treasurer. The Treasurer will do the purchase order and place the order with Dell for a new computer. The employee will not need to place the order. When the equipment comes in, Rich from Pro-stratus will schedule a time to setup the equipment and will notify the employee when the new equipment is ready. The old equipment needs to be turned back into the Treasurer. The employee cannot keep the old equipment.

## **USE OF EMAIL**

At the time of employment, an email account will be setup for the employee by the IT coordinator. Employees will be provided a temporary password to use. Email addresses are the first letter of the first name and then last name (ex. John Doe's address is [jdoe@mresc.org](mailto:jdoe@mresc.org)).

Please use the following email guidelines:

- All employees are strongly urged to check their email on a regular basis. The employee should check their email at least once every work day and periodically while on breaks.
- Employees will be held responsible for information and requests for information that are disseminated via email.
- The ESC will use MRESC email addresses only as the means to communicate important information to staff members.
- Do not "Reply to All" to emails that have been addressed to the entire ESC Staff.
- Never use the work issued email account for personal business.
- Do not forward a personal email account to the work email account. Likewise, do not forward a work email account to a personal account.
- Do not open emails that appear to be suspicious in nature and do not click on embedded links in emails from senders with whom you are not familiar.
- If you need assistance with email, please contact the IT coordinator at [support@pro-stratus.com](mailto:support@pro-stratus.com).

## **LEAVE POLICIES**

**NOTE: With all forms of leave described below, staff members are required to enter leave requests into the Absence Management System for approval by their supervisor. Failure to enter leave requests into absence management may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension without pay and/or termination.**

## Sick Leave

**Sick leave accrual is based on Ohio Revised Code. All full-time employees earn** fifteen (15) days of sick leave per year or their equivalent hours if an hourly employee (See the definition of "full-time" on page 10). This is calculated at the rate of 1.25 days per month.

For employees contracted to work less than full time sick leave is calculated at 1.25 times the number of scheduled daily hours (Example  $1.25 \text{ days per month} \times 7.5 \text{ hours per day} = 9.38 \text{ hours per month}$ ). Sick leave is accrued on a monthly basis.

With all newly employed persons, **an advance of** five (5) days (or equivalent number of hours) is allowed if illness occurs early in employment. This will become part of the fifteen (15) days that can be accumulated for the year.

Unused sick leave from another Ohio public agency may be transferred to Midwest Regional ESC. The ESC will need a letter from the previous district or Ohio agency in order to confirm the balance to be transferred.

Sick leave shall accumulate to a maximum of 200 days. Employees may use sick leave upon approval of the supervisor and superintendent for absence due to personal illness, pregnancy, injury, exposure to contagious disease which could be communicated to others, and for absence due to illness, injury, or death in the employee's immediate family. Immediate family is defined as father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, husband, wife, grandparents, grandchildren, mother/father-in-law, brother/sister-in-law. When an employee has used all his/her sick leave, the salary will be reduced on a per diem basis.

The Treasurer shall keep the sick leave records of all personnel. The sick leave balance is on the employee's direct deposit notice.

### NEW HIRE SICK LEAVE POLICY

ORC states that all new hires are allowed to use up to negative 5.00 (-5.00) sick leave days in the first calendar year of employment. Before we allow negative sick leave, the new hire must use all personal and vacation leave (if applicable) and then additional time off would be allowed to start the negative sick leave balance.

Each date that negative sick leave is used will be recorded, up to 5.00 negative sick leave occurrences in the first calendar year of employment. If a new hire employee in their first year of employment has all 5.00 negative sick leave dates recorded, they will not be allowed to have any additional negative sick leave past those recorded dates.

If the new hire reaches -5.00 recorded sick leave days, all additional time off will be a dock day from their pay until they achieve a positive sick leave balance again. If an employee gets into a docked pay situation, if they take benefits, the employee will have to pay the Board share pro-ratio of the benefit premiums for the docked days.

If a new hire were to quit before achieving the positive sick leave balance, their last paycheck would be docked to reimburse the MRESC for the negative sick days left at the time of the resignation.

## RETURNING EMPLOYEE SICK LEAVE POLICY

Employees who are NOT in their first year of employment with the MRESC are not allowed to have a negative sick leave balance. A returning MRESC employee must use all personal and vacation leave (if applicable) to cover absences if they have exhausted the sick leave balances and need additional time off.

Once all leave balances are exhausted, the employee will have their pay docked for each day they are absent without leave time to cover the absence. If an employee gets into a docked pay situation, if they take benefits, the employee will have to pay the Board share pro-ratio of the benefit premiums for the docked days:

**Falsification of a sick leave is grounds for suspension or termination of employment under ORC: 3319.081 and 3319.16. See additional details regarding sick leave in Board Policy #3432 and #4432.**

## Personal Leave

Personal leave amounting to three (3) days (or equivalent number of hours) per year, subject to the approval of the Superintendent, will be available to certified and classified staff. Those employees contracted to work less than full time have pro-rated personal leave hours.

**Personal leave must be requested through ABSENCE MANAGEMENT at least (5) days in advance, except in emergencies. Emergency status exceptions will be determined by the Superintendent.**

Personal leave cannot be accumulated from year to year. Employees will not be paid for unused personal leave.

Some examples of how Personal leave may be used are mandatory court appearances, legal or business matters, family emergencies, family obligations, medical appointments, weddings, religious holidays, or any other matter of a personal nature.

For nine (9) month employees Personal Leave **will not\*\*** be granted:

1. During the first ten (10) days of school
2. During the last ten (10) days of school
3. The day before or after any regularly scheduled break periods or holidays
4. On professional conference days
5. On parent-teacher conference days

**\*\*Unless an unusual, extenuating circumstance exists and is approved by the Superintendent.**

Should the Superintendent determine a misuse of personal leave, salary will be docked on a per day basis. Personal leave balances are on the direct deposit notices. See additional details regarding personal leave in Board Policy #4436 and #3436.

## Vacation Leave

Twelve-month employees who work a minimum of 245 days in a school year are eligible to receive vacation leave (policy updated in April, 2024). Vacation leave starts accruing during the first year of employment. Employees will have 10 days accrued at the end of the first year of employment.

**NOTE:** *Those employees who work less than full-time, vacation leave accrual will be pro-rated appropriately based on work hours per week (full-time is 35 hours per week).*

The number of vacation days for twelve (12) month employees is as follows:

1-4 years of service with the MRESC	10 days
5-9 years of service with the MRESC	15 days
10 and more years of service with the MRESC	20 days

The amount of vacation accrued cannot exceed thirty (30) days. Employees cannot be paid out in lieu of vacation leave. Vacations shall be arranged with the work load of the Midwest Regional ESC and also with the consideration of colleagues. **Vacation requests are entered into ABSENCE MANAGEMENT.** Vacation leave must be approved by your supervisor.

Vacation leave can be taken in increments. Balances are shown on the direct deposit emails. Upon separation from employment a nonteaching school employee (administrative assistants, secretaries, financial assistants) shall be entitled to compensation at their current rate of pay for all lawfully accrued and unused vacation leave to their credit at the time of separation, not to exceed the vacation leave accrued to their credit for the two years immediately preceding their separation and the prorated portion of their earned (but unused) vacation leave for the current year. Vacation leave cannot be accrued unless the employee works at least 245 paid contract days per school year for their standard employment contract i.e. one cannot add supplemental contract days/hours. If an employee has worked for the MRESC in a position that did not accrue vacation leave and then takes a position that does accrue vacation leave, they would start at year one for the accruals, not at the accrual rate for the amount of years they have been with the MRESC. The employee would be given credit for the amount of years that they worked in a vacation accrual eligible position.

Law requires payment of vacation upon separation for classified employees, whereas with administrators it is discretionary, subject to the Board's contracts with its administrators. See additional information regarding vacation in Board Policy #3433, #4433, and #6530.

For the Superintendent, Treasurer, Assistant Superintendent, Executive Director of Special Education, and Preschool Director, start employment with four weeks of vacation accrual (not front loaded), if they have a 255 day contract or more. These positions can also submit up to ten vacation leave days at their current per diem for payment, once a contract year. There is no retroactive vacation leave accrual for current employees for prior years' vacation leave.

## Uncompensated (Dock) Leave

Uncompensated leave may be taken for the following purposes:

NOTE: **Before a request for uncompensated leave is requested, all existing leave balances must be expended.**

1. Sabbatical;
2. Special Work Assignment;
3. Public Service Commitment;
4. FMLA when all personal and sick leave have been exhausted;
5. Other reasons that are considered to be "Extraordinary" in nature and beyond the control of the employee.

Uncompensated leave will not be granted for the following purposes:

1. to extend a regularly scheduled break period or holiday
2. for vacation, travel, or leisure activities

Request for uncompensated leave shall be made, in writing (See Form 3341/4431), to the Superintendent at least two (2) weeks in advance of the desired start date and must be accompanied by a physician's statement when the cause is medical. All applications are subject to final approval by the Superintendent. In the event of an emergency, prior approval may be waived at the discretion of the superintendent, without setting precedent. **If the Dock leave is approved, the Treasurer will provide a letter indicating the amount of dollars that will be docked. The employee will need to sign-off on this sheet and return it to the Treasurer.**

## Professional Leave

Please use the following procedure in order to obtain approval for Professional Leave:

1. Log into ABSENCE MANAGEMENT to create a leave request for professional leave. This will go to your supervisor and the superintendent for approval.
2. You should receive an email letting you know if your professional leave has been approved or denied.
3. Once your leave has been approved, submit completed requisitions to the Treasurer's office. Complete requisition(s) for: registration, hotels if necessary, reimbursement for meals, etc. If you turn in a monthly mileage sheet, we will already have a purchase order for your mileage. **You will submit your professional development mileage on your monthly mileage form.**
4. Once you have submitted your requisitions and you have received your purchase order(s), you may make your reservations and register for your conference. Please contact the fiscal office if you need payment in advance for your registration to the conference.
5. Employees can obtain the ESC's American Express credit card the day before the conference from the Treasurer or Financial Assistant. The credit card should be used for the hotel and meals. **Do not**



**use personal credit cards. We will not reimburse employees who make purchases on personal credit/debit cards.**

6. Make arrangements for payment of your hotel and/or conference registration with the Financial Assistant. You will always need to take tax exempt forms with you for the hotel and restaurants. You can obtain tax exemption letters from the Financial Assistant.
7. Provide the ESC American Express credit card (or MRESC Visa Card if approved) and tax exemption form to the hotel and restaurants.
8. After you attend the conference, then turn in all receipts (hotel/meals) to the Financial Assistant. **You must sign all of your itemized receipts and state the reason for the receipt, as for example, Treasurer's Conference.** Turn in the ESC's American Express/Visa credit card to the Treasurer or Financial Assistant.

**Note: You will not be reimbursed for any meals unless you are required to stay overnight. There will be no reimbursement for one day conferences. For example, there is no meal reimbursement for attending a meeting or professional development in Columbus and then returning home the same day.**

**Per Board policy, you are allowed UP TO \$35.00 per day for meal reimbursement. This is not a daily stipend, but reimbursement of actual meal charges. Meals should only be for the employee, no family members or others. If the conference is providing a meal, the staff member cannot use the credit card to purchase a meal.**

**The ESC will not pay for tax, alcohol, or tips. If you do get charged tax, you must reimburse the ESC for any unallowed charges.**

## **FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)**

There are several qualifying events that may allow an employee to have up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per a rolling 12 month period. The birth of a child, placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care, time to recover from your medical event, and time to take care of parent or spouse would be a qualifying events. Please contact the Treasurer for information as there are eligibility requirements. You may be required to have paperwork completed with a physician and turn back into the Treasurer. The ESC can also award you with FMLA without being requested. In order to be paid during FMLA, one can use your sick leave and personal leave to run concurrently. There is no "maternity leave", as this qualifies as FMLA.

## **DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME**

The definition of a full-time employee is one who is contracted to work at least 35 hours a week. Employees may work five days a week, but if they do not work 35 hours during the week, they are not considered "full-time" by definition. For example, an employee working 30 to 34.99 hours is eligible for insurance benefits.



## HOLIDAYS

The Board approves the holiday schedule annually. The current year holiday schedule can be accessed on the ESC's website under "Staff Links.". The Ohio Revised Code Section 3319.087 for paid holidays will be followed in the event of questions. See additional details regarding Holidays in Board Policy #4434.

Paid holidays by paid contract days:

PAID CONTRACT DAYS	AMOUNT OF PAID HOLIDAYS
186-200	5
201-220	8
221-250	11
251-260	14

## BENEFITS

### Retirement Pension

Employees shall complete the membership record form, sign, and return it to the Treasurer's Office immediately after employment. Classified employees pay into SERS at a rate of 10% of their gross pay and Certified employees pay into STRS at a rate of 14% of their gross pay.

The Midwest Regional ESC contributes at the rate of 14% of gross salary on behalf of the employee. Retirement participation is mandatory. Please refer to the STRS and SERS websites for additional pension information.

### Workers' Compensation

The Midwest Regional ESC Board contributes to the State's Workers' Compensation Fund.

### Medical Insurance

All employees contracted to work thirty (30) or more hours per week, following ACA guidelines, may elect to participate with the Medical Insurance benefit. This is a high deductible health savings plan (H.S.A.). The Board approves the insurance rates annually.

The upcoming calendar year's rates are provided prior to open enrollment. Current employees can enroll and change insurance during open enrollment, which occurs in **November**. This enrollment then becomes effective the following January for the calendar year.

New employees can enroll at the beginning of employment. Insurance coverage is effective the first month the employee is paid. **Employees must complete required paperwork to be enrolled.** One must provide the H.S.A. account and routing number to payroll to be setup. Single and family coverage is available.

The current health insurance is through Anthem. See the bottom of the following page in regards to additional insurance information. See additional details regarding health insurance in Board Policy #3421.1 and #4421.1.

The Midwest Regional Educational Service Center participates in a Section 125 plan provided by American Fidelity that allows all approved insurance premiums to be taken out of the employee's paycheck prior to being taxed.

The insurance consortium has approved spousal carve-out. If your spouse can obtain health insurance through their employer, Medicare, retirement program, VA or a disability program, your spouse cannot be covered under the ESC health insurance. **All insurances are effective the first month that an employee is paid.**

## Dental Insurance

All employees contracted to work thirty (30) or more hours per week may elect to participate with the Dental Insurance benefit. See the note below about part-time employees. **Employees must complete the necessary paperwork for coverage.**

A portion of the cost is paid by the ESC. The current dental coverage is through Luminare. Single and family coverage is available. See additional details regarding dental insurance in Board policy #3421.1 and #4421.1

## Vision Insurance

All employees contracted to work thirty (30) or more hours per week may elect to participate with the Vision Insurance benefit. See the note below about part-time employees. **Employees must complete the necessary paperwork for coverage.** A portion of the cost is paid by the ESC. The current vision insurance is through VSP. Single and family coverage is available.

## Life Insurance

All employees contracted to work thirty (30) or more hours a week shall receive \$30,000.00 in life insurance benefit fully paid by the **Midwest Regional ESC Governing Board**. **Employees must complete the necessary paperwork for coverage.**

Eligible **employees also** have the option of purchasing additional life insurance coverage through American Fidelity. **Contact the HR Manager (Elaine Drumm) for details about the additional life insurance coverage available.**

Employees must have a qualifying life event to change, add or drop insurance. Employees can't discontinue voluntary insurance such as critical illness until open enrollment.

All insurance costs are approved by the Board and based on calendar year. The new insurance costs are provided prior to open enrollment (November).

Employees working 30 to 34.99 hours per week are considered part-time. These part-time employees may enroll for single or family insurance, but at a pro-rated premium rate. There is no pro-ration for life insurance.

## DEGREE MOVEMENT ON SALARY SCHEDULE

Some of the ESC positions require higher educational degrees. Staff members who attain higher levels of education (i.e. Master's Degree, Master's +15, etc.) will receive a \$2,000.00 increase as outlined in the MRESC's New Compensation Guidelines. To receive this increase, official transcripts of the additional hours/coursework must be turned into the Treasurer by September 15<sup>th</sup>.

This date is set by Ohio Rev. Code Section 3317.14. If the official transcripts are turned in prior to 9/15, then the salary would be adjusted/increased for the contract year. On the other hand, if the transcript is turned in after 9/15, one would have to wait until the next contract for the increase from moving columns. Photocopies do not suffice, the employee must submit official transcript(s). Since this is a change in pay, the Board would approve the degree movement as well.

## ADDITIONAL EMPLOYEE WORK (Supplemental)

There may be instances in which additional employee work may be performed. The additional work falls under the Compensatory Time. However, if the employee wants compensated for additional work, the request must be submitted to their supervisor in writing. The supervisor will forward the request to the Superintendent.

The Board will approve any additional employee work through a Board approved supplemental contract. No additional employee compensated work can be performed without prior Superintendent approval. **Employees cannot claim additional work and then request compensation after the fact.** Any summer work is paid at the same hourly rate or per diem as their personnel contract rate. The supplemental contract will indicate whether the payment is based on an approved and signed **ESC timesheet** or an ESC Request for Payment Form. If you have questions about your supplemental, please contact the Treasurer.

## SUPPLY/EQUIPMENT/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUESTS

The ESC's fiscal year budget is based on costs provided to the districts in the spring of the prior fiscal year. Thus, there is a budgeted amount for all supplies, equipment, and professional development. The Treasurer will compare employee requests (i.e. supervisor approved requisitions) to the Board approved budget. There may be instances that a request will be denied due to the budget constraints.

The Treasurer will provide notice to the employee. Budgets are based on fiscal year, which is July 1st through June 30th of each year. Employees have their full budget available at the beginning of the fiscal year, but must consider the budget is for a twelve-month period.

## EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENTS

The ESC does not reimburse the employee for work related purchases. The ESC will not reimburse based on the employee's credit card statement. Once the employee has an approved purchase order, one can use an ESC credit card to make the purchase or provide the vendor the ESC purchase order number and ask the vendor to send the Treasurer's office an invoice to pay. Refer the Procurement/Purchase Order process.

## **FIXED ASSETS**

The ESC tracks and accounts for their fixed assets. When an employee receives a computer, printer, or another fixed asset, please verify whether it has an asset tag on it. If it does not have a tag, please contact the IT Coordinator for a fixed asset tag. A fixed asset addition form is completed as well. Do not dispose of any fixed asset without the Treasurer's approval.

Some fixed assets, such as technology, can be repaired by the IT Coordinator. When you dispose of your fixed asset, please request a disposal form from the IT Coordinator. A completed disposal form must be turned into the IT Coordinator in order to update the inventory. If employees come across ESC property without a tag, or have fixed asset questions, please contact the Treasurer.

## **GRANTS**

The ESC values and applies for several local, state, and federal grants. The Treasurer needs to be made aware of any grant or donation that is applied for. The Board approves grant applications and accepts donations. Some grants may require the ESC to provide a share of the funding or other requirements in order to receive the grant.

The Treasurer needs to know the grant criteria and potential reporting requirements prior to applying for the grant. Please provide all grant and donation applications to the Treasurer before submission.

## **CROWD FUNDING / GO FUND ME**

Crowdfunding is defined as the solicitation of resources from individuals and/or organizations to support identified activities or projects that enhance the educational program or a specific cause approved by the Center. The solicitation is typically from a large number of individuals / organizations utilizing internet-based technologies.

The Governing Board does not permit or sanction the use of crowdfunding for Center or specific school programs or activities, including co-curricular or extracurricular activities.

Crowdfunding activities aimed at raising funds for a specific classroom or school activity, including extracurricular activity, or to obtain supplemental resources (e.g., supplies or equipment) that are not required to provide a free appropriate public education to any students in the classroom may be permitted, but only with the specific approval of the ESC Superintendent.

All approved crowdfunding activities shall protect the privacy of students, children, and young adults in accordance with Center policies and administrative guidelines and applicable State and Federal law, including FERPA and IDEIA.

Materials, supplies, equipment, and other proceeds of the crowdfunding activity shall become property of the Center or school. Cash or equivalent payment to Center personnel is prohibited. All fiscal transactions shall comply with appropriate Center policies.

## **RECORD RETENTION**

The student records and other data used during the course of the workday are public records. The ESC has a detailed record retention policy which provides for the time that a record must be maintained. If the records meet the retention schedule, please notify the Treasurer so the records can be presented to the Board's record commission for permission of the disposal. All public record requests should go to the Treasurer. Also, see the Board Policy #8310A for the schedule, #8320 Personnel Files, and #8330 Student Records.

## **SEVERANCE PAY**

Severance pay, upon retirement, shall be in compliance with ORC Section 3319.41. Certified and classified personnel qualifying for retirement benefits under State Teachers' Retirement System or School Employees' Retirement System will be granted one-fourth of the accumulated sick leave days up to a maximum of 40 days payable at the daily rate earned at retirement.

However, the employee must have ten consecutive years or more of active service with the ESC to be eligible for the severance. Severance will be paid by the ESC to VOYA account, which saves the retiree in taxes. The pending retiree will need to setup their account with VOYA prior to retirement. The Treasurer can provide contact information for the VOYA representative.

Retired and rehired employees will not be eligible to any type of severance compensation. Severance will not be paid until the first retirement check is submitted to the Treasurer's office. See additional details about severance in Board Policy #3415 and #4415.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

As an ESC employee our actions and words reflect on the ESC and on the district(s) we serve. Please do not post negative or questionable comments about our districts on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). The districts are our customers and we should only post positively on social media.

## **COMP TIME**

The accumulated comp time policy requires the accumulated leave form to be completed and submitted within three workdays from the occurrence of the accumulated time. Any accumulated leave form submitted after the three workdays will not be accepted. In most cases, the accumulated comp time should be prior approved by the Superintendent and/or Treasurer. All comp time and accumulated comp time would be entered through SC View.

## **NATIONAL CERTIFICATION**

There is national certification reimbursement for speech language therapists, school psychologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. One can be reimbursed up to \$500 each fiscal year (between 7/1 - 6/30). The reimbursement is based on documentation of the payment by the employee. This only applies to the national certification, not state certification or required licensure.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- General work related questions – See your immediate supervisor
- Questions on ESC policies – See the Board Policies located online at <https://www.boarddocs.com/oh/midesc/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies>.
- Health/Dental/Vision/Life Insurance questions – Contact Elaine Drumm at [edrumm@mresc.org](mailto:edrumm@mresc.org)
- Questions on voluntary benefits such as critical illness and supplemental life insurance – Contact Elaine Drumm at [edrumm@mresc.org](mailto:edrumm@mresc.org)
- Questions on Evaluations – Contact your immediate supervisor
- Sick/Vacation/Personal Leave Balances – Check your Absence Management account or your direct deposit notice
- Grant Questions – Contact Keith Thomas at [kthomas@mresc.org](mailto:kthomas@mresc.org)
- Budget Questions – Contact Keith Thomas at [kthomas@mresc.org](mailto:kthomas@mresc.org)
- Where can I find the mileage form – On the ESC's website under "Staff Links."
- When do I get paid — See Pay schedule on the ESC's website under "Staff Links."
- Salary Notice question - Issued in late June of each year. Contact Teresa Featheringham at [tfeatheringham@mresc.org](mailto:tfeatheringham@mresc.org)
- To whom should I send a letter of resignation or retirement — Immediate Supervisor
- How do I obtain an ESC credit card — You must have a purchase order (not a requisition) to obtain one. The credit cards are available from Jana Barhorst, Mareena Walter, and Treasurer with an approved purchase order.
- My computer or printer won't work— Contact ProStratus at 937-346-8490 – option 1 (Solutions Center) or email [support@pro-stratus.com](mailto:support@pro-stratus.com)
- Retirement questions—
  - STRS for Certified employees - [www.strsoh.org](http://www.strsoh.org)
  - SERS for Classified employees - [www.ohsers.org](http://www.ohsers.org)
- Need a tag for a fixed asset— Keith Thomas [kthomas@mresc.org](mailto:kthomas@mresc.org)
- Where is my Purchase order— Mareena Walter [mwalter@mresc.org](mailto:mwalter@mresc.org)
- What is my job calendar— Follow your assigned district's calendar
- General Payroll questions— Teresa Featheringham [tfeatheringham@mresc.org](mailto:tfeatheringham@mresc.org)
- When is open enrollment— two week period in November of each year
- Open enrollment questions— Elaine Drumm [edrumm@mresc.org](mailto:edrumm@mresc.org)
- What is the mileage rate — it is on the mileage form on the ESC's website under "Staff Links."