

Monroe County School Board



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Revised 11/2012

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NOTE:

The information provided in this handbook is based on current law and School Board Policies in effect at the time of printing, and as interpreted by School District Administration. Laws, policies, and interpretations may change from time to time during your employment, and you are cautioned not to rely on the information contained in this handbook as being a complete compilation or absolutely correct. One purpose of this handbook is to provide you with a general notice of some, but not all, information that should be important to you.

If you have any questions, please contact your office manager or supervisor. If they are unable to assist you, they will give you direction as to which person or department at the district level is responsible for the issue in question. You may always contact the District's Human Resources Department for any questions that you have regarding employment policies.

Union members should refer to their union contract for details regarding specific employment rights and procedures. This handbook does not replace your union contract.

The School Board Policies are also available to all employees and the public for more detailed information and a complete set of the district's rules, regulations, and policies. These policies may be found at <http://www.neola.com/monroe-fl/> and is incorporated herein.

This employee handbook does not supersede or replace any other contract that you may have with the District. Further, this employee handbook does not create any additional or special rights or contract between you and the District.

A. **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE/WORKING HOURS**

The school district's salary schedules are divided into pay grades and steps. Each job is assigned a specific pay grade. A copy of the current salary schedule may be obtained from your office manager or supervisor and a copy is available on the district's website, at http://payroll.keysschools.schoolfusion.us/modules/locker/files/get_group_file.phtml?fid=12429395&gid=1574150&sessionid=696b5a82a42763d08c48b57dd54c2b0c

We encourage you to advance your career within the school district. Vacancies within the district are advertised as they occur at our online paperless application system (PATS). If you are interested and feel you are qualified for an open position which has been announced please express your interest by applying; as a courtesy you should notify your present supervisor that you are applying for the position.

Current employees may apply by visiting the website at: <https://pats.monroe.k12.fl.us> (**Only 1 application needs to be completed**).

1. When you arrive at the site go to the "Apply for Job" on the right side of the screen.
2. Click on the "Current MCSD Employees Only" link at the bottom left of your screen.
3. Register as a user – you type in your name and you create your own password (answer any field that has a red *).
4. Log on at the far left side of the screen using your username and password (exactly as entered when registering; the system is case sensitive).
5. Read the first page and then click on "continue".
6. Click on "Select Areas of Interest".
7. For Instructional type positions click on "Select areas of Certification"; select the areas of certification that you are qualified for and that you wish to be considered for a transfer and then "continue".

For Support type positions click on "Select Job Titles"; select the job titles that you are qualified for and/or that you wish to be considered for transfer and then "continue".

8. Teachers will be asked several questions regarding certification such as do you have a professional certificate, how many years have you taught, etc. When you get to the question. "Do you want a lateral transfer....," answer yes and it will be reviewed and processed. Remember to sign electronically and submit.
9. Non-instructional employees will be asked, "Do you want a lateral transfer for _____?" A lateral transfer is the same position but at another school or department or a different shift ONLY. If yes, enter your total number of years

experience in this job category with the district; answer yes or no and it will be reviewed and processed. Remember to sign electronically and submit.

10. You will now need to go to *Enter/Update* your application (far left side) and update information on demographics if necessary – at the bottom of the screen it will allow you to select those sites that you are interested in being considered for transfer. Electronically sign and submit.
11. Click on the “*To Do*” list, complete the education section, and submit.

You may go into the system and review all job vacancies and apply OR the system will notify you if you provided an email address when you registered in the system with specific job titles or certification areas that have been qualified. The system will notify you of positions when they are posted and you can respond and tell them you are interested in that posting or you can decline consideration for that specific posting (i.e., if you want to teach 3rd grade and the posting is for 1st grade - you could decline without changing your transfer status and still be considered for other postings that become available).

It is the policy of the School Board to select employees on the basis of merit, training, and experience. First consideration is acknowledged and followed as per the union contracts. There will be no discrimination against any applicant or employee because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, handicap, sexual orientation, or marital status. The District complies with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment.

WORKING HOURS

The length of the work day, the hours, lunch and break times vary with each job and or specific school location. Your supervisor should give you this information when you are employed and should be verified upon reporting your first day of employment.

If you are ill or have an emergency and will either be unable to report to work or will be late, you are required to notify your supervisor immediately so that arrangements can be made for someone to cover your area of responsibility. For instructional and some paraprofessional personnel Aesop has been implemented to assist in finding substitute teachers to cover classrooms.

There is a district form for leave and procedures to cover each type of leave. Your supervisor should discuss these leaves with you and can answer questions. Be aware that absence without approved leave may be cause for disciplinary action and that it is the employee’s responsibility to insure that the leave form has been completed and given to their office manager or supervisor. You are also urged to contact the Human Resources Department regarding leave, leave forms, and employment-related matters.

B. ON-THE-JOB

1. Human Resources Department

a. New employee requirements

As a new employee, you are required to report to the Human Resources office in Key West to complete the required paperwork and fingerprinting in order to be placed on the payroll. It is important that all your paperwork is completed at this time.

Before you can be paid you must complete and have these forms on file in the Human Resources Department: a medical history, a loyalty oath, W-4, complete the TB Screening Form and follow-up if required, I-9 (employee eligibility verification), provide a copy of your social security card*, official picture ID, personnel information form, acknowledgement of ethics policies, sexual harassment policy, laptop use/security policy, acceptable use and password policy, anti-bullying, drug-free workplace, bloodborne pathogens, direct deposit document, and retirement enrollment form for regular employees.

*Please note that a copy of the original, official social security card is the only copy accepted by the Human Resources Department. It is very important in that it assures retirement and social security contributions are credited to you. Make certain you use the name that appears on the social security card on all documents you prepare or submit to the School Board or the Human Resources Department. This is also the name under which you will be paid. If you change your name on your social security card please submit a copy to the Human Resources Department in order to update your personnel file.

As of January 1, 1990, all new employees must be fingerprinted and as of July 1, 2005, all employees will have their fingerprints re-submitted every five years. Fingerprinting is offered at the Human Resources Office, during normal business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The fingerprints must be done before an employee is allowed to begin working; resubmissions are from the digital database from FDLE/FBI.

b. Credit for Years of Experience – Teachers

Teachers coming into the district may receive credit for their years of teaching experience in the public or private sector for K-12 experience once verified. Verification of the experience is the responsibility of the teacher to acquire from their former employers. Verification must be received in the Human Resources Department no later than May 30th in order to be processed and receive credit for experience for that school year.

Forms for verification are available from the Human Resources Department.

c. ID Badges

An identification badge is issued to each employee (temporary and permanent) at the time of employment. The identification badge must be worn so that the employee's picture, name, and validity period are readily visible on the front of the badge.

ID badges must be worn at all time by transportation personnel, including bus drivers, mechanics, maintenance personnel, mailroom/delivery personnel, and cafeteria personnel. All

school based instructional, district support and district administrative and curriculum personnel are to wear badges when visiting schools. The ID badge must be worn at other times as designated by the supervisor.

ID badges remain the property of the School Board and employees are required to return them to their supervisor upon termination of employment. This is an essential part of the official check out procedure. The misuse of the ID badge and/or failure to comply with this rule will subject an employee to disciplinary action. A replacement fee of \$5.00 may be assessed for a lost or damaged badge.

d. TB Test

To protect employees and students against tuberculosis, employees are required to complete the TB Screening form and do a follow up if required at the time of hire. If it is necessary to have an actual TB Test the Human Resources Department will provide a form entitling you to have a TB test made at a local health provider at no cost to you. If you are charged for the test, you may submit the receipt to the Human Resources Department for reimbursement. This provision is a School Board policy and is a condition of employment.

e. Hepatitis B Vaccinations

To protect employees and students against Hepatitis B, employees in high risk categories are offered the opportunity to receive the Hepatitis B vaccination series at the district's expense. The Human Resources Department will provide a form authorizing these employees to have the vaccination upon request.

The categories of employees automatically eligible for this vaccination are:

- Principals/Asst. Principals in charge of discipline
- PE Teachers/Athletic Coaches/Athletic Trainers
- ESE Teachers
- ESE Teacher Aides
- ESE Bus Drivers
- ESE Bus Aides
- Pre-K Teachers
- Pre-K Teacher Aides
- Kindergarten Teachers
- Kindergarten Aides
- Nurses
- Plumbers
- Cafeteria Workers

Other interested employees that do not fall into any of the categories listed above may appeal to the Director of Human Resources if they feel they are in a high risk category and would like to receive the vaccination.

f. Use of District Vehicles

The use of district owned vehicles is a privilege and not a right. Before operating a district owned vehicle you must complete the authorization form for the district to run a background check on your driver's license. Drivers of district vehicles may be employees or

approved volunteers and hold a valid Florida Driver's License. The forms are available from your office manager/supervisor or may be obtained from the Human Resources Department.

g. Name/Address Change

If you have a legal change made to your name you will need to provide a copy of your new social security card to the Human Resources Department. If you have a change of address you should submit the change through the eHRPortal.

h. AIDS Policy

The District's AIDS policy requires that all instructional and support staff members shall receive in-service training to increase awareness and knowledge about AIDS. These workshops shall be held periodically and you should be apprised of them by your supervisor.

i. Tobacco – Smoke Free

The District defines "use of tobacco" to include all uses of tobacco, including cigars, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, or any other matter or substances that contain tobacco, and the possession of paper used to roll cigarettes.

The District prohibits the use of tobacco at any time on Board property or when doing official business for the board:

- a) within any indoor facility owned or leased or contracted for by the Board.
- b) anywhere on the campus of any facility owned or leased or contracted for by the Board, including, but not limited to, practice fields, playgrounds, football fields, baseball fields, softball fields, pool areas, soccer fields, tennis courts, and all open areas.
- c) in all vehicles, owned or operated by the Board, including, but not limited to, school buses, vans, trucks, station wagons, and cars.

j. Drug-Free Workplace

The School Board maintains a Drug-Free Workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcohol or tobacco, or a controlled substance as identified in Florida Statutes, Chapter 893, by employees is prohibited at any worksite or workplace and at any school-related activity, and any employee is prohibited from influencing students to use or abuse illicit drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Any employee who is found to be in violation of this prohibition will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension without pay and termination and the loss of workers' compensation benefits.

As a condition of employment, employees will abide by the terms of a drug-free workplace. Further, employees will notify the Board of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in or away from the workplace no later than five days after such conviction.

For cessation resources please call the Quitline 1-877-U-CAN-NOW or Quit Smoking Now Class 305-743-7111.

k. Weapons Policy

The School Board prohibits the possession, storing, making, or using a weapon, including a concealed weapon, in a school safety zone and any setting that is under the control and supervision of the District for the purpose of school activities approved and authorized by the District including, but not limited to, property leased, owned, or contracted for by the District, a school-sponsored event, or in a District vehicle.

A weapon may be brought on District property for educational purposes under controlled circumstances when authorized by the building principal as part of a class or individual presentation or a theatrical prop used under adult supervision, if used for the purpose and in the manner approved, would be an exception to this policy. (Working firearms and any ammunition will never be approved as part of a presentation.)

The term "weapon" means any object which, in the manner in which it is used, is intended to be used, or is represented, is capable of inflicting serious bodily harm or property damage, as well as endangering the health and safety of persons. Weapons, as defined by F.S. Chapter 790, include, but are not limited to, firearms, guns of any type whatsoever, including air and gas-powered guns (whether loaded or unloaded), knives, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons, ammunition, and explosives.

This policy also encompasses such actions as look-alike items, false fire alarms, bomb threats, or intentional calls to falsely report a dangerous condition.

Staff and students are required to immediately report knowledge of weapons and threats of violence by students and staff to the building principal. Failure to report such knowledge may subject the staff or student to immediate suspension and potential expulsion from school.

l. Sexual Harassment Policy

The School Board desires to maintain an academic and work environment in which all employees, volunteers, and students are treated with respect and dignity. A vital element of this atmosphere is the Board's commitment to equal opportunities and the prohibition of discriminatory practices. The Board's prohibition against discriminatory practices includes prohibitions against sexual harassment, or any other form of harassment based upon a person's membership in a protected class and specifically prohibited by applicable state or federal law. The School Board forbids sexual harassment, or any other form of illegal harassment, of any employee, student, volunteer, or visitor. The Board will not tolerate sexual harassment or any other form of illegal harassment by any of its employees, volunteers, or agents.

A substantiated allegation of discrimination or harassment against an employee may result in disciplinary actions including termination and referral to appropriate law enforcement authorities. A volunteer shall be removed from service and a referral may be made to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

m. Civility Policy

School district personnel will treat parents, students, and other district personnel with courtesy and respect, and expect the same from others.

It is the intent of the School Board to promote mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among district employees, students, parents, and the public. It is not the intent of the School Board, however, to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. The School Board also recognizes there may be a variety of cultural perspectives on what constitutes civil or uncivil behavior; however, the intent of this policy is to maintain, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, a safe, civil, harassment-free workplace for all, and to set an example of civility for students to emulate. In the interest of presenting administrators, teachers, and other employees as positive role models, the School Board encourages positive communication and discourages disruptive, volatile, hostile or aggressive communications or actions.

n. Probationary Period

Upon initial employment, all regular employees will serve a probationary period that begins the first day of regular employment. Probationary periods are as follows:

- administrative and instructional personnel is 97 days
- non-instructional personnel is 6 months

Employees who are released during or at the end of their probationary period shall not have any rights of appeal nor have the right to a written explanation.

o. Self-reporting of Arrest

As required by the provisions of State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006(5) and The Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida, a professional employee is required to self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to the Superintendent any arrests or charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt, nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, self-reporting shall also be required for any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, or entering of a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere* for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight (48) hours after the final judgment. NOTE: DUI is not a minor traffic violation.

p. Evaluations

Each employee will be evaluated annually. The process is designed to let you know what you are doing well and if there are areas for improvement. The evaluation will be in writing and will be placed in your personnel file. Your supervisor will share it privately with you and ask you to sign the form. Your signature is acknowledging receipt of the evaluation your indication that you have read the form which also has space for your comments. You are welcome to write comments and/or attach an additional sheet for comments if so desired.

q. Resignation/Retirement

If you decide to resign or retire from your job with the School Board notify your supervisor as far in advance as possible. At the same time, you should contact the Employee Benefits & Risk Management Department concerning options for continuing any insurance coverage you may have.

If you are planning to retire, you may be eligible for special benefits, including insurance coverage. You should contact the Payroll Department as soon as you begin considering retirement, because it takes time to process the necessary forms.

An Exhibit A form must be completed on the eHRPortal by the employee.

2. Payroll Department

a. Pay schedules

Paydays are approved annually by the School Board. All employees are paid twice a month -- on the 15th and the 30th. A copy of the most recent pay schedule is available from your office manager or supervisor. Pay stubs are available through the eHRPortal.

b. 12 month pay

All regular employee positions are paid out over a twelve (12) month period regardless if the position is 10- 11-, or 12month position.

c. Direct Deposit

Direct payroll deposit is mandatory. Pay checks are not in a paper format. However, ePay stubs can be found on the eHRPortal. Direct deposit is available for any banking institution. The online form is completed at the time of hire and can be resubmitted through the eHRPortal at any time and will be submitted directly to the Payroll Department for processing. A copy of a voided check or a letter from the banking institution for savings accounts is required backup documentation.

d. Payroll Deductions

The School Board provides the opportunity for voluntary payroll deductions for the following: Board approved life insurance plans, tax sheltered annuities, Credit Union, Take Stock in Children, union dues, and United Way contributions. Any deduction authorized by you will be reflected on your ePay stub. Check your ePay stub regularly for important information. It will show your pay period earnings, all deductions, and your total earnings to date for the year. If you feel there is an error, contact your office manager or supervisor.

3. Employee Benefits and Risk Management

a. Health Insurance

The School Board provides all employees with the following:

- 1) \$10,000 Life Insurance and AD&D Insurance
- 2) Partially paid medical coverage for employees who choose medical insurance and
- 3) \$450 a year contribution (less the \$28.50 administrative fee), which is applied to your medical coverage. If you do not have medical insurance through the School Board, the contribution may be used to purchase voluntary benefits through Fringe Benefits Management Co., excluding 401 (K). Any unused balances will revert back to the School Board.

b. Section 125 Cafeteria Plan

Eligible employees have the opportunity to select individual fringe benefits that fit their family situation and personal needs such as dental, vision, disability insurance, and extra life insurance through Fringe Benefits Management Co.

The costs of the premium for these plans are your personal responsibility and must be paid by you.

At any time you are not being paid by the District, you must make arrangements to pay your insurance premiums directly to the School District. You can do this by contacting the Employee Benefits and Risk Management Department.

c. Workers' Compensation/Injury on the job

If you are injured on the job, you are covered by Workers' Compensation. You must report **ANY and ALL** accidents or injuries to your **supervisor or office manager immediately** in order to be considered for these benefits. After reporting your injury to your Supervisor, medical treatment for a non-emergency must be obtained through a Network Provider. You can only visit Health Care Providers authorized by us (your employer).

If you are injured on the job and have to miss work due to the injury, you must have a doctor's note stating you are not able to work and for how long. When you are able to come back to work, you must have a doctor's note releasing you to return to work and listing any and all restrictions if applicable.

d. Illness- or Injury-in-the-Line-of-Duty

Any employee, except substitutes or temporary employees, shall be entitled to Illness/Injury in Line of Duty leave when he/she has to be absent from duties because of a personal injury received in the discharge of duty or because of illness from any contagious or infectious disease contracted in school work. The following requirement shall be observed:

Sick leave used by the employee shall be authorized for a total not to exceed ten (10) days during any fiscal year. It is the employee's responsibility to file a request for compensation through their supervisor within the time and the manner provided by law (5 days).

Other requirements may also apply. You are urged to contact your supervisor, school principal, or the Human Resource Department regarding same.

C. BENEFITS

1. Leave

At various times you may be eligible for personal and emergency leave, military leave, illness-in-the-line-of-duty leave, workers' compensation leave, and leave without pay. When you have special needs, discuss them with your supervisor. Any time you are on leave without pay for longer than ten working days, you must contact the Human Resources Department to schedule a meeting (video conference for the Keys) with the Payroll Department and Employee

Benefits & Risk Management Department to continue your medical insurance and other insurance benefits you may have.

Leave will not be granted to any employee to accept other employment. Acceptance of employment while on leave automatically cancels the leave. The employee must then either return to work or resign. Failure to do so will result in termination by the district.

a. Annual Leave

All full-time employees appointed to a twelve-month position earn annual leave after three months of employment, retroactive to the date of employment at the rate of one day per month. Part-time 12-month employees will receive annual leave to match the time worked (e.g., a person who works four hours per day will earn four hours per month annual leave). After five years, employees will earn 1 1/4 days annual leave each month. When you have completed ten years with the District, you will begin earning 1 1/2 days a month. Total accrued vacation leave may not exceed forty-two (42) days at the end of the district's fiscal year, June 30th.

You may apply for vacation leave once you have earned it. The appropriate form is available from your office manager. File this form in advance for approval by your supervisor.

b. Sick Leave

One of the many benefits you earn as an employee is sick leave. You will earn one day of sick leave for each month of employment. The sick leave days you earn match the length of your work day. Sick leave may be used for your personal illness or for death or serious illness in your immediate family. Careful use of your sick leave days will benefit you if you have a serious illness. Additionally, under current Florida law, accumulated sick leave can also put extra dollars in your pocket when you retire.

c. Sick Leave Pool

After you have worked one year in the system and have accrued seven days of sick leave, you become eligible to participate in the Sick Leave Pool. This plan currently provides personnel an emergency pool of sick leave days for use in cases of prolonged absence due to personal illness or disability (normal maternity leave is not allowable under the plan). To join, you must apply during the first twenty working days of the school year. You will contribute one of your sick leave days to the pool. An additional day may be charged each year. Sick Leave Pool days can only be applied for after you have exhausted your personal sick leave days. Your office manager has the application forms.

d. Personal Leave charged to Sick Leave

Support Service Personnel may be granted four (4) days of personal leave with pay for the purpose of conducting personal business involving special obligations which cannot be scheduled on non-duty days. Such leave shall be chargeable to your sick leave and shall not be cumulative from year to year.

Instructional Personnel may be granted six (6) days of personal leave with pay; five for the purpose of conducting personal business involving special obligations which cannot be scheduled on non-duty days and one for personal development. Such leave shall be chargeable to your sick leave and shall not be cumulative from year to year.

Requests for personal leave should be submitted five (5) days prior to the date that the employee desires to be absent from his/her duties. Less notice may be acceptable in the event of unforeseen circumstances. In all instances, the request is subject to the approval of the employee's supervisor who determines that the absence of the employee will not work an unusual hardship at the school site or department effected. In no instance may a supervisor approve personal leave with pay for more than ten percent (10%) of the work force for which he/she is responsible on a given day.

e. FMLA

This leave is available to qualified employees for a maximum period of 60 work days of unpaid leave per year. This leave may be used for the birth of the employee's child; the adoption of a child by the employee; to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent; or a serious personal health condition. Please note the Monroe County School Board requires employees to utilize any leave time they have during this period.

To qualify the employee must have been employed for a 12 month period and have worked a total of 1250 hours. However, there are exceptions and an employee should contact the Human Resources Department for clarification. Also, appropriate and valid medical certification as required by the FMLA and School Board policy is required in the case of serious illness.

f. Jury Duty/Witness Leave

If during your regular working hours, you are summoned or selected for jury duty, or you are subpoenaed to testify in a court or administrative case in which the School Board is a plaintiff or defendant, you will not lose any pay. You will be paid the difference between what the court pays you and what you would have earned on the job or you may pay the School Board the fee you receive minus any travel, in which case you shall receive your regular paycheck, or any amount required by applicable law. The leave form is available from your office manager and must be completed and filed in advance of the dates you are to appear.

NOTE: If you are subpoenaed to testify or to appear in any other matter in which the School Board is not a plaintiff or defendant, you will not be paid for the time you are absent from your regular work, unless you are on approved annual leave or personal leave charged against sick leave. However, you must still obtain, complete, and file the appropriate leave form in advance.

g. Temporary Duty Elsewhere

The School Board may grant temporary duty elsewhere leave for an employee to attend meetings, conferences, and workshops inside or outside the county. Such leave must be initially approved by the supervisor and be job-related. This leave normally will be with pay and include those travel expenses payable under Florida law. Leave papers must be completed along with an attached copy of the notification/agenda of the meeting to the Superintendent's office. This leave form is to be filed in advance.

h. Military Leave

Military leave shall be granted to an employee who is required to serve in the armed forces of the United States or of the State of Florida in fulfillment of obligations incurred under

the Selective Service Laws or because of membership in the reserves of the armed forces or the National Guard. When an employee enters voluntarily into any branch of the armed forces for temporary or an extended period of service, military leave shall be granted at the School Board's discretion. However, an employee whose absence will interfere with the orderly operation of the school program shall be denied military leave except in unusual cases.

If the employee provides documentation of orders for active duty and requests benefit continuance in writing, the employee shall be entitled to continue to receive District health or other insurance benefits. The Board's contribution toward benefits will continue. The employee will continue to pay the employee portion of all premiums.

Notwithstanding any other provision in Board rules or policy, employees called to active duty pursuant to this section shall be granted military leave for period of active duty without loss of seniority and shall be entitled to reemployment upon release of active duty as provided in School Board Policies.

i. Holidays

Holidays may vary from year to year depending on state law and school board policy. The current school calendar is posted on the district's main website and a copy is available from your office manager/supervisor.

2. Retirement

a. Florida Retirement System

Another benefit you have is your membership in the Florida Retirement System. The School Board pays part of your retirement contribution. By Florida Statute, employees are required to pay 3% of the contribution to this retirement fund.

EXISTING FRS PARTICIPANTS as of June 30, 2011:

You become eligible for a retirement benefit under the retirement system after six years of creditable service. The categories for normal retirement benefits are:

- (1) six or more years of service and age 62, or
- (2) thirty years of service, regardless of age.

NEW FRS PARTICIPANTS as of July 1, 2011:

You become eligible for a retirement benefit under the retirement system after eight years of creditable service. The categories for normal retirement benefits are:

- (1) eight or more years of service and age 65, or
- (2) thirty-three years of service, regardless of age.

All members of the Florida Retirement System are required by state law to be covered under Social Security, and contributions for Social Security are automatically deducted from your paycheck. (The School Board also pays into your Social Security Account a matching amount). The local Social Security office can provide you information regarding Social Security eligibility and benefits.

b. DROP

The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) allows you to retire under the Florida Retirement System (FRS) Pension Plan and begin accumulating your retirement benefits, without terminating employment for up to 60 months from the date you first reach normal retirement or eligible deferral date. You will simultaneously earn a salary and a retirement income.

The earliest you may begin participating in DROP is the month you reach your normal retirement date. Existing vested members qualify for normal retirement by attaining age 62 or by completing 30 years of creditable service, regardless of age.

3. Miscellaneous

a. Monroe County Teachers Federal Credit Union

The Monroe County Teachers Federal Credit Union is a non-profit organization. The credit union offers such services as: checking accounts, savings accounts, club accounts, ATM cards, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA), and certificates of deposit.

Loans are available for most useful purposes; some examples are the purchase of a new or used automobile, boat, motorcycle, and RV. For the home owner, the credit union finances mobile homes (new or used) and offers home improvement loans. Deposits and payments may be made by the option of payroll deduction. They also have direct deposit available for paychecks, retirement, and social security.

Employees and their immediate family members living in the same household may join the credit union. Membership may be retained even if employment with the school board ceases.

The credit union location is May Sands School, 1400 United Street, Key West, Florida 33045. For more information, contact the credit union at 296-8546 or P.O. Box 2666, Key West, Florida 33045-2666.

b. United Teachers of Monroe

United Teachers of Monroe represent both the instructional and the support related (blue collar) employees of the Monroe County School Board.

Their office is located in Key West at 1400-C United Street, Key West, Florida 33045. The phone number is 305-294-7483.

4. Reporting Requirements

a. Reporting Suspected Drug Abuse

The Florida Statutes require that all school personnel report to the principal or the principal's designee any suspected unlawful use, possession, or sale of any controlled substance, counterfeit controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, tobacco, or model glue by a student. All school personnel shall be exempt from civil liability when reporting in good faith to the proper school authority such suspected unlawful uses, possessions or sales.

Employees should report such suspected activities to the principal or his/her designee and only the principal or his/her designee shall contact a parent or legal guardian of a student regarding this situation.

b. Reporting Child Abuse

Under Florida Statutes, all employees or agents of the school board have a duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect and a duty to comply with child protective investigations and all other provisions of law relating to child abuse and neglect. Employees are granted immunity from civil liability when reporting in good faith such actual or suspected cases of child abuse. Such reports should be made directly to the Department of Children and Family Services and you may inform the principal of the school that you have filed a report.

1-800-966-ABUSE