APPENDIX V: COMMUNICATIONS

Preparing students to step forward with confidence and a vision of lifetime success

Partners in educational success

SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

SDSD

South Dakota School for the Deaf

Dear State of South Dakota Employees,

Public service is essential to maintaining our democratic society, providing services to our citizens, and helping the state and country prosper. Thank you for your dedication to the State of South Dakota and its citizens.

Beyond day-to-day duties, each State employee, regardless of title or pay grade, is responsible to help maintain the public trust. Any misappropriation of resources, conflict of interest or other illegal activity, undermines the confidence citizens have in our State government. It overshadows the otherwise good work being done for society.

In addition to reading and abiding by the personal responsibility policies outlined here, you are asked to report acts that you believe violate these policies. If you see something, please say something. To create a comfortable atmosphere for recounting such concerns, an internal control officer has been appointed in each department. If you do not feel comfortable discussing your concerns with the internal control officer in your department, you may reach out to an internal control officer from another department or contact your human resources manager.

Thank you in advance for representing yourself and your fellow State employees with integrity.

Sincerely,

Governor Dennis Daugaard

Dear Board of Regents Employees,

Integrity. Ethics. Transparency. Protecting the public trust. You and I not only have the responsibility to maintain the very highest standards in these areas, but also to pass these values along to our students. Our society has long depended on higher education to enhance the ability of our democracy to function effectively and fairly for all of the people that call our nation and state home. We must assist students in their search for knowledge, in understanding themselves and their cultural and physical environments, and in developing the wisdom and skills necessary to function as responsible citizens in society.

As a Regental system employee, you play an integral role in carrying out that mission. Each and every employee has a responsibility to demonstrate to each other, our students, and the citizens of the State of South Dakota, a commitment to making stewardship and ethical behavior a part of our everyday activity. Thank you for representing the Board of Regents and your institution with honesty and integrity, and leading by example for the future leaders of South Dakota.

Sincerely,

Mike Rush
Executive Director and CEO

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It is the policy of the SDSBVI/SDSD that communications will be made accessible to all staff as a reasonable accommodation. Please notify the office staff if you need other than standard print.

INTERNET AND E-MAIL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Special Schools recognize the value of the Internet and Email as tools of communication and sources of information for both students and staff. The Internet provides connections to millions of computers around the world and a wealth of excellent and useful information for learning. Electronic mail (E-mail) provides a quick and convenient method of communication within our building and with any other computer user (including parents and family).

Although there are many excellent resources on the Internet, there is also material inappropriate for children, inappropriate in an educational setting, and inappropriate in the workplace. E-Mail messages can also be used inappropriately.

The policies define what is appropriate, what is unacceptable, and the consequences for misuse. Staff members are expected to serve as role models for students. It is the intent of the SDSBVI to immediately implement the following policies regarding use of the Internet and E-Mail.

1. Prior to use of the Internet students will be required to receive training in both use of the Internet and appropriate etiquette (Netiquette) by classroom teacher.
2. Staff and students and parent/guardian will be required to sign a contract "Acceptable Use Policy for the Technology Resources Agreement Form" confirming their understanding and compliance with these policies.
3. Students will have a specific research topic approved by a teacher or appropriate staff member.
4. Independent use of the Internet by students requires prior parental permission and full compliance with school use policies.
5. Any materials from the Internet must be saved on a student flashdrive, rather than on the classroom, lab, or library computer.
6. Unauthorized downloading of information or programs is not allowed.
7. Staff and students may not visit sites with unsuitable materials containing vulgarities, obscenities, or other inappropriate materials. Unacceptable use also includes visiting inappropriate sites, sharing inappropriate or threatening messages on E-mail, violation of copyright laws, or use of the school computers for commercial activity. Product advertisement and political lobbying are also prohibited.
8. Acceptable use includes research on approved topics and communication/collaboration with others.
9. The use of the Internet and E-Mail at the SDSBVI is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in suspension of privileges and other disciplinary action.
10. Security on any system is a high priority. Any staff or student who tampers with the system, knowingly introduces a virus, or vandalizes computer hardware or software will result in the immediate suspension of privileges and disciplinary action.
11. Some computers at SDSBVI, including the ones in the Technology Lab, Library, Spicer Hall, and Herseth Hall have programs for screen enlargement or speech. **Don't mess with these!** Use them, but don't make any changes to the settings.
12. Use lowercase letters for email. WHEN YOU USE ALL CAPS IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING, and your recipient may think you're angry.

13. Use the email to save unnecessary steps or catch up with people on other shifts, but remember that it is still important to talk with each other, particularly if you're trying to problem solve. Don't use email to avoid a direct conversation or it will become a barrier to communication instead of a positive tool.
14. Keep your personal password simple….something you are likely to remember.
15. When you forward one of those "cute" things that make the rounds, first determine if it will contribute to a positive work environment. Anything in questionable taste should be trashed, not forwarded! Second, delete the portion at the top that is the list of previous recipients (some go on for pages before you get to the message). Keep in mind when you send something on, it has your name on it. While everyone can use a bit of cheer, some days there is too much of a good thing. Don't send these to "All Staff."
16. Clear out your mailbox regularly to free server space. If you want to keep something make a folder and move it. If you're not sure how to do this, ask someone. Also remember to periodically empty your "sent mail" folder as well.
17. Take a few minutes to set up "personal groups" in mail. This will cut down on mail sent to people who don't need it and don't want it. This works especially well for departments and committees. Again, if you'd like help, just ask.
18. Don't hesitate to ask for help or advice. If you have questions or concerns, please ask. If they are questions about the "system", ask the Technology Specialist. <u>Nobody</u> was born knowing this stuff! We're just all learners at different stages.

APPROPRIATE USE POLICY

<u>E-Mail:</u>
1. Be courteous and respectful in your messages to others. Never put anything into an E-mail message that you wouldn't say face-to-face.
2. Use appropriate language. Swearing, vulgarity, and obscenity are strictly forbidden.
3. If you are the unintentional recipient of inappropriate materials, alert a staff member and/or delete them. Do not pass them on.
4. E-mail is not guaranteed to be private communication; it is subject to discovery. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to illegal activities will be reported to authorities.

<u>Internet:</u>
(This applies to all devices and equipment, including, but not limited to computers, iPads, iPods and cell phones)
1. Internet sites containing inappropriate materials are "off limits." You are responsible for the sites you choose to visit.
2. The Internet may not be used for illegal activity.
3. Do not reveal your home address or telephone numbers or that of other students or staff.
4. Do not post personal messages on bulletin boards or list serves. Send personal messages directly to the person you wish to contact.
5. Do not download any programs from the Internet without specific permission from the Technology Specialist. Because we are on a networked system and we have assistive technology on many machines, an inappropriate "download" may cause problems for other users.
6. Do not open files from unknown sources.

<u>COMMITTEES</u>

A great deal is accomplished each year through the work of committees. Some of these committees are formed to work on specific events; other committees meet regularly to review, plan and implement a variety of valuable functions. The membership for some committees is established in the BOR/COHE contract; others are set by the administration, and still others are on a volunteer basis. What follows is a brief description of the main committees:

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- <u>Calendar Committee:</u> This committee reviews the annual calendar and makes recommendations.
- <u>Outreach Meeting Committee:</u> This committee assists the Director of Outreach on preparation for scheduled outreach meetings.
- <u>Professional Development Committee</u>: This committee is established in COHE Contract and makes recommendations for professional development.
- <u>SDSD Foundation</u>: This group is an independent foundation that supports the work of the school. The primary mission is to expand opportunities for students to participate in community activities. The Foundation supports student and family activities, student scholarships, and summer camps.

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<u>INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS</u>
- <u>Civil Service Employee Advisory Council (CSEAC)</u>: This committee represents the Civil Service staff members in interactions with the administration, Board of Regents, etc. They help resolve issues relating to Civil Service employment.
- <u>Committee on Internal Organization (CIO)</u>: This is a meeting of department heads who share information and address interdepartmental issues.
- <u>Dorm Staffing</u>: The residential staff, nurses, instructional assistants, and others who work with ADL review student needs and share information about programs.
- <u>Faculty/Staff Meeting</u>: This meeting is an opportunity for faculty members, instructional assistants, and principal to exchange information.
- <u>Internal Agreement Management Committee (IAM)</u>: COHE representatives and administrators meet to address issues pertaining to the teacher's contract between COHE and the Board of Regents.
- <u>Management and Planning (MAP)</u>: The administrative team meets to review student issues, discuss school policies, plan for staffing, and facilitate collaboration between residential and educational programs.
- <u>Outreach Consultants</u>: This group includes the faculty and staff who provide outreach consultation and provides an opportunity to share ideas and information and plan together.
- <u>Transition Committee</u>: This group looks at students of transition age and works to coordinate activities on their behalf and assess progress.

- **Archives Committee:** This group is working to organize and preserve our school's historic artifacts.
- **Arts and Special Activities:** This group plans for the Artist in the Schools program and a wide variety of school activities for students and staff. There are numerous sub-committees who work on specific projects and sponsor various fund-raising activities.
- **Crisis Team:** They review any incident reports and determine what steps can be taken to improve safety for students and staff.
- **Curriculum Committee:** This group is charged with regular review and revision of our adopted curriculum.
- **External Behavior Management:** This is the oversight group that reviews all behavioral policies and implementation of individual behavior programs. This group ensures that policy and procedures as well as state and federal mandates are followed.
- **Library Committee:** This group develops library policy and provides input to the librarian about curricular needs.
- **Professional Development:** This group plans for the fall professional development days and other staff development.
- **Steering Committee:** This group is charged with developing, implementing and reviewing our progress on the School Improvement Plan.
- **Technology Task Force:** This group meets to review the technology needs of students and staff and identify training opportunities. They make recommendations about technology purchases.
- **Wellness Team:** Oversees efforts related to the health and wellness as to nutrition and education standards and activities.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
- **Advisory Council:** This group was formed by the South Dakota Board of Regents to advise both the Superintendent and the Board.
- **SD Foundation for the Blind and Visually Impaired:** This group is an independent foundation that supports the work of the school. The primary mission is to expand opportunities for students to participate in community activities.

Each committee is asked to use the following process each year.
- Designate a chair or co-chairs.
- Determine frequency and day/time of meetings and inform Administrative Assistant.
- Set annual goals or activities.
- Take brief action minutes of each meeting. There should be a record of specific areas discussed and any plans to implement activities, along with person assigned and projected timeline.
- Distribute minutes by email or paper copy to committee members, principal, student services director, administrative assistant, and superintendent. (Some committees do not keep official minutes.)
- Complete a year-end review and make recommendations for the next year.

PUBLIC INFORMATION / PUBLIC RELATIONS

The SDSBVI and SDSD play a key role in educating South Dakota students with vision or hearing loss, focusing our efforts on building the skills necessary for them to lead satisfying adult lives, through a combination of our academic curriculum, the expanded core curriculum, outreach services, and staff development.

In addition to teaching students and providing consultations to parents and teachers, we have an obligation to help create a cultural environment that is accepting of vision and hearing loss and doesn't see either as a barrier to full participation in society.

In the broadest sense, responsibility for public information rests with all staff. As we talk with others about our work, we shape community perception of blindness and deafness. If we portray the students as capable people with potential, we help create opportunities for employment and participation. We need to be sure that we are ready to answer questions from the general public with current and accurate information.

All staff members are encouraged to become members of their related professional organizations and organizations related to promoting a barrier-free environment. By doing so, we stay current in our field and bring more ideas into our school and the school becomes an active part of the state, regional, and national dialogue.

The primary responsibility for implementing the Public Relations/Public Information Plan rests with the Superintendent and the Liaison for Services at SDSBVI and with the Director of Outreach at SDSD. The PR/PI Plan objectives are to:
1. Create visibility for the schools with our various publics, including parents, teachers, and school administrators so they can access our programs and services when needed.
2. Increase general understanding of the educational needs of students with vision or hearing loss.
3. Increase public understanding of sensory loss and the capability of blind and deaf people.
4. Increase public understanding of the role and mission of the schools.
5. Create a positive image of the SDSBVI and SDSD with our various publics, including the Board of Regents and the state legislature.
6. Share information with organizations and groups who have a particular interest in blindness and vision loss or deafness and hearing loss including the consumer groups, the Lions/Lioness Clubs, and the Sertoma Club.

The Public Information/Public Relations Plan is designed to use a variety of means to share information. We use mass media (radio, television, newspapers), some advertising (Chamber Directories), printed materials (brochures and handouts), newsletters (Pioneer, Consultants' Corner, Wagon Trails), a booth display, videos, website, Facebook, Pinterest, public speaking, special events, and collaborations with community and state organizations.

Confidentiality is an essential consideration. We have both a legal and moral responsibility to respect the privacy of the students we serve and their families. The family's right to privacy is guaranteed under the Family Rights and Privacy Act.

Annually, parents (and students when they reach age 18) have the option of signing annual media releases detailing what (if any) information can be released. All staff members are responsible for respecting the wishes of families in this regard. Basic information such as name and hometown is sufficient for most press releases.

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STAFF DIRECTORY
The staff directory is located in SNAP under SDSD Groups, Files, and Staff Directory. This directory is compiled for administrative and staff convenience. It is intended for SDSD personnel only.

PHONE DIRECTORY
The phone directory is located in SNAP under SDSD Groups, Files, and SDSD Phone Directory.

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MASTER CALENDAR

The Master Calendar is an online calendar maintained by the Administrative Assistant announcing school events, meetings, tours, appointments, and all-school news for staff and students with daily updates. Information to be included on the Master Calendar should be emailed or given in writing to the Administrative Assistant. The Master Calendar is accessible online through your email account. If you do not know how to view the calendar on your computer, please contact the Technology Specialist. The Master Calendar will be made available in Braille as needed.

ACTIVITIES

All activities and scheduled meetings should be placed on the Master Calendar. Please inform the Administrative Assistant of any item to put on this calendar. Anyone wishing to place an item on the calendar should first check to see if an activity is already scheduled for that day/time- first come, first scheduled. Any activity or meeting not on the calendar will not be considered a school approved activity.

BULLETIN BOARDS

The six (6) bulletin boards located in the Staff Lounge should be used as follows.
1. The large bulletin board in the Lounge is for general information.
2. Medical Updates; so that every staff member knows where to look to find medical news from the nurses.
3. COHE Information
4. Civil Service bulletin board is used for posting information concerning Civil Service employees.
5. Job Openings (in-state and out-of-state)
6. Arts & Special Activities Committee, including fundraising information.

The bulletin board located by the Human Resources Office is for information that deals with human resource items.

ERASABLE BOARDS

There are two (2) erasable boards to be used as follows:
1. The one located by the Staff Lounge is used for <u>non-confidential</u> day-to-day communication which is useful for all staff.
2. The one next to the Front Office is used for signing out when leaving the campus.

SIGN-OUT POLICY

Each employee, when leaving and returning to campus during working hours, <u>must</u> sign-out/sign-in on the erasable board located on the wall next to the Front Office. Reasons for leaving campus should always be job related unless a request for leave has been approved by one's supervisor or the Director of Human Resources.

Any employee leaving campus during their lunch time also needs to also sign-out/sign-in. If a staff member leaves campus with students their names should be included.

INTERCOM

Each classroom and other areas without phone access have been fitted with a two-way intercom. In a classroom <u>emergency</u>, the teacher/staff member can use the intercom to call the office and request the assistance needed. The front office staff will summon help. Students should not use the intercom. The base in the office includes an "all call" feature to broadcast messages throughout the school.

During the class day, the intercom will <u>not</u> be used by the front office to contact the classroom.

During the school day, personal messages will continue be relayed by email, unless the call is of an emergency nature or the teacher/staff member makes a specific request (i.e. a call from a specific person or a work-related call they need to be returned). After 3:00 we will attempt to notify people of phone calls using the intercom in the assigned classroom.

TELEPHONE

Employees shall have access to school phones for the transaction of school related business. <u>Personal phone calls should not be placed or received during work times.</u> Except in cases of emergency, staff members will <u>not</u> be called from work situations to answer phone calls. Under ordinary conditions, messages will be taken so that the staff member may return the call during break time, lunch period, or for short periods during class preparation time. If expecting a return phone call, please let all the front office personnel know where to locate you. All personal long distance phone calls must be collect or billed to one's home phone number.

Work-related calls take priority and we will try to handle these calls as efficiently as possible.

There are some things you can do to make this whole process more efficient.

➢ Please let frequent callers know when you have break, prep time or lunch, and to call you then. We will not interrupt classes for routine calls.
➢ For routine calls, we will take messages for people by emails during the school day and you can return them when you have break.
➢ When you leave the building, use the sign-out board.
➢ Provide your cell number to the front office and they can forward calls when necessary.

ANSWERING THE TELEPHONE

To improve our overall telephone communication system and to create a consistently positive image for the school through all telephone contacts, please implement the following guidelines.

A. Whenever you answer a telephone, please identify us by using one of these variations:
   1. Good Morning/Afternoon. School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
   2. S.D. School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
   3. Either of the above with the addition of your department or name.
B. Be sure to finish any conversations with those around you before you pick up the phone. Give the caller the benefit of your full attention.
C. Speak clearly and loudly enough so your caller can easily hear you. Make an effort to sound pleasant and positive. Your tone will convey an overall impression of the school.
D. If the caller needs to talk to someone else in the building, tell them that you will be happy to transfer the call. (See instructions for "transferring calls" under Using The Telephone Correctly.)
E. If the caller does not volunteer his/her name and you are directing the call to someone else, please ask the caller, "May I tell him/her who's calling?" This gives the person answering the call a few moments to collect their thoughts and be ready for the caller.
F. Please transfer calls to the appropriate person. If the caller specifically requests a faculty or staff member, try them first; if the person is not available, you should ask if anyone else could help them or offer to take a message.
G. Rather than simply laying the receiver on the desk, please use "hold". If you do not use hold, the caller can hear the extraneous conversation going on near the phone. (See instructions for "putting calls on hold" under Using the Telephone Correctly.)
H. General informational calls, requests for tours or speakers, and calls pertaining to students not currently enrolled should be directed to the Liaison for Services. Requests for specific information may be directed to the person responsible for that area.
I. If you are unsure of which resource is best, contact the Principal, Business Manager, Director of Human Resources, or Superintendent.
J. If you happen to be near the front office, please answer the phone rather than letting it go to voice mail.

TAKING TELEPHONE MESSAGES

A. Whenever you take a telephone message, please include the following information:
1. Name of caller (verify spelling if you aren't sure.)
2. Phone number if call is to be returned
3. Any message
4. Date and time call was received
5. Name/initials of person taking message
B. If the message is of an emergency nature, get that message to the person as quickly as possible.
C. For messages that are not emergencies, but need attention by a specified time, an attempt should be made to contact the staff member by contacting the appropriate department.
D. Messages will be placed on the email system.

TELEPHONE USAGE GUIDE

A. EMERGENCY - Dial 9 + 911
B. OPERATOR - Dial 9 + 0
C   DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE – Dial 9 + 1 + Area Code + 555-1212
D. DEPARTMENT CALLS/OTHER "626" NUMBERS - Dial the desired extension number. Each phone has a list of local numbers for each department located by the phone.
E. LOCAL CALLS - Dial 9 + Seven Digit Number. Personal calls made on a school phone should be kept to a minimum.
F. LONG DISTANCE CALLS – Dial 9 + 1 + Area Code + Seven Digit Number.
G. TOLL FREE CALLS - Dial 9 + 1 + Ten Digit Number
H. CREDIT CARD CALLS
1. In-State: Dial 50 (listen for tone) + 0 + 605 + Seven Digit Number (listen for tone) + credit card number.
2. Out-of-State: Dial 50 (listen for tone) + 0 + Area Code + Seven Digit Number (listen for tone) + credit card number.
 I. TRANSFERRING CALLS - Advise the caller of the reason for the transfer and be sure to transfer to the right person. Depress the switch hook once and release; after getting a dial tone, dial the phone number needed, announce the call, hang up and the call will be connected. If busy/no answer, depress the switch hook twice to bring the caller back to you.
 J. PUTTING CALLS ON HOLD - Depress the switch hook and release (listen for tone), dial *12, lay handset down (do not hang up). To remove the call from hold, depress switch hook and release or hang up and the phone will ring back automatically.
K. CALL PICK UP - To pick up a call from another phone, lift handset and listen for dial tone, dial "*68" and answer the call.
L. FORWARDING CALLS - To forward your calls to another number. On your phone dial "*39", then the phone number where you want your calls answered. Listen for confirmation tones, hang up. To deactivate, dial "*40" on your phone. If forwarding to a line that is busy/no answer, repeat procedure twice within two minutes.

M. THREE WAY CALLING -- Call first party, depress switch hook and release, listen for dial tone, call second party, depress switch hook and release to connect both parties.

N. MULTI-PORT CONFERENCE CALLING – (This feature is similar to Three-Way Calling, but allows you to connect 5 lines and is available in the West Conference Room, Dean North Conference Room, South Conference Room, Superintendent's Office, and Principal's Office.) To activate this feature, you must first dial "*43" on the phone, then call first party, depress switch hook and release, listen for dial tone, call second party, depress switch hook and release, listen for dial tone. Continue this sequence until you have up to five additional lines, then depress switch hook and release to connect all parties.

O. "INTERCALL" CONFERENCING SERVICES – For information on this feature, please contact the Technology Specialist.
http://www.intercall.com/conferencing-services.php

TYPES OF CONFERENCING SERVICES

Audio Conferencing »
Web Conferencing »
Video Conferencing »