



Westminster
COMMUNITY
CHARTER SCHOOL

Staff Handbook 2018-2019

24 Westminster Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215
Phone: (716) 816-2450 • Fax (716) 838-7458
www.westminsterccs.org

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I. Introduction

Westminster Community Charter School's Background

In 1993, M&T Bank decided that it wanted to make a major investment in education in Buffalo in order to return something to the community by partnering with a school. The bank wanted to choose one school where the impact would be felt and, indirectly, change an entire community.

M&T Bank approached the Buffalo Board of Education with a proposition to partner with its lowest performing school. School 68 was selected due to low student test scores (students were scoring at the bottom of the district for over a decade prior to 1993), high poverty, discipline problems, and high student mobility.

The results have been impressive to say the least. Westminster is now one of the top performing schools in the District. In spring 2004, Westminster was designated, for the second consecutive year, one of the most improved schools in New York State by the Department of Education. On the 2002-03 NYS Math exam, Westminster's fourth grade ranked first and the eighth grade ranked third among all the public schools in the City of Buffalo. On the 2003-04 NYS ELA exams, the fourth grade class ranked seventh and the eighth grade ranked third. In 2004, *Business First* ranked Westminster third for elementary schools and middle schools in the Buffalo Public School District.

In order to ensure continued success and to protect the school from future budget cuts, M&T Bank put forth a proposal to convert Westminster into a charter school. In July 2004, the Buffalo Board of Education gave final approval to M&T's proposal and the Westminster Community Charter School became Buffalo's first "conversion charter school." As part of the agreement, M&T Bank renewed its commitment to the school for at least another five years promising an additional \$2 million of support. Different from an "independent" charter school, the conversion charter allowed Westminster to retain its current students, retain its teachers and other staff under their union collective bargaining agreements, and remain in its current building.

WCCS Mission Statement

"To challenge the status quo – to encourage people to think differently about their station in life. We do this through assuring that there are high levels of learning, by creating a safe and caring environment, and promoting community involvement in order to prepare students for a successful secondary experience."

WCCS Vision

It is our goal to become a national leader in education within 5 years. As we use this term leadership we mean higher standardized test scores, exemplary survey results, more applicable learning experiences, more innovation that serves our teachers and students' interest, and a more attractive place to work than any other school. Achieving this ambitious goal will probably require double-digit gains in standardized test and additional resources from outside sources. It surely will require that we become less test oriented, more expeditionary focused, considerably less bureaucratic, and more of a service, instead of a product, oriented school. We sincerely believe that if we work together we can achieve this change and in the process create a school that will be admired by our students, parents, teachers, and community.

Core Values

- Insatiable
- Willing to play in the sandbox
- Travel to where the sidewalk ends...
- Prepared to fail

The values that are outlined in the Mission, Vision and Core Values are then outlined in the school's Credo:

We believe that our first responsibility is to the students, parents and community members, who attend our school, use our services and interact with us. In meeting their needs everything we do must be high quality. We must constantly strive to use the best instructional practices, in order to provide the best education possible. Students, parents and community members must be serviced promptly, courteously and in a fair way. More importantly our students must have an opportunity to gain from their education.

We are responsible to our employees, the men and women who work with us within our community. Everyone must be considered as an individual. We must respect their dignity and recognize their merit. They must have a sense of security in their jobs. Assignment and workloads must be fair and adequate, and working conditions clean, orderly and safe. We must be mindful of ways to help our families fulfill their family responsibilities. Employees must feel free to make suggestions and complaints. There must equal opportunity for leadership, development, and advancement for those qualified. We must provide competent management, and their actions must be just and ethical.

We are responsible to the communities in which we live and work and to the world as well. We must be good citizens – support good works and model a belief in supporting charities. We must encourage civic improvements, a better understanding of ourselves and others, and our impact on our greater community.

Ultimately our most important responsibilities are to our students. Our daily work must provide students with a sound and innovative education, a place for social and emotional growth. We must experiment with new ideas and emerging technology. We must take risks with the curricula. The physical plant must continue to be cared for in a timely manner. Risk should be taken to reflect our value and our purpose of developing a rigorous and caring environment.

When we operate according to these principles, the students should be the beneficiaries of our work.

These documents provide the guiding framework for all of our work. The leadership team uses the aforementioned items as a litmus test to measure the quality of its decisions. Teachers are hired based of their alignment to the core values and their embodiment of the work. The school's improvement plan and strategic initiatives are rooted in this framework; a process that is monitored by the WCCS board. Additionally, teachers, staff and parents are involved in the development of curriculum, the steering of the school and the various decision-making processes to assure that goals of the school are attainable.

Student Pledge

I am a student of the Westminster Community Charter School, Buffalo's Best. I respect my parents, my teacher, my classmates, and myself. I am responsible for all of my behaviors. I am learning to set goals for myself. I come to school with a clean body and appropriate, clean clothes. I come to school prepared to learn with my homework, books, pencils, pens, and paper. I come to school with a positive attitude and an open mind, ready to learn. I come to school to learn and participate in order to get the best education I can!

Equal Employment Opportunity

Westminster Community Charter School provides equal employment opportunity to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, gender, age, disability, religion, creed, national origin, genetic predisposition, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or activity, veteran status, victims of domestic violence, use of a recognized guide dog, hearing dog or service dog, or any other status protected by law.

The policy applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training and development, promotion, transfer, termination, layoff, compensation benefits, social and recreational programs, and all other conditions and privileges of employment in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

It is the policy of Westminster Community Charter School to comply with all the relevant and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Westminster Community Charter School will not discriminate against any qualified employee or job applicant with respect to any terms, privileges, or conditions of employment because of a person's physical or mental disability. Westminster Community Charter School will make reasonable accommodation wherever necessary for all employees or applicants with disabilities, provided that the individual is otherwise qualified to safely perform the duties and assignments connected with the job and provided that any accommodations made do not require significant difficulty or expense.

An employee must notify management of their need for an accommodation. Upon doing so, a member of management, may ask an employee for their input on the type of accommodation they believe may be necessary and the functional limitations caused by an employee's disability. Additionally, when appropriate, Westminster Community Charter School may request written authorization to obtain additional information from an employee's physician or other medical or rehabilitation professionals to verify an employee's claimed functional limitations and need for an accommodation.

This is reflected in all Westminster Community Charter School's practices and policies regarding hiring, training, promotions, transfers, rates of pay, layoff, and other forms of compensation. In addition, Westminster Community Charter School will not use the services of any placement agency known to discriminate in its referrals on the basis of any of the characteristics mentioned above.

New York State Code of Ethics for Educators

Statement of Purpose

The Code of Ethics is a public statement by educators that sets clear expectations and principles to guide practice and inspire professional excellence. Educators believe a commonly held set of principles can assist in the individual exercise of professional judgment. This Code speaks to the core values of the profession. "Educator" as used throughout means all educators serving New York schools in positions requiring a certificate, including classroom teachers, school leaders and pupil personnel service providers.

Principle 1: Educators nurture the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and civic potential of each student. Educators promote growth in all students through the integration of intellectual, physical, emotional, social and civic learning. They respect the inherent dignity and worth of each individual. Educators help students to value their own identity, learn more about their cultural heritage, and practice social and civic responsibilities. They help students to reflect on their own learning and connect it to their life experience. They engage students in activities that encourage diverse approaches and solutions to issues, while providing a range of ways for students to demonstrate their abilities and learning. They foster the development of students who can analyze, synthesize, evaluate and communicate information effectively.

Principle 2: Educators create, support, and maintain challenging learning environments for all.

Educators apply their professional knowledge to promote student learning. They know the curriculum and utilize a range of strategies and assessments to address differences. Educators develop and implement programs based upon a strong understanding of human development and learning theory. They support a challenging learning environment. They advocate for necessary resources to teach to higher levels of learning. They establish and maintain clear standards of behavior and civility. Educators are role models, displaying the habits of mind and work necessary to develop and apply knowledge while simultaneously displaying a curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. They invite students to become active, inquisitive, and discerning individuals who reflect upon and monitor their own learning.

Principle 3: Educators commit to their own learning in order to develop their practice.

Educators recognize that professional knowledge and development are the foundations of their practice. They know their subject matter, and they understand how students learn. Educators respect the reciprocal nature of learning between educators and students. They engage in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to develop professionally and to promote student learning. They draw on and contribute to various forms of educational research to improve their own practice.

Principle 4: Educators collaborate with colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning.

Educators encourage and support their colleagues to build and maintain high standards. They participate in decisions regarding curriculum, instruction and assessment designs, and they share responsibility for the governance of schools. They cooperate with community agencies in using resources and building comprehensive services in support of students. Educators respect fellow professionals and believe that all have the right to teach and learn in a professional and supportive environment. They participate in the preparation and induction of new educators and in professional development for all staff.

Principle 5: Educators collaborate with parents and community, building trust and respecting confidentiality.

Educators partner with parents and other members of the community to enhance school programs and to promote student learning. They also recognize how cultural and linguistic heritage, gender, family and community shape experience and learning. Educators respect the private nature of the special knowledge they have about students and their families and use that knowledge only in the students' best interests. They advocate for fair opportunity for all children.

Principle 6: Educators advance the intellectual and ethical foundation of the learning community.

Educators recognize the obligations of the trust placed in them. They share the responsibility for understanding what is known, pursuing further knowledge, contributing to the generation of knowledge, and translating knowledge into comprehensible forms. They help students understand that knowledge is often complex and sometimes paradoxical. Educators are confidants, mentors and advocates for their students' growth and development. As models for youth and the public, they embody intellectual honesty, diplomacy, tact and fairness.

II. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

All policies and procedures set forth herein are presented only as a matter of information. These policies and procedures may be changed or deleted and new policies or procedures may be added by the organization at any time, consistent with all applicable collective bargaining agreements and/or applicable laws. This manual and the policies and procedures set forth herein are not intended to create or constitute a contract between this organization and its employees, or to change the nature of the employment relationship between the organization and its employees, which, unless governed by an applicable collective bargaining agreement, is at will.

Sexual & Other Harassment

WCCS strongly condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment, including but not limited to sexual harassment, in the workplace and school building or at school-sponsored activities and events. WCCS will act to investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment and to discipline any student or employee who harasses a student or employee of the district.

Sexual harassment is against the law. It also creates an unpleasant and unproductive working environment. All employees are reminded that such behavior is absolutely unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action or discharge. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical contact or communication of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining or retaining employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting any aspect of employment; or
- That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or education environment.

The following activities are examples of possible "sexual harassment." All may be considered serious enough to warrant immediate discipline or discharge; however, this in no way constitutes a complete list of possible forms of sexual harassment.

Threatening retribution or promising benefits in return for sexual favors.

- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact. The person being touched is the judge of what contact is unwanted.
- Unwanted sexual advances.
- Comments concerning an employee's sexual habits, sexual preference, or sexual desirability, whether directed directly at him or her or not.
- Offensive talk about sex, gender, women, men, or sexuality.
- The use of demeaning or offensive words when referring to men or women.
- The display of pornographic or other highly offensive material.
- Any other activity that creates an unpleasant or offensive working environment or that interferes with work performance, because of a person's gender.

It makes no difference if the harassment is "just joking" or "teasing" or "playful." Jokes may be just as offensive as any other type of harassment, and will be dealt with in the same manner. Harassment by peers is just as strictly prohibited as harassment by supervisors. No employee may engage in any behavior that creates an offensive environment for any other employee. All employees are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that comports with this policy. In particular, every employee has an affirmative duty to keep the work area free from any form of harassment.

Fingerprinting General Information

[Chapter 180 of the Laws of 2000](#), the Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) requires that applicants for teaching and administrative certification and prospective employees of covered schools (school districts, charter schools, and BOCES) undergo a fingerprint-supported criminal history background check. The Commissioner's Regulations ([8 NYCRR §80-1.11 and Part 87](#)) (http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/ospra/part87regulations_oct01) clarify who must comply with the fingerprinting requirements.

The legislation and regulations also establish certain due process steps that must be followed in the event that the Department determines, based on its review of an individual's criminal history record, that his or her clearance for employment will be denied or that his or her application for certification will be subject to further review. The legislation and regulations also identify how to purge an individual's fingerprints and data from the Department's files. For further information, please go to <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/ospra/index.html>.

Emergency Conditional Appointments

Upon recommendation of the Principal, the Board of Trustees may make an emergency conditional appointment of a prospective employee. Prior to the commencement of such appointment, WCCS will obtain a signed statement from the prospective employee indicating whether, to the best of his/her knowledge; the prospective employee has a pending criminal charge or criminal conviction in any jurisdiction. Then, to ensure the safety of students that have contact with an employee with an emergency conditional appointment, WCCS will provide heightened administrative supervision.

Hiring

All new open positions must be approved by the Board. All applications are filtered through the Director of Operations who reviews qualifications and forwards qualified candidates to the Principal and interview team to conduct a panel interview. If a candidate passes the panel interview, the panel chooses finalists to move onto the second round. The second round of candidates will be asked to teach a demonstration lesson. The finalists will interview with the President of WCCS and Principal, and a final decision will be made. Employment references will be conducted by the Director of Operations, as appropriate, prior to making an offer of employment. Upon employment by WCCS, all employees are required to complete any and all necessary financial forms and benefit applications as deemed necessary by the Principal or by his or her designee. Employment qualifications as stated by an employee or prospective employee on an employment application or related information may be verified. Falsification of such information may be grounds for rejection of a prospective employee or dismissal of a current employee.

Hiring of Family Members- Anti-Nepotism Policy

No Westminster Community Charter School employee, officer, or member of the Board of Trustees may participate in any decision specifically to appoint, hire promote, discipline or discharge a relative for any position at, for or within the school.

No Westminster Community Charter School employee, officer, or member of the Board of Trustees may directly supervise a relative in the performance of the relative's official powers or duties.

Nothing in this rule shall be deemed or construed to prohibit or discourage the employment of a qualified individual by reason of the fact that a near relative of the individual is an employee, officer, or member of the Board of Trustees of Westminster Community Charter School. Nor shall anything in this policy be construed to add any additional qualification or disqualification to the requirements for employment.

Change of Personal Information/Personnel Inquiries

Employees are required to notify the Director of Operations as soon as possible of any change in name, family status, address, telephone number, or other information affecting personal data held or used by WCCS. Any personnel inquiries must be directed to Director of Operations. No other staff member is authorized to respond either verbally or in writing.

Confidentiality

Protecting our school's information is the responsibility of every employee and we all share a common interest in making sure it is not improperly or accidentally disclosed. Do not discuss Westminster Community Charter School's confidential business with anyone who does not work for the School. All student and school information is confidential. Protection of student privacy is a requirement under the law.

Nothing in this section shall be interpreted or applied as limiting an employee's right to engage in protected concerted activity as provided by the New York State Taylor Law.

Family Medical Leave (FMLA)

Refer to Collective Bargaining Agreement

Maternity Leave

Refer to Collective Bargaining Agreement

Military Service Leave

Refer to Collective Bargaining Agreement

Workers' Compensation

On-the-job injuries are covered by our Workers Compensation insurance policy. This insurance is provided at no cost to the employee. If an employee is injured on the job, no matter how slight the employee shall report the incident immediately to the Director of Operations. Any employee sustaining an injury either on school property or at a school related function at another site is required to complete an **"Accident Report"** and submit it to Main Office. The Director of Operations shall then give the injured employee a C-3 form to complete and send to the insurance carrier.

Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize an employee's claim. We ask for an employee's assistance in alerting management to any condition, which could lead to or contribute to an employee accident.

Westminster Community Charter School will abide with all requirements set forth by the state's Workers' Compensation law and other applicable laws or regulations. No adverse action against an employee in retaliation for filing a Workers' Compensation claim will occur.

The amount of benefits payable and the duration of payment depend upon the nature of an employee's injury or illness.

Accident Reports

In the unfortunate event of an accident, Accident Reports must be filled out immediately after the accident and returned to Main Office for the Principal's signature. They then must be submitted to Director of Operations. Any subsequent doctor bills must be submitted directly to Director of Operations to be processed for payment. Student accident reports must be also be completed immediately after the accident. Section II of the accident report must be completed in full by the parent and then submitted to Director of Operations.

IV. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Health Insurance

Each employee is responsible for (understanding) his/her own health insurance coverage in accordance with his/her Contract agreement. (Refer to appropriate contract for complete details) An open enrollment period shall be held annually for purposes of enabling employees to enroll or resign from a plan in November of each year. Employees must prepare and submit the required forms within 30 days of hire date or during periods of open enrollment.

Employees must notify the school within 30 days any time there is a change in marital status, status of dependents, or if the employee or spouse turns 65.

Dental Insurance

Refer to Collective Bargaining Agreement

Pension

Refer to New York State Teacher Retirement System (TRS) or Employee Retirement System (ERS)

Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)

The Buffalo City School District has contracted with Employee Resources to provide an Employee Assistance Program for you. EAP is an assessment/referral service provided to help you and your family members when you have problems, which may be interfering with your everyday functioning. We all have problems and we usually handle them, but occasionally we need help. Employee Resources has several EAP offices with day and evening hours for your convenience.

Sick Time

Refer to Collective Bargaining Agreement

Personal Time

Refer to Collective Bargaining Agreement

V. SCHOOL POLICIES

Personnel Files

Westminster Community Charter School is required by law to maintain and retain certain personal information about each employee. Since personnel files contain information of a personal and private nature, these files are confidential and are kept secure at all times and have limited access. All personnel files are the property of Westminster Community Charter School, and can only be handled by the school Principal or a designated school official. Employees may be granted access to personnel files with advance request to the Director of Operations. Files may not be removed from the main office and no content from the files may be copied or memorialized in any way.

Maintaining up-to-date information about employees is critical in order to remain in compliance with all federal and state laws and aid employees and/or their families in matters of personal emergency. Employees are responsible to promptly provide the School changes in name, address, marital status and number of dependents. Westminster Community Charter School will not be responsible for any errors that may result from failure of any employee to update personal information.

Staff & Faculty Absences

All teachers and/or staff members will enter their own absences for personal leave and sick days on AESOP. Each teacher and/or staff member should know his or her ID number and PIN number in order to access the AESOP system by phone or on the Internet. When entering an absence by phone, please wait until you receive a confirmation number before you terminate the phone call. If you access AESOP on the Internet, (<http://www.aesoponline.com>), you will be able to enter absences and check your absence schedule. The office clerical staff will NOT enter absences for any staff member unless directed by an administrator.

Except for emergencies and unforeseen instances, it is recommended that staff refrain from submitting an absence request for a day preceding or following a holiday or during the NYS Testing windows, as provided by NYSED and the school's calendar. In case of emergencies or extenuating circumstances, a doctor's note or other documentation to substantiate said absence is required. (Please refer to the BTF contract handbook for further details).

Excessive absenteeism or lateness may result in disciplinary action. If an employee is absent for 2 days without notifying Westminster Community Charter School, it is assumed the employee has voluntarily abandoned an employee's position with Westminster Community Charter School, and the employee will be considered to have voluntarily terminated his/her employment with the School and will be removed from the payroll.

Return of WCCS Materials & Property

An employee who is terminated or who resigns must return all WCCS, classroom and/or office keys, identification, security cards and codes, and materials and supplies in such employee's possession to the Principal. Further, no materials or supplies belonging to WCCS shall be removed prior to or at termination. No information or copies of information, including but in no way limited to files, memos, computer-stored items, lists, or other similar information, may be taken by such employee without the express permission of the Principal.

Release of Information Concerning Former Employees

Westminster Community Charter School shall not release information concerning the employment records, personnel file or past performance of a former employee, unless such information is required to be disclosed by law. Only the initial and final dates of employment and the position held shall be provided through a written response to a written request. Additional employment related information will not be released without the written consent of the employee, unless it is required by law.

Classroom Furniture/Decorations/Bulletin Boards

All teachers are expected to maintain a colorful room reflective of your students' work, and the current class projects. Teachers may and are encouraged to decorate their classrooms making them warm, inviting and attractive.

Corkboard strips are provided in all classrooms and hallways for teachers to display posters, student work, and other decorations.

Rooms should be neat and organized and stay in the format they are laid out. Please have your students assume responsibility for keeping the rooms, corridors, and building and school grounds clean and graffiti free.

Drug/Alcohol Policy

Westminster Community Charter School prohibits the consumption, sharing and/or selling, use and/or possession of illegal drugs, counterfeit and designer drugs or alcoholic beverages in the workplace and at any off site school sponsored event. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the school.

Pursuant to federal and state laws, tobacco use shall not be permitted and no person shall use tobacco on school grounds. "School grounds" includes any building, structure and surrounding outdoor grounds of the Westminster Community Charter School legally defined property boundaries as registered in the County Clerk's and City Hall Offices. Smoking is also prohibited in any school-owned vehicle and at any off site school sponsored event.

Information about any drug and alcohol counseling and/or rehabilitation programs shall be made available to employees, through the Employee Assistance Program. Confidentiality shall be insured as required by state and federal law.

Violations of this policy will lead to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

School Calendar

Unless otherwise decided, Westminster Community Charter School will follow the Buffalo Public Schools calendar. That is, the school year shall consist of a maximum of 42 consecutive calendar weeks commencing no earlier than Labor Day with a maximum of 188 days therein on which teacher attendance is required. However, an amendment to the current CBA would take precedence. New personnel may be required to attend additional orientation sessions. For more information regarding the school calendar and teaching schedule, see Article VIII of the BTF Union contract

School Day

As per the BTF Union contract (July 1, 2016), and effective beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year, the hours of service for teachers shall not exceed seven hours and fifteen minutes. The twenty-five additional minutes will be added at the end of the day. The starting time shall begin no earlier than 7:50 and end no later than 4:05.

Should Westminster Community Charter School ask teachers and they agree to work beyond the required school day hours; teachers will be paid the prevailing hourly rate. For rates, please refer to Article XXV of the BTF contract.

For the 2018-2019 school year, the school day will begin at 7:55 am and end at 3:45 pm. Teachers will be paid the prevailing hourly rate for the additional time as per Article XXV of the BTF contract. **Teachers, teacher aides/assistants and substitutes will be required to sign in and report to their post by 7:55am.**

Failure to sign in on time without notifying the office of a reason for tardiness is subject to formal reprimand or warning by a supervisor for “infraction of rules or delinquency in professional performance” or loss of pay as per Article XII of the BTF Union contract.

Staff Meetings

Faculty meetings shall be limited to ten (10) and shall, except in emergencies, not exceed one hour after school. General faculty meetings shall be held only when the matters for discussion concern the general faculty and will not be called when the matters involved can be handled in a less time-consuming matter.

The Federation shall be given an opportunity at Building Faculty Meetings to present brief reports and announcements.

Five (5) faculty meetings each school year, but not more than one (1) each month, may be utilized in whole or in part for staff development purposes without additional compensation. The agenda for such meetings shall be prepared at least ten (10) days in advance, after discussion with the Federation Building Committee.

Evaluation of Personnel

Please refer to Collective Bargaining Agreement

Lunch and Prep Periods

Teachers will be assigned a 30-minute lunch period. All teachers will receive a 45-minute individual planning time each day. Classroom teachers have one additional prep period for PLC time.

Sign-In Sheets

The daily sign-in sheet for teachers is located on the counter in the main office. Sign in by placing the time of your arrival, your initials in the proper day's column and if you are regular or part time hours.

Staff Mailboxes

Staff mailboxes are located in the Main Office. Mailboxes are in alphabetical order. If you need assistance locating a mailbox please ask the office staff for assistance. Please be sure to check your box regularly as time sensitive information can be placed in there.

Room Keys/Fob Cards

Teachers and staff are provided with a room key and fob. Fobs are to be used when entering and exiting the building between the hours of 7 am and 5 pm. In addition, keys to the classroom doors are provided. The fob and keys are to be kept with the staff member at all times throughout the school day, no student should be in possession of keys or fob at any time. Before leaving the building classroom keys should be hung in the key box located in the Main Office behind. This helps daily operations and procedures run smoothly if someone calls in sick. We are able to provide the substitute with your room key to get into your classroom and get organized for the day in a timely manner. Loss of fob will result in replacement fee to be paid for by employee.

Lockdown Keys

For lockdown procedures please make sure you check a lockdown key is in the assigned classroom. If you do not please contact the Main Office

Leaving the Building During School Hours

If at any time, a staff member leaves the building including during his/her lunch period, you must sign out upon leaving and sign in upon returning to the building in the Main Office.

Inclement Weather Policy

At times, emergencies such as severe weather can disrupt school operations. These circumstances may require the closing of the school. In the event that such an emergency occurs during nonworking hours, television stations (2, 4 and 7) will be notified and an email will be sent to all staff members to notify of such closures. When looking for a Westminster School closure, please be advised that if Buffalo Public Schools are closed Westminster will be closed.

Transportation of Students in Private Vehicles

Staff members shall be discouraged from using private vehicles to transport students to and from school. The owner of the car is liable for any mishaps occurring while transporting children to and from school.

Acceptable Use Policy

All technology (tablets, Chrome books, desktop computers or/and Mac books) remain property of Westminster Community Charter School until the teacher has left or turns their device back into the school and are subject to the same acceptable use guidelines as all other WCCS equipment. All applications (apps), files and documents stored on the device are the property of Westminster Community Charter School. WCCS reserves the right to confiscate and search a device to ensure compliance with the Acceptable Use Policy. Westminster Community Charter School is not responsible for the financial loss of any personal files that are deleted. Any staff member who leaves Westminster Community Charter School and does not return devices name may be turned over to the local police for theft.

Teacher Responsibilities:

Caring For Devices:

- Teachers must purchase a protective case; WCCS is not responsible for financial reimbursement.
- The screen is made of glass and therefore is subject to cracking and breaking if misused. Never drop nor place heavy objects (books, laptops, etc.) on top of devices.
- Only a soft cloth or approved laptop screen cleaning solution is to be used to clean the screen.
- Defacing of the device, including the WCCS tag, in any way is prohibited (stickers, markers, etc.).
- To extend battery life, turn off and secure the device after work is completed.
- Do not subject the device to extreme heat or cold (do not store in vehicles).

Safeguarding and Maintaining as an Academic Tool

- Preloaded apps may not be deleted and they must be updated periodically.
- Memory space is limited. Academic content takes precedence over personal files and apps.
- Non-educational content is for personal use only and should not be shared in any manner.
- The whereabouts of the device should be known at all times. It is a teacher's responsibility to keep their devices safe and secure.

Lost, Damaged or Stolen device

- If the device is lost, stolen, or damaged, WCCS must be notified immediately.
- Teachers are responsible for the cost for replacing a device that is lost, stolen, or damaged.

Illegal Activities - Use of the school's internet/E-mail accounts for financial or commercial gain or for any illegal activity.

Violating Copyrights - The items downloaded and synced to the device must be in compliance with Federal copyright laws.

Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access – Teachers should set a passcode to their device to prevent others from misusing their device.

Malicious Use/Vandalism - Any attempt to destroy hardware, software or data.

Jailbreaking/Rooting – Jailbreaking/Rooting is the process of which removes any limitations placed on the device by Apple. Once jailbroken, users are able to download additional applications, extensions and themes that are not otherwise available. Jailbreaking/ Rooting results in a less secure device and is strictly prohibited.

Email/Computer Technology Policy

In accordance with the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Internet activity on school networks is electronically filtered and monitored. Access to Internet sites and services is filtered to prevent access to inappropriate content (i.e. pornography, P2P networks, hate groups, violence, illegal activities, extremist groups and cults, online advertising, etc.) to the highest degree possible. Internet activity is logged and monitored, in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for participation in the federal E-rate program, to help assure the safety and security of students and staff.

Users will use information systems for authorized purposes only. The system is monitored and controls have been put into place to safeguard the information stored, transmitted, and displayed on its information systems. The information systems are the property of the WCCS and BPS and users should have no expectation of privacy.

Respect the privacy of others and security of the Buffalo Public Schools System.

- Users will use only the login credentials (i.e., user IDs) issued to them by the school district.
- Users will not share the passwords provided or assigned to them with other individuals.
- Users will not try to learn passwords of other users or information system administrators.
- Users will not access, store, or cause to be transmitted offensive, hateful, harassing, insulting, false or defamatory, sexually explicit, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate information.
- Users will not use information systems in a way that will preempt the work activities or duties of others.
- Users will not copy, download, install, or distribute licensed software in violation of copyright laws or licensing agreements.
- Users will use copyrighted materials in accordance with the “fair use” doctrine (Title 17 USC § 107) and will not copy, distribute, or transmit a third party’s information in violation of copyright laws.
- Users must not conceal their identity when using the Buffalo Public Schools System, except when the option of anonymous access is explicitly authorized.
- Users will not install on or connect to any personally owned or a third party’s software, computer equipment, peripheral, or network connection without authorization.
- Users may use a personally owned computer to connect to information systems made available for access via the Internet; however, users will not store information on any such system without authorization.
- Users will not bypass any security system or feature put in place to protect, monitor, or restrict access to information or information systems (e.g., using a proxy server to access a web site blocked by content filters).
- Users will not create, download, install, or use software or equipment to test the weaknesses of, infiltrate, circumvent, provide “back door” access to, or cause damage to information systems.
- Users will not remove or make modifications to information systems, or copy or make changes to system configuration files, without authorization.
- Users will not use unauthorized software, devices, or settings (e.g., disabling remote access or installing an unauthorized encryption program) to prevent authorized individuals from accessing information or information systems.

- Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to, disrupt, interfere with, or destroy information or information systems.
- Users will not use WCCS information systems for unauthorized purposes including but not limited to: playing games unrelated to academic activities; personal business endeavors; illegal purposes or activities in violation of civil or criminal laws at the federal, state, or local levels (e.g. promoting a pyramid scheme, distributing illegal obscenity, infringing copyrights, making bomb threats, solicitation or lobbying activities, discriminatory activities, receiving, transmitting, or possessing child pornography); or other activities prohibited by WCCS policy.
- Users will limit incidental personal use not related to work. Incidental personal use is permitted only during duty-free time and only if the use has no tangible impact on the function of WCCS information systems and the use otherwise conforms to the requirements of this policy.
- Users will not waste information system resources including computer processing time and storage, network capacity, and information technology supplies provided by the WCCS (e.g., storing large amounts of music, video or picture files, downloading music, video, and picture files, playing computer games, sending or receiving large amounts of non-work related emails, etc.)
- Users will not share or enable unauthorized individuals to access private information of the school including but not limited to sensitive information related to students and employees.
- Users will not transfer or transmit sensitive information to another individual without explicit authorization. When authorized, users will apply appropriate safeguards to prevent unauthorized access to the information.
- Users will not share information with other individuals that could allow those individuals to gain unauthorized access to information systems of the Buffalo Public Schools System.
- Users will not use personal electronic messaging accounts not provided by WCCS for any official WCCS communication.
- Users will take appropriate precautions to safeguard the information and information systems assigned to them, on and off WCCS premises, to prevent loss, theft, damage, or unauthorized use.
- Users will promptly report any known or suspected loss, theft, unauthorized disclosure, or unauthorized access to the schools network and or property.
- Users aware of an alleged violation of the AUP, who may or may not have been harmed by the alleged violation, may report the matter to the Director of Information Technology.

Use of Classroom Phones

Classroom phones are to be used exclusively for school business. Please be considerate of this when making personal calls. Messages will be placed in teacher's mailbox for incoming personal phone calls to the school. Only emergency calls will be transferred to rooms. It is the staff member's responsibility to check your mailbox before leaving at the end of the day. If you are expecting an important call please alert the office staff. Any personal calls should be made during free periods. Students should not be sent to the office to use the phone and students should not answer the classroom phones.

Use of Cellular Phones

Staff by agreement with unions, may have cell phones in their possession. However, also by agreement, staff may not use cell phones for personal reasons while on duty. This includes receiving calls. No staff member should be using a cell phone in the presence of children. Cell phones should not ring when working with students. Staff may NOT take a picture or video of any child or employee without expressed written

permission. The student photo release form only covers school wide sanctioned events, advertising and marketing which will be used by Westminster Community Charter School, Westminster Foundation and Buffalo Promise Neighborhood accounts, NOT personal accounts.

Whistle Blower Policy

If any employee reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of *Westminster Community Charter School* is in violation of law, a written complaint must be filed by that employee with the *Principal* or the *President of the Board of Trustees*.

It is the intent of *Westminster Community Charter School* to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization and the underlying purpose of this policy is to support the organization's goal of legal compliance. The support of all employees is necessary to achieving compliance with various laws and regulations. An employee is protected from retaliation provided that the employee brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to the attention of *Westminster Community Charter School* and provides the *Westminster Community Charter School* with a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity. The protection described below is only available to employees that comply with this requirement,

Westminster Community Charter School will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of *Westminster Community Charter School*, or of another individual or entity with whom *Westminster Community Charter School* has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, or a clear mandate of public policy.

Westminster Community Charter School will not retaliate against employees who disclose or threaten to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any activity, policy, or practice of *Westminster Community Charter School* that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule, or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate of public policy concerning the health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment.

Code of Ethics

§ 1. Title; statement of purpose.

- A. This Part II- Section 3(1) of the Governance Plan shall be known as the "Code of Ethics of the Westminster Community Charter School," and is referred to herein as the "Code of Ethics."
- B. Pursuant to the provisions of § 2854 of the Education Law and § 806 of the General Municipal Law, the Trustees of the Westminster Community Charter School recognizes that there are rules of ethical conduct for public officers and employees which must be observed if a high degree of moral conduct is to be obtained and if public confidence is to be maintained in our charter school. It is the purpose of this Code of Ethics to promulgate these rules of ethical conduct for the officers and employees of the Westminster Community Charter School. These rules shall serve as a guide for official conduct of the officers and employees of the Westminster Community Charter School. The rules of ethical conduct of this Code of Ethics, as adopted, shall not conflict with but shall be in addition to any other general or special law relating to ethical conduct and interest in contracts of Educational Corporations, including § 715 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and entities that qualify under § 501(c)(3) of the Income Tax Code.

§ 2. Definitions.

As used in this Code of Ethics, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS — A spouse, minor child or dependent of a School officer, School board member, or School employee.

SCHOOL CONSULTANT — Any individual, group or firm which renders services on behalf of the School

to any School officer, School board, or School Committee.

SCHOOL OFFICER, SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER or SCHOOL EMPLOYEE — An officer or employee of the Westminster Community Charter School, whether paid or unpaid. Should any School officer be subject to another code of ethics or professional conduct, the School officer shall be subject to the conditions of both codes, and the more stringent standards will apply.

§ 3. Conflict of interest prohibited.

- A. No School officer, School board member, School employee or School consultant shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engage in any business or transaction or professional activity, or incur any obligation of any nature, which is in conflict with, or might reasonably tend to conflict with, the proper discharge of his duties in the public interest. In supplementation of the foregoing, pursuant to § 801 of New York State General Municipal Law, and subject to the exceptions set forth in § 802 of the General Municipal Law, as such sections may be amended or re-designated from time to time, no School officer, School board member or School employee shall have an interest in any contract with the School, when such School officer, School board member or School employee, individually or as a member of a board, has the power or duty to negotiate payment thereunder, audit bills or claims under the contract, or appoint an officer or employee who has any of the powers or duties set forth above; and no School Treasurer, School accountant, his or her deputy, nor a School employee within his or her department, shall have an interest in a bank or trust company designated as a depository, paying agent, registration agent or for investment of funds of the School. See Appendix A of this Code of Ethics for the texts of § 801 and § 802 of the General Municipal Law as of the date of adoption hereof. Editor's Note: Said Appendix A is on file in the office of the School Secretary. The provisions of this section shall in no event be construed to preclude the payment of lawful compensation and necessary expenses of any School officer, School board member or School employee in one or more positions of public employment, the holding of which is not prohibited by law.
- B. If such a conflict occurs, the School officer, School board member, School employee or School consultant shall make known to all concerned parties the nature of such conflict and shall refrain from any participation whatsoever in the matter so as to avoid the conflict. In all cases of potential conflict, the School CEO or President and all board members shall be made aware of the situation by the person in conflict along with any other concerned parties.
- C. No School officer, School board member, School employee or School consultant shall:
- (1) Appear as attorney or counsel against the interests of the School in any matter in which the School is a party or complainant.
 - (2) Solicit any nonelected officer or employee of the School to participate in an election campaign or to pay or promise to pay any assessment, subscription, or contribution to a political party, political party organization, or election campaign.
 - (3) Solicit participation in an election campaign or payment or promise of payment of any assessment, subscription, or contribution to a political party, political party organization, or election campaign from any person who, to the knowledge of the School officer or employee, has, or within the previous 12 months has had, any business dealing with the School.
 - (4) Hold the office of chairman or vice-chairman in a political party or political party organization. This Subsection C(4) shall apply only to appointed, paid public officials.
 - (5) Direct or cause any School officer, School board member or School employee to do or perform any service or work outside of public work or employment, or to accept any such service or work, nor shall any such officer, member or employee offer to perform any such service or work, for such officer or employee.
 - (6) Request of members of the School Board, School officers or department heads or employees that any individual receive preferential consideration in connection with the provision of services or any appointment.

(7) Request or permit the use of School-owned vehicles, equipment, materials or property for personal convenience or profit, except when such services are available to the public generally or are provided as a School policy for the use of such officer, School board member or employee in the conduct of official business, or as otherwise permitted by prior written agreement or contractual language.

D. The provisions of Subsections B and C above shall not be interpreted or construed as precluding any School officer, board member, employee or consultant from contribution to, or participating in, any political campaign, whether federal, state, county or local, as a private citizen.

§ 4. Disclosure of interest.

Any School board member, School Officer, School employee or School consultant who has any financial interest, direct or indirect, in any contract with the School, or in the sale of any land, material, supplies or services to the School or in any contractor supplying the School, shall make the interest known, in writing, to the School Board. The conflicted person shall not in any way participate in discussion of the contract.

§ 5. Disclosure of confidential information.

No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant, whether paid or unpaid, shall disclose confidential information acquired by him/her in the course of his/her official duties, nor use such information to advance his/her financial or other private interests.

§ 6. Standards of conduct.

A. No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall receive, or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the School, School Board or any committee thereof over which he has jurisdiction or to which he has the power to appoint any member, officer or employee.

B. No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall receive, or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the School, School Board or any committee thereof whereby his compensation is to be dependent or contingent upon any action by the School, School Board or any committee thereof with respect to such matter, provided that this paragraph shall not prohibit the fixing at any time of fees based upon the reasonable value of the services rendered.

C. No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall accept other employment which will impair his/her independence of judgment in the exercise of his/her official School duties.

D. No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall accept employment or engage in business or professional activity which will require him/her to disclose confidential information gained by reason of official position or authority.

E. No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall use or attempt to use his/her official position to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions for himself/herself or others.

F. No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall engage in any transaction as a representative of the Westminster Community Charter School with any business entity in which he/she has a direct or indirect financial interest that might reasonably tend to conflict with the proper discharge of his/her official duties.

G. No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall by his/her conduct give reasonable basis for the impression that another can improperly influence him/her or unduly enjoy his/her favor in the performance of his/her official duties or that he/she is affected by kinship, rank, position or influence of any party or person.

H. A School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall abstain from making personal investments in enterprises which he/she has reason to believe may be directly involved in decisions to be made by him/her or which will otherwise create substantial conflict between his/her duty in the public

interest and his/her private interest.

- I. No School board member, School officer, School employee or School consultant shall accept any gifts or gratuities having a value of \$75 or more whether in the form of money or in kind in any way relating to his/her official duties. The recipient of such gift or gratuity shall immediately return same to the giver and shall notify the Westminster Community Charter School Board of Trustees of the incident.

§ 7. Waivers; complaints.

- A. Issuance of waivers. The School Board shall grant a waiver in those situations in which the School Board believes the exception would serve the public interest, upon a unanimous vote of the School Board. Waivers shall be in writing and state the grounds on which they are granted.
- B. Filing of a complaint. Any person may file a complaint alleging a violation of this Code by writing to the Board Secretary, except if such complaint pertains to the School Board Secretary or his/her office, then to the School President's office.

§ 8. Investigation of alleged violations.

- A. Upon receipt of a sworn complaint by any person alleging any violation of this Code of Ethics or of any local ethics law, or upon determining on its own initiative that a violation of this Code of Ethics or of any local ethics act may exist, the School Board shall have the power and duty to appoint an Ethics Committee to conduct any investigation necessary to carry out the provision of this Code of Ethics. The appointed Ethics Committee may administer oaths or affirmations, subpoena witnesses, compel their attendance and require the production of any books or records which it may deem relevant and material.
- B. The accused shall be notified in writing regarding the complaint and shall have the right to appear before the appointed Ethics Committee to explain or defend his/her position regarding the complaint.
- C. The School Board is not permitted to conduct an investigation of any of its members. Should the School Board receive notification alleging that the Board or any of its members has violated any provision of this Code or any other law, the Board shall promptly refer the matter to the county or state ethics board?
- D. The appointed Ethics Committee shall state in writing its advisory opinion or disposition of every sworn complaint it receives and of every investigation it conducts and shall set forth the reasons for the disposition. Upon the final disposition of a complaint, all such statements and all sworn complaints shall be public records and shall be indexed and maintained on file by the School Board Secretary. Prior to final disposition, all complaints, statements or other evidence shall remain confidential.
- E. Upon receipt of a complaint alleging a violation of this Code of Ethics by an individual that is a member of an association or society that maintains a grievance committee and has a grievance procedure in effect, the School Board shall forward said complaint to said grievance committee for an advisory opinion of any violation of the association or society code of ethics. Upon receipt of the advisory opinion, the School Board shall adopt, reject, or adopt in part the advisory opinion of the association or society and shall thereafter adopt its own decision.
- F. In its discretion, the School Board may refer a matter to the authority, person or body authorized by law to impose disciplinary actions or to the appropriate prosecutor, if in the course of an investigation or hearing the School Board determines that such a referral is appropriate. If such a referral is made, the School Board may suspend its investigation or adjourn its hearing, as the case may be, pending a determination by such authority, person, body or prosecutor.

§ 9. Recommendation of disciplinary action.

- A. After receiving the advisory opinion, the School Board may conduct a hearing on the matter in accordance with applicable laws. Upon completion of such hearing, the School Board may request an advisory opinion and recommendation of disciplinary action from the appointed Ethics Committee, which may recommend as follows:
 - (1) Any School officer, School consultant or employee who engages in any action that violates any provision of this Code may be warned or reprimanded or suspended or removed from office or employment by the

School Board, pursuant to applicable law, or by the person or body authorized by law to impose such sanctions.

B. If a hearing is held, the School Board shall conduct and complete the hearing with reasonable promptness.

§ 10. Advisory Opinions.

A. Upon written request of any board, department, or individual School officer or School employee, the School Board may render written advisory opinions with respect to the interpretation or application of any provision of this Code in a generic sense.

B. Opinions and requests for opinions shall be public records and shall be indexed and maintained on file in an appropriate manner by the School Board Secretary.

§ 11. Unconstitutionality or Illegality.

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, word, section or part of this School Code of Ethics shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, word section or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered.

**For Personnel Inquiries please refer to your appropriate contract or speak with
Alisha Baggiano-Gramza, WCCS Operations (716)352-6581**

M&T Contact Information:

Amy Mesi- supplies, travel, special orders
amesi@mtb.com

Olga Tschernenko- payroll, reimbursements, budget, all financials
otschernenko@mtb.com

Chain of Command at WCCS

<u>STAFF MEMBER</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
Robert Ross	Principal	716-816-3450 or 3454
LaMonica Harris	Assistant Principal	716-816-3450 or 3592
Angela Conway	Assistant Principal	716-816-3450

Chain of Command at remote Administration Office

<u>STAFF MEMBER</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
Pam Hokanson	President	(716) 848-5634
Olga Tschernenko	Fiscal Officer	(716) 842-5983

VI. Certification of Receipt of Staff Handbook by Employees

I have received a copy of WCCS's *Staff Handbook* and understand that I am responsible for becoming familiar with the policies described in it. I understand that the information contained in it represents management guidelines only, which may be modified from time to time. I understand that neither the *Handbook's* policies nor any representations made by a management representative, at the time of hire or subsequently, are to be interpreted as a contract between WCCS and any of its employees. I further understand that my employment is voluntarily entered into, that I am free to resign at any time and that WCCS may terminate the employment relationship whenever it determines that it is in its best interest to do so as governed by applicable law and/or the collective bargaining agreements.

Employee Signature

Date