

Procedures-Guidelines for School/Agency/Program Volunteers

The MESD supports the utilization of community volunteers to augment and supplement the MESD's regular instructional program. The purpose of the MESD Volunteer Program is to enhance educational opportunities for students by enriching the experiences beyond those the school can provide. Volunteers can provide more effective utilization of staff time and skills, give time for more individual attention to students, and promote greater school-community involvement.

Like other building employees, volunteers are responsible to the school/agency/program supervisor.

Goals

1. To provide volunteer help to meet the needs of individual students effectively and to enrich the curriculum.
2. To assist staff in providing student programs.
3. To increase student motivation and learning.
4. To enlist and strengthen the cooperation of parents in the education of their students.
5. To develop an environment that encourages friendly two-way communication between home and school.

Recruitment

No offer of voluntary service by any otherwise qualified person shall be rejected on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, citizenship status, political affiliation, disability, or other basis of unlawful discrimination. Finding a volunteer who is suitable to the required task is essential. A positive and proactive recruiting program may involve, but not be limited to:

1. Retired staff;
2. Parents;
3. Community members;
4. Advisory committees;
5. Local businesses, corporations, civic clubs and churches.

The acceptance and utilization of the services of any person on a voluntary basis shall be at the discretion of the MESD and such services may be discontinued at any time.

Qualifications

Volunteers will demonstrate the following personal attributes:

1. A sense of responsibility;
2. Enthusiasm;
3. Good listening skills;
4. Skills commensurate with a specific district need;
5. Ability to follow directions;
6. An understanding of confidentiality requirements.

The MESD shall conduct background checks on volunteers before utilizing their services. This may include, but is not limited to, conducting criminal history verification and calling references. Fees may be at the expense of the volunteer.

Screening Training

The amount and type of training the volunteer receives will depend upon his/her past experience, the particular needs of the volunteer and the amount of skill required to do the job. At a minimum training should include:

1. Orientation on the specific skills needed to do the job;
2. Short-term activities, training that will be ongoing and will be provided as needed;
3. Long-term activities, training for activities that occur on a daily basis;
4. Confidentiality requirements;
5. Board policies, administrative regulations, school rules and routines;
6. The role of the volunteer;
7. Volunteers will be informed of the district's supervisory structure for the volunteer program.

Screening

The process of determining the suitability of a volunteer will include the following:

1. A criminal records check;
2. Completion of an interview designed to match skills with MESD needs;
3. Submission of two letters of reference.

Expectations

1. Volunteers must maintain a high level of confidentiality about information gained while performing service to the MESD.
2. Volunteers shall adhere to applicable laws and MESD policies and procedures.
3. Volunteers shall perform their services under the direction of an administrator or supervisor.
4. Volunteers shall not engage in political or religious activities while performing service for the MESD.
5. Volunteers must use normal registration procedures upon entering buildings, including signing in and wearing appropriate identification, as required.
6. Volunteers are covered by Worker's Compensation so long as they follow building sign-in procedures.
7. Volunteers are asked to maintain the professional attitude of respecting the confidentiality of all information and activities related to students and other personnel in the school.
8. Volunteers are asked to abide by the same MESD policies pertaining to appropriate behavior at work as MESD employees, including, but not limited to smoking, profanity, discipline and promotion of personal religious doctrine.
9. Orientation and training programs will be offered to volunteers. Staff will also be offered training on how to work with volunteers.
10. Because dependability is so important to the success of the volunteer program, volunteers are asked to call their immediate supervisor as early as possible if unable to fulfill their volunteer obligation.
11. During training and orientation, volunteers will be informed of the following rules:
 - a. Teachers are always responsible for students assigned to them;
 - b. Teachers are responsible for general planning, individual student diagnosis and prescription decisions;

- c. Because of their relationship to both students and curriculum, teachers and principals/supervisors must remain the final judges of whether a particular volunteer may work and must be free at any time to discontinue the volunteer's service;
- d. Volunteers may ask for reassignment.

12. Volunteers are not to administer student discipline.

Employee Volunteers

MESD employees may not volunteer to perform services on behalf of the MESD unless they are considered "bona fide volunteers." An employee is a bona fide volunteer if:

- 1. The employee's services are offered freely and without pressure or coercion, direct or implied, from the district; and
- 2. The employee does not engage in the same or similar type of volunteer services as he/she performs in his/her regular job.

As provided by law, employees will not be permitted to volunteer to perform their regular work duties or the same type of duties off the clock and without compensation. The requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) cannot be waived by the employee or the MESD. Employees who volunteer to perform services for the MESD will be required to complete the MESD's School/Agency/Program Volunteer Agreement (IICC-AR(2)) verifying that they are volunteering to perform services and such services are not performed in the course of their regular employment.