Gretna Public Schools
11717 S 216th St, Gretna, NE 68028
Phone: (402) 332-3265



2023 – 2024

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

MRS. CARISSA DICKES - PRINCIPAL

Gretna Public Schools
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Gretna Public Schools

Mission Statement

The mission of Gretna Public Schools is to accept all students unconditionally and maximize their potential.

Gretna Public Schools

Goals

1. To develop a positive educational environment that accepts all students and emphasizes their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.

2. To adopt financial policies that ensure quality educational facilities, equipment, and materials to aid on the accomplishment of the district's educational goals.

3. To attract and retain highly qualified personnel and promote opportunities for their professional growth and development.

4. To develop students' knowledge and values so they will be effective participants in our democratic society.

5. To develop academic skills in the areas of reading, writing, computing, listening, and speaking so students may effectively interact in our society.

6. To provide opportunities for students to gain an appreciation for the fine and performing arts.

7. To provide educational programs, which allow students to identify and achieve their career goals and emphasize the value of hard work.

8. To introduce students to a variety of activities which encourage them to develop morally, physically, socially, academically, emotionally, and spiritually.

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GRETNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATION & BOARD OF EDUCATION

Administration

Mr. Travis Lightle…….. Interim Superintendent
Mr. Russ Olsen…… Director of Business Operations
Mr. Michael Sortino…… Director of Student Services
Mr. Andrew Rinaldi…… Director of Human Resources
Dr. Rex Anderson…… Director of Curriculum
Mr. Shawn Hoppes…….. Asst. Director of Curriculum
Mr. Andrew Boone…….. Teacher Curriculum Coordinator
Mr. Paul Duin……. Director of Special Education
Dr. Kendra Schneider…. Asst. Director of Special Education
Mr. Pat Phelan…… Director of Building Projects and Custodial
Mr. Todd Mueller…….. Gretna High School Principal
Mr. John Heckenlively… Gretna High School Assistant Principal
Mr. Chad Jepsen……. Gretna High School Principal
Ms. Jami Ewer…… Gretna East High School Assistant Principal
Ms. Theresa Huttman…. Gretna High School Assistant Principal
Mr. Ryan Garder…… Gretna East High School Assistant Principal & Activities Director
Mr. Matt Curtis ……. Gretna High School Assistant Principal & Activities Director
Mr. Matt Bruggeman…. Gretna Middle School Principal
Ms. Megan Furstenau…. Gretna Middle School Assistant Principal & Activities Director
Ms. Stacey Deterding…. Aspen Creek Middle School Principal
Mr. Riley Gross…….. Aspen Creek Middle School Asst. Principal & Activities Director
Mr. Bret Basye…… Thomas Elementary Principal
Ms. Karen Naylor…….. Palisades Elementary Principal
Ms. Carissa Dickes……. Gretna Elementary Principal
Ms. Amy Falcone…… Whitetail Elementary Principal
Ms. Wendi Kistler…….. Aspen Creek Elementary Principal
Ms. Jennifer Hellbusch... Falling Waters Elementary Principal
Ms. Kirsten Troester…... Harvest Hills Elementary Principal
Mr. Jacob Runyon…….. Assistant Elementary Principal

Board of Education

Mr. Rick Hollendieck
Mr. Kyle Janssen
Mr. Greg Beach
Ms. Dawn Stock
Mr. Mark Hauptman
Mr. Blake Turpen

Gretna Elementary Staff Directory

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1. Gretna Elementary

1.1 APPOINTMENTS AND QUICK ANSWERS

Appointments with the principal and parent-teacher discussions should be pre-arranged by telephoning the school secretaries at 402-332-3341. Parents can get quick answers about school by calling between 7:30-8:00 a.m., but for questions requiring detailed answers, please call after 8:45 a.m.

1.2 ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Because of supervisory concerns, students are requested not to arrive at school prior to 7:35 a.m. Students coming to school between 7:35-8:00 AM will go to a supervised area. All students must enter the building through the front doors and are not to go to their lockers or rooms prior to 8:00 a.m. Students are not allowed on the playground before school starts. At 8:05 a.m., the tardy bell rings and classes begin. If your child is tardy, he/she must report to the office for a tardy pass before going to class.

Because of traffic volume before and after school, students are not permitted to ride bicycles to school.

All staff will follow regular pick up routines unless there is a note or phone call from the parent. We want to be sure students are where they need to be for getting home safe. Unless there is an emergency, all students should be picked up by parents prior to 3:15 p.m.

If you need your child/children to come to school prior to 7:35 a.m. or picked up after 3:15 p.m., please sign up for Gretna Kids Connections. Enrollment applications are available in the school office, administration office or online at www.gretnadragons.org. The Gretna Schools Foundation is a non-profit corporation that will operate the Kids Connection Program completely separate from the Gretna Public Schools.

1.3 ATTENDANCE

1. Regular and prompt attendance in school is necessary for maximum academic achievement and is mandated by state law.
2. If your child is absent from school, please notify the Gretna Elementary School office before 8:05 a.m. (402-332-3341). If you have not notified the school secretaries by 8:45 a.m., they will call the parent/guardian at home or work.
3. If your child is tardy, he/she must report to the office for a pass before going to class.
4. If it is necessary for your child to leave during school hours, please inform the school office and appropriate teacher(s) with a note. You must sign your child out at the office before dismissal. Whenever possible, doctor and dentist appointments should be made at times other than school hours.
5. Although vacations taken during the school year are discouraged, Gretna Public Schools realize that (1) circumstances sometimes require such trips and (2) travel does have educational benefits. In

order for a child to receive credit for missed work, parents should contact the teacher and school office prior to the trip so that necessary arrangements can be made.

6. **If a student's absences or tardiness become excessive, the parent may be required to have a conference with the principal and teacher and/or submit a doctor's excuse.**
7. Although perfect attendance is not formally recognized, regular attendance is important and is recorded on your child's quarterly report card and cumulative record. In order to calculate attendance, the school day is divided into seven, one hour periods. Every seven periods equal one day of absence.
8. Letters may be sent to notify parents/guardians once a child has accumulated 10 absences and tardies.
9. Please refer to the Attendance Policy and Excessive Absenteeism in the back of this handbook.

1.4 BEHAVIORAL POINT OF CONTACT – Michelle LaMountain

1.5 SCHOOL HOURS

- **Kindergarten-5th Grade**
  - Doors Open: 7:35 AM
  - Tardy Bell Rings: 8:05 AM
  - End of School Day: 3:05 PM
- **Preschool**
  - 7:45 a.m. – 11:00 AM
  - 11:40 a.m. – 2:55 PM

1.6 SCHOOL EVENTS - GES Calendar

2. Elementary Schools Handbook

2.1 BIRTHDAYS

Birthday parties are not permitted, but birthday treats may be distributed. Please check with the classroom teacher prior to bringing a birthday treat. **Birthday treats must be store-bought**. Invitations to private parties may not be passed out at school.

In order to be in compliance with federal lunch program guidelines, we cannot allow class pizza parties to take the place of school lunches. Pizza is an appropriate snack at other times.

2.2 DRESS CODE

Refer to Student Discipline Policy: Student Dress Code. In addition, conditions should be considered in selection of school clothes. During winter months, if a child wants to go outside for recess, long pants may be required. When wet or snowy conditions exist and yet recess is still held outside, students must wear boots if they expect to play off the paved playground.

2.3 GRADING AND EVALUATION

Grades will be reported on a semester basis, at the end of the 2nd quarter and 4th quarter. Progress Reports will be reported mid-semester, at the end of the 1st quarter and 3rd quarter. Report cards are posted electronically at the end of each semester, unless a hard copy is requested. In addition to report cards, parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. When grades are reported, the following scale is utilized:

1	94-100
2	86-93
3	78-85
4	70-77
5	69 & below

2.4 HIGH ABILITY LEARNERS

Learners with high ability shall be identified in the academic areas of mathematics and language arts. Identification of learners in grades 3-5 with high ability in the specified academic areas shall be based on scores from a variety of tests and assessments. Formal services for identified students occur in grades 4 and 5.

2.5 HOMEWORK

Homework provides students with the opportunity to practice what they have learned in the classroom; to review, expand and explore new ideas; and to complete projects without the pressure of time. Homework also has value as a process: one that teaches a child to organize time, work independently, use good study skills, and develop self-discipline. Setting aside time daily to read to your child or have your child read independently will aid in the development of good reading skills. Usually, the amount of homework assigned to the upper elementary grades should not take more than an hour of home study. Children who must study more than an hour at home have probably not used their time to good advantage in school.

Parents should provide for a quiet, regularly scheduled study time at home to help the child develop good study habits. Parental encouragement and interest in homework are also strong motivators. If you have questions concerning the amount of homework or its level of difficulty, talk it over with your child's teacher.

2.6 PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Each elementary school in the Gretna Public School system shall have a separate parent-teacher organization that meets monthly and shall be guided and controlled by approved bylaws. Each elementary school shall have a name designated for its parent-teacher organization, with its own members, officers and executive committee. Each elementary PTO is organized under the authority of the Gretna Board of Education. All parents are welcome to attend and participate. Check the school newsletter for dates and time changes.

2.7 PARTIES

Class parties for students are held on Tuesday, October 31st, Thursday, December 21st; and Wednesday, February 14. The school collects a recommended donation of $5 per child at the beginning of the year. This money is used to provide food at each of these parties. Any extra donated treats must be store-bought. Room parents are arranged by the PTO to help plan and organize the activities for each classroom.

2.8 PETS

Any pets/animals brought into the school building must have prior approval by the classroom teacher. Many young children are afraid of dogs; therefore, we ask parents not to bring family dogs to arrival and dismissal times. If you must bring a dog along, please stand away from areas of high student traffic.

2.9 RECESS – WEATHER RELATED PLANS

Students will have outdoor recess (at least for a few minutes) unless the temperature and/or wind chill is 9 degrees or below. Long pants may be required during winter months. Teachers may ask students to remain indoors if not appropriately dressed for weather. In case of inclement weather, recess teachers and their students will stay inside.

2.10 SPECIAL PROGRAMS

1. Students in K-5 regularly participate in physical education classes. It is recommended that children have some type of gym shoe for their own safety and the safety of classmates. This shoe should have a non-slip bottom. A child's physical education program will be modified if a parental note indicates that such modifications are necessary. Extended exclusion from physical education class requires a doctor's order.
2. Students in K-5 regularly participate in classes in choral/general music, art, and library/media. These classes enable us to more fully develop the potential in all children and are viewed as a valued component of daily instruction.
3. Gretna Public Schools offer differentiated services to students who demonstrate high potential in general intellectual/aptitude in reading, math, and visual spatial. Identified fourth and fifth graders participate in a formalized pullout HAL (High Ability Learner) program. Depending upon time, staffing resources, and student need, curriculum-based enrichment services will be offered to kindergarten through third grade.
4. Read Team is a program of support for students who show a need for extra help in the area of

reading. Classroom teachers along with the Read Team teacher work together to identify those students who would most benefit from added reading instruction offered in a small group or one-to-one setting. These students are supported by the Read Team teacher and/or a volunteer depending on each individual child's needs. The program continually evaluates the reading progress of every student to ensure that each child who needs support in the area of reading is given this opportunity.

5. Throughout the year, special events and activities are planned which enhance the curriculum, build student self-esteem, and create a spirited school climate.

2.11 STUDENT CONDUCT CODE AND RULES

Every child has a right to receive a quality education, and our staff is committed to providing a school atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Please discuss these rules with your child.

General School Rules

1. The Student Conduct Code applies to all students and will be enforced by any/all supervisory adults.
2. When in the halls, students are expected to walk and remain quiet.
3. Candy and gum are not allowed in the school building or on the grounds during the school day unless approved by a supervisory adult.
4. Students are expected to respect and follow the requests of all school personnel.
5. All cell phones must be turned off and stored during school hours. Other personal electronic devices that become a distraction to learning may be confiscated.

Playground Rules

1. No one should be on the playground before school.
2. Stay in assigned areas.
3. Use acceptable equipment appropriately.
4. Hard baseballs are not allowed on the playground.
5. Only balls and Frisbees can be thrown (no rocks, dirt, or snowballs)
6. The school cannot be not responsible for personal sports equipment in the event it is lost or damaged. Any personal sports equipment must be approved by school staff.
7. Students go outside for recess unless it is rainy or too cold (9 degrees or below). Teachers may ask students to remain indoors if not appropriately dressed for weather. Long pants may be required during winter months.

2.12 STUDENT PLACEMENT

If your child has an extenuating need not known to the school that would impact classroom placement, please submit this concern in writing to the principal prior to the end of school.

2.13 VISITATIONS

Parents and grandparents are invited to observe our classes and can make arrangements for visits through their child's homeroom teacher or the office. In order to maintain an effective learning environment,

however, our students are not allowed to bring peer/age friends and relatives to school for visits. If cleared through the office though, it can sometimes be arranged for these younger guests to join us for lunch. We appreciate parental cooperation and understanding of this policy. Visitors are expected to follow all General

School Rules (listed below), including no recording or pictures of students.

2.14 VOLUNTEERS

If you have some extra time and wish to help at school, please contact your child's teacher. Volunteers are asked to check in at the office and get a visitor sticker before proceeding to a classroom.

Volunteers who come on a regular basis are required to have a background check.

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District Handbook

Each year the Board of Education shall adopt a Parent-Student Handbook. The rules, procedures, and practices adopted in the Parent-Student Handbook shall have the effect of Board Policy and shall control over any earlier-adopted Board policy to the extent of the conflict. The Parent-Student Handbook is not a contract (Policy 5011)

3. COMMUNITY RELATIONS POLICY

3.1 ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

The policy of Gretna Public Schools is to not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race, color, religion, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, or other protected status, in admission or access to, or treatment with regard to employment or with regard to its programs and activities.

Please select the following links for information and forms related to the Gretna Public Schools Anti-Discrimination Policies.

1. **Anti-discrimination (Policy 1200)**
2. **Title IX - Procedures for Complaints of Sexual Harassment (Policy 1211)**
3. **Title IX - Discrimination (Policy 1210)**
4. **Notice of Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment Form**
5. **Sexual Harassment Complaint Form**
6. **Designation of Coordinator (Policy 1250)**

3.2 RECORDING OF OTHERS

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of student information, Gretna Public Schools has adopted a policy for the procedures for recording others. Please select the following link to review this policy: **Recording of Others (Policy 1102)**

3.3 TOBACCO POLICY

The use of tobacco products is prohibited in all school buildings and all school vehicles. To view the entire policy, please select the following link: **Tobacco Policy (Policy 1120)**

3.4 VISITING GRETNA SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Parents and other interested individuals are encouraged to visit school and are to be made welcome by the respective building staffs and student bodies; however, administration requires 24-hour advanced notice of visitations to make appropriate arrangements for visitations. Please select the following link to view this policy: **Visiting Schools (Policy 1010)**

4. STUDENT POLICY

4.1 ACADEMIC REPORTING AND PROGRESS

The following links provide information about academic progress, making up work when absent, and the confidentiality of student information.

1. **Promotion and Retention (Policy 5201)**
2. **Notice of Rights Under FERPA (Policy 5202z)**
3. **Make-up Work (Policy 5207)**

4.2 ADMISSION AND ATTENDANCE

The following links provide information about student admission to Gretna Public Schools, attendance requirements and procedures, and notice of providing student information to military recruiters.

1. **Admission Requirements (Policy 5001)**
2. **Student Attendance (Policy 5008)**
3. **Closed Campus (Policy 5009)**
4. **Notice Concerning Disclosure of Student Recruiting Information**

4.3 BUS TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

Gretna Public Schools provides transportation to students who live more than one mile from their assigned home school. Please select the following link for additional information about bus rules, bus registration, and bus passes: **Bus Transportation Guidelines**

4.4 EMERGENCY PROTOCOL (STUDENTS WITH ALLERGIES)

If you have a student with allergies, please select the following link for the District procedures and protocols for students with allergies: **Students with Allergies (Policy 5602)**

4.5 EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES/WELFARE

The following links provide information outlining policies to provide for equal opportunities, safety, and welfare of all students.

1. **Child Abuse and Neglect (Policy 5402)**
2. **Married Students (Policy 5403)**
3. **Search and Seizures (Policy 5406)**
4. **Vandalism (Policy 5407)**
5. **Health Screening (Policy 5408)**
6. **Anti-Bullying Policy (Policy 5415)**
7. **Student Fees Policy (Policy 5416)**
8. **School Wellness Policy (Policy 5417)**
9. **Homeless Students (Policy 5418)**

10. Student Privacy Protection Policy (Policy 5419)
11. Dating Violence (Policy 5420)
12. Pregnant and Parenting Students (Policy 5422)
13. Food and Nutrition Services
    Meal Charge Policy (Policy 3571)
14. Notice to Parents of Rights Afforded by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

4.6 STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Please select the following links for information about fund raising and charitable giving.

1. Student Fund Raising Activities (Policy 5306)
2. Charitable Giving Campaign (Policy 5307)

4.7 STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The following links provide information about Student Discipline (Code of Conduct).

1. Student Discipline (Policy 5101)
2. Drug and Substance Use and Prevention (Policy 5104)

4.8 STUDENT RIGHTS

Please select the following link for information about due process and student rights: Student Rights

5. INSTRUCTION POLICY

5.1 INSTRUCTION

The following links provide information in regards to teaching, learning, and guidance services throughout Gretna Public Schools.

1. Ceremonies, Observances and the Pledge of Allegiance (Policy 6117)
2. Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs (Policy 6360)
3. Controversial Issues (Policy 6390)
4. Homework (Policy 6240)
5. Purpose of Homework (Policy 6241)
6. Field Trips (Policy 6270)
7. Special Education (Policy 6600)
8. Guidance (Policy 6260)
9. Notice Concerning Staff Qualifications
10. Parent/Community Involvement (Policy 6400)
11. Selection and Review of Instructional and Media Materials (Policy 6300)
12. Artificial Intelligence (Policy 6288)
13. **Library/Media -** A description of the library/media program can be found under the media tab on our school website.

14. **MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports)**
Gretna Public Schools is utilizing a framework named MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports). MTSS is a proactive approach to meeting the needs of and educating the entire student. The MTSS framework provides interventions and support for students with academic, behavioral, social, and emotional challenges. The key components of the MTSS Framework incorporated by Gretna Public Schools are as follows:

- Establishing and teaching schoolwide expectations and procedures. The schoolwide procedures are based on the following District-wide expectations:
  - **G - GIVE KINDNESS**
  - **P - PRACTICE ACCOUNTABILITY**
  - **S - STAY SAFE**
- Ongoing data collection used to make informed decisions
- Utilizing tiers of instruction, intervention, and support
- Creating a positive climate and culture

5.2 SCHOOL SAFETY

The following links provide information on school safety including crisis/emergency plans as well as health regulations and protocols:

A. Fire Drills/Crisis Plan (Policy 6115)
B. Emergency Dismissal or Cancellation (Policy 6116)
C. Safe Schools Policy (Policy 6120)
D. Concussions (Policy) 6283
E. Concussions: Return to Learn Protocol (Policy 6283A)
F. Health Regulations and Medication Dispensing (Policy 6910)
G. Internet Safety Policy (Policy 6800)