

Crowley's Ridge

A stylized graphic of three green hills or ridges, with the top ridge being the highest and the two lower ridges flanking it, positioned behind the main title.

Educational Service Cooperative

Leading with excellence!

Personnel Policy
Handbook
2021-2022

CROWLEY'S RIDGE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

2021-2022

COUNTIES: Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Mississippi, Poinsett, and Newport in Jackson County

PERSONNEL POLICIES

NAME AND AUTHORITY OF AGENCY

The name of the agency shall be Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative (CRESC).

MISSION

The purpose of this Cooperative is to be of assistance to member schools in achieving more efficient use of their shared resources, to be of assistance in meeting or exceeding accreditation standards, and to promote coordination between districts and the State Department of Education in order to provide services consistent with district needs.

GENERAL GOALS

A. Services

The needs and desires of the districts will greatly influence the Cooperative's service program. These programs will also be structured so as to make services available to local districts through the Cooperative.

1. The Cooperative will endeavor to make available the requested services more economically and effectively than could be achieved on the local level.
2. The Cooperative shall make a strong effort to provide services to all interested districts as equally accessible as possible.
3. Purchase shall be made in accordance with State laws and procurement procedures that are deemed to be in the best interest of the Cooperative.

B. Communication and Coordination

1. The Cooperative shall work with district, other Cooperatives, and the State Department of Education to improve communication and coordination.
2. This Cooperative shall work diligently in striving to comply with the wishes of the local districts in its operations, as long as it is consistent with state regulations.

C. Governing Bodies

There are two types of Boards that all Co-ops can function by:

1. The General Board is the governing body that is comprised of the Superintendent or his designee from each member district. A quorum and a majority vote will rule on proposals.
2. The Executive Board shall consist of a total of seven (7) members selected from counties represented, so as to represent local districts equitably. (Craighead 1; Crittenden 1; Cross 1; Mississippi 1; Poinsett 1; and At-Large 2). After this first term of office all terms will be for three (3) years.

CRESC function with a General Board

3. Should any vacancies occur, it shall be filled by the Board until the next election date. The appointee shall be representative of the county where the vacancy exists.
 - The re-appointment or dismissal of the Director at the end of each year shall occur after the sentiments of a majority of the members of the Executive Board have been obtained.
 - Upon the recommendations of the Director, appoint and dismiss other employees of the Cooperative.
 - General fiduciary responsibilities for the Cooperative with the regard to policies and practices consistent with guarding the integrity of the agency and maintaining public trust in its operation. Such responsibilities shall include but not limited to the following:
 - Develop a budget
 - Periodic review of disbursements and receipts
 - Approval of financial procedures
 - Compliance with applicable statutes
 - Establishment of personnel policies

- Monitoring of annual programs to make sure they comply with priorities of the Board and the services of member schools.

D. Participation

1. The participation of any district in any Cooperative service is strictly voluntary.

E. Accountability

1. The Cooperative is required to report to the State Department of Education upon receipts and disbursements in a format prescribed by the Department.
2. Employees, administrators, officials, or agents shall not solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub-agreements including but not limited to:
 - Entertainments
 - Hotel Rooms
 - Transportation
 - Gifts

F. Personnel

This Cooperative shall strive to hire the best available qualified persons; its personnel policies and pay schedules shall be designed to attract and hold such people. Consistent with this goal the following personnel policies shall abide:

1. Status and Regulations – This Cooperative will comply with applicable personnel statutes of the State of Arkansas, and the federal government; rules and regulations of the Arkansas Department of Education, and other official control agencies affecting CRESC employment practices.
2. Non-discrimination – Cooperative shall not discriminate in recruiting, hiring, firing, and day-to-day working policies and practices affecting its employees. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the governing body and the Board that equal opportunity shall be pursued for all employees regardless of race, sex, national origin or handicap.
3. Responsibility for Policy Execution – the governing body of this Cooperative assigns responsibility for executing personnel policies to the Board and to the Director.

The Board shall:

- a) Have the responsibility to recommend to the Superintendents the re-appointment or the dismissal at the end of the year of the Director. This shall be made upon a majority vote.
- b) Establish the Director's salary, benefits, working conditions, and length of contract. Contract may be issued from one (1) to three (3) years.
- c) Upon the recommendation of the Director appointment, dismissal, salary levels, benefits, and working conditions for other employees.
- d) Conduct an annual assessment of the Director's effectiveness and report to the governing body.

The Director shall:

- a) Carry out the policies established by the governing body and the board.
- b) Recommend appointments and/or dismissals, benefits, and working conditions of the board.
- c) Temporarily employ, not to exceed 60 days without Board approval of new personnel.
- d) Employ part-time and consultative personnel as the need arises within the limiting constraints of the budget or in agreement with individual districts.
(See policy 1.6 and 1.6.1)

G. Operational Personnel

Employment of Personnel

1. The board shall employ, upon a recommendation of the Director such employees as deemed necessary to carry out the successful operation of the Co-op.
2. Certified Personnel shall be able to meet all requirements prescribed by law or set by the Director and Board at the time of employment. Items required to be on file in the office of the Director shall include a valid teaching certificate, a complete official copy of the transcript of all college credits, a Teacher Retirement System membership, a completed W-4 form, a personal information sheet, work record, and a copy of Social Security Card. It is not the policy of Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative to pay the fee required for the criminal background check before employing a new certified employee. Prospective employees are responsible for paying required fee. ACT 1314 and ACT 1315. This provision is subject to change based on extenuating circumstances as determined by the director.

Dismissal

1. Termination of employment will be in accordance with the existing law of the State of Arkansas as stated in subchapter 15 (Teacher Fair Dismissal) ACT ACE 16-17-1501 and subchapter 17 (Public School Employee Fair Hearing) ACT ACE 6-17-1701.
2. The Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative will provide a hearing, upon written request, and otherwise follow the procedures as outlines in the "Public School Fair Employment and Dismissal Practice Act", ACT 799 of 1979.

Employment Sick Leave

1. A full-time employee under contract shall be allowed one (1) day of sick leave at full pay for each month employed under the contract, (example 190 day contract will receive 10 days) until a maximum of ninety (90) days have been accumulated. Employees will be allowed to transfer up to ninety (90) days of accumulated sick leave from other school or educational agencies. For all absences in excess of those described above a proportional amount will be deducted, unless otherwise directed by the Director. This amount will be equal to the total annual salary divided by the total number of days employed and multiplied by the number of days in excess absences.
2. Failure to report to work without notification by 8:00 a.m. may result in the day being counted as personal leave and/or result in the reduction in pay resulting from a dock of the daily rate of pay per day missed.
3. To qualify for supplemental pay for unused sick days, an employee must have accumulated ninety (90) days of unused leave. Beginning with the school year following the one in which the maximum ninety (90) days of allowable sick leave is reached, payment will be made for any days accumulated beyond the ninety (90) days carry-over limit. This payment will be made in June at the end of the school year. Rate of pay will be \$50.00 per day. The ninety (90) day base must be maintained at all times in order to qualify for pay for unused sick leave.
4. Sick leave covers sickness of a full-time employee or the death or illness of the employee's spouse, children, parents, grandparents, and/or relatives living in the same household as the employee. Pregnancy will be treated the same as the other illnesses.

5. An Accurate up-to-date record of sick leave will be kept in the Administrative office. The Director may, at his/her discretion, require proof of illness. Failure of the employee to correctly document days present/absent accurately may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
6. The CRESC Sick Leave Bank will provide all eligible employees who have exhausted accumulated sick leave a means of possibly obtaining additional sick leave days.

All employees of the CRESC shall be eligible for participation in the Sick Leave Bank. By September 15th each year, employees must declare whether or not they intend to participate in the Sick Leave Bank. Those electing to participate in the bank must contribute one sick day a year to the bank unless the bank has accumulated sufficient days to waive such deduction for employees who have previously donated day(s) to the bank. Such declaration and contribution shall be made on a CRESC Form distributed and collected by the CRECS Administrative Office.

Any employee will be eligible to request a grant from the Sick Leave Bank only during the contract period in which the employee has contributed to the bank. The CRESC Advisory Committee shall serve as the Sick Leave Bank Committee. Requests will be submitted in writing to the committee chairperson. The Committee may request a review of sick leave records and/or require appropriate documentation from Sick Leave Bank records. The committee may require a physician's statement to verify the need for sick leave. Grants from the Sick Leave Bank may, as a general guideline, be withdrawn only for absence due to catastrophic illness or injury to a participant or participant's spouse, children, parents, or any other relative in the same household. Catastrophic illness or injury for the purpose of this policy is defined as an injury or illness which will be disabling and is not related to normal pregnancy, cosmetic surgery or other voluntary surgery that is related to illness.

The committee and the administrative office shall maintain records of Sick Leave Bank utilization and reconcile the records at least annually.

The bank days may be used only upon exhaustion of a participating employee's accumulated sick leave days and vacation days. Days used from the bank are grants and do not require re-payment. Sick Leave Bank days will not be granted if the employee is eligible to receive income from

an income or salary protection policy. Sick Leave Grants shall be for no more than forty (40) days for an individual employee for the total term of his/her employment.

Unused bank days will accumulate and carry forward. If the total of available days in the bank falls to less than thirty (30) day, the committee may solicit additional contributions to the bank. If, at the end of any school year, the number of days in the bank exceeds one hundred and sixty (160), then current members will receive automatic membership at the beginning of the next school year. New members must contribute to the bank.

H. Personal or Business Leave

An employee under contract shall be allowed two (2) days absence at full pay for business or personal reasons. Personal days are accumulative and employees can accumulative up to four (4) days. Requests for absence from duty for any reason other than holidays and sick leave must be made to and approved by the Director. In regards to all absentees (sick leave, jury, etc.), employees are required to advise the main office of their absence prior to 8:00 am, or at the time of requiring to take off, if sick leave becomes necessary after reporting to work. Otherwise, the employee may be docked a day's salary. Unused personal days in excess of (4) four days will be converted to sick days when days are rolled over.

I. Other Absences

1. An employee who is unable to or does not complete the contract year as agreed upon, or defined by his/her contract dates will not be eligible for re-employment.
2. An employee may serve on Jury Duty without penalty or loss of pay. (See 3.14)

J. Expense or Travel

1. The Cooperative will reimburse for expenses in the following manner if a travel request is pre-approved by the Director. Mileage reimbursement will be made at the rate paid by the State of Arkansas. Mileage will be reimbursed

from the duty station, based on the shortest route on the Google Maps Website in Google Suite. (See 3.20)

2. Expense or travel within Cooperative region – Employees shall be reimbursed for all miles driven from their first daily assignment to any subsequent assignment during the day. Employees will not be reimbursed mileage from home to their first assignment or from their last assignment to home, regardless of their place of residence, in compliance with the IRS tax code. Reference at <https://www.irs.gov/publications/p463/ch01.html>.
3. Expense or travel outside Cooperative region – Mileage reimbursement will be made at the rate paid by the State of Arkansas. Mileage will be reimbursed from the duty station or home, based on the shortest route on the Google Maps Website in Google Suite.
4. Actual Expenses for lodging will be reimbursed when common sense dictates the necessity for overnight accommodations. A hotel/motel receipt will be attached to the request for reimbursement. Reimbursement for lodging expenses will be made only in instances that have prior approval from the Director and when accompanied by appropriate documentation.
5. Reimbursement for meals is allowed only in connection with overnight travel. Reimbursement is to be claimed for the actual expenses for meals, not to exceed the maximum allowable rate of \$41.00 per day for in-state travel. Reimbursement of out-of-state travel will not exceed the federal maximum allowable rates published on the United States General Services Administration website at www.gsa.gov/perdiem. Receipts for meals are not to be submitted with the reimbursement paperwork, but should be maintained by the traveler as they may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that meals are provided by the conference/meeting, the maximum allowable rate of \$41.00 will reduced as follows:

Breakfast - \$7.00

Lunch - \$11.00

Dinner - \$23.00

On the day of departure and the day of return, as indicated on the travel request form, the traveler may only claim incurred expenses of up to 75% of the maximum allowable rate. For in-state travel, this amount is \$30.75.

6. Extended or out-of-state travel will require approval of the Director.
7. All requests for expense reimbursement will be made on standard Co-op "Travel Expense Reimbursement Forms", as well as a meeting agenda and other documentation and must be approved by the Director.

8. Requests for reimbursement of travel and/or other expenses must be submitted within 40 days occurrence. All reimbursements must be pre-approved by the Director before reimbursements will be made.
9. Pre-approved forms must be accompanied by a meeting agenda or other approved documentation.
10. All employees should maintain an accurate daily schedule of travel including sites visited.
11. Employees should check in or sign-in at visited sites upon arrival.

K. Retirement

All certified employees and other eligible employees are required by law to join the Arkansas Teachers Retirement System.

Upon retirement, all personnel will be compensated for unused sick leave under the following:

- A. Payment of unused sick leave will be the rate of thirty (30%) percent of the daily pay.
- B. The employee must be an approved applicant for teacher retirement benefits and must have ten (10) years of service credited with the Teacher Retirement System and ten (10) years' service with Crowley's Ridge Educational Cooperative.

L. Vacation

- Vacations for twelve (12) month employees will be for 10 days.
- Employees desiring to take vacation time must obtain approval from the Director.
- Vacation days must be approved by the Director in advance.
- Vacation days may be carried over
- However, vacation days carried over **must** be used by December 31st of the New Year.

M. Holidays

Holidays for employees of the Cooperative will be scheduled, as nearly as possible, to coincide with the holiday schedule of the member schools.

- The Director may grant administrative leave in the case of emergencies such as inclement weather in other instances deemed appropriate by the Director.

- The Director may also assign work from home status to employees as required due to extenuating circumstances.
- No administrative leave and/or work from home status will be granted without pre-approved by the Director.
- Any absence without such approval will be counted as sick, personal, or vacation leave and may result in docked wages should all leave days be exhausted prior to such absence.

N. Pay Schedule

All employees will be paid twice a month.

- O.** Temporary policies on matters not covered by these initial policies will be developed and implemented as necessary by the Director with consideration for approval by the Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting after the effective date of the temporary policy.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT
FOR
CROWLEY'S RIDGE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE**

No person shall be denied employment, re-employment, or advancement; nor shall be evaluated on the basis of sex, marital status, race, color, creed, national origin, or qualified handicaps. Age shall be considered only with respect to minimums set by laws and retirement as specified by the state or policies of this board.

Any complains concerning issues in the above policy statement shall be referred to the Equity Coordinator of Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

CROWLEY'S RIDGE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

Definition:

A grievance shall mean a claim initiated by an employee(s) which is thought to be a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative personnel policy or Arkansas State Law.

STEP 1:

The employee shall first discuss and informally try to resolve the problem with their immediate supervisor.

STEP 2:

The employee shall submit a formal, written grievance if he/she feels that the problem has not been resolved. The grievance will be signed, and dated by the employee and submitted to the immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will provide the employee with a written response on the grievance within fourteen (14) calendar days.

STEP 3:

The employee shall then submit a formal written grievance if he/she feels that the problem has not been resolved. The grievance shall be signed and dated by the employee and submitted to the supervisor within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the report from the immediate supervisor. The supervisor will provide the employee with a written response on the grievance within (30) calendar days.

STEP 4:

The employee shall submit a formal written grievance if he/she feels that the problem has not been resolved. This grievance will be signed and dated by the employee and submitted to the Director within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the written report from the supervisor. If no resolution is reached, the Director will refer the matter to the Executive Board within thirty (30) days after the receipt of the grievance. The board will tender its decision in writing on the grievance, including the reasons on which it is based, within ten (10) calendar days of the hearing).

CRESC Acceptable Use Policy

Acceptable Use Policy 2020-2021

Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative (CRESC) offers access to the Cooperative's computers and/or computer network for electronic mail and Internet. To gain and/or to continue access to e-mail and the Internet, all employees must agree and sign this form.

The following policy for acceptable use of computers, networks, and system resources, including the Internet, shall apply to all CRESC administrators, faculty, and staff. All technology equipment shall be used under the supervision of the Technology Coordinator. Any user who violates any condition of this policy is subject to disciplinary action or administrative sanctions as specified in the Personnel Policy Handbook.

* 'system' or 'system resources' refer to any coop computer, network, or Internet resource.

- 1.** The individual in whose name a computer is issued will be responsible at all times for its proper use.
- 2.** Users shall not let other persons use their computer user account, network logon username and password, or computer files for any reason (except for authorized staff members).
- 3.** Users shall not store or display their system resource passwords anywhere except on their person (e.g. wallet, purse) or in an otherwise secure location (e.g. cabinet or file drawer).
- 4.** Users shall not try to discover another user's password by any method.
- 5.** Users shall not erase, rename, or make unusable anyone else's computer files, programs, or disks.
- 6.** Users may not copy or distribute copyrighted materials such as software, audio, video, files, graphics, and text without the express written permission of the copyright owner and the permission of the site administrator.
- 7.** Users may not download, upload, install, or otherwise use programs or software not directly related to their work prior to permission from the Technology Coordinator.
- 8.** Users shall not use any system resources for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by district policy and guidelines.

9. Users shall not write, produce, generate copy, propagate, or attempt to introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or otherwise hinder the performance of any computer's memory, file system, or software. Such software is often called a bug, virus, worm, Trojan, or other name.

10. Users shall not use system resources to purposefully access materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually-oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. The State of Arkansas provides filtering mechanisms to help prevent accidental access to such materials; however, filters are not all-inclusive and will not block all inappropriate sites. In the event that accidental access to prohibited materials occurs, users are expected to immediately discontinue such access and report the incident.

11. Users shall not bypass or attempt to bypass CRESC security measures through means such as, but not limited to, online proxies, bootable media, IP spoofing, etc.

12. Users shall not alter or vandalize computers, networks, printers, or other associated equipment and system resources. Alteration or vandalism includes, but is not limited to, removal of parts, intentional destruction of equipment, attempting to degrade or disrupt system performance, or attempting to make system resources unusable.

13. Users shall not relocate or remove technology equipment (hardware or software) from its location without permission from the Cooperative Administration office.

14. CRESC does not support personal equipment or software. Users shall not install personal software on CRESC-owned computers without permission (Home Network Connection Software is permitted).

15. Users shall not use system resources to distribute or provide personal information or addresses that others may use inappropriately.

16. Users should be aware that all e-mail and all other files stored on CRESC's network and/or the crmail.k12.ar.us Google domain are the property of CRESC. Users should not send any messages or create any files that they would not want to be made public.

17. Users shall not use system resources for the forgery or attempted forgery of e-mail messages. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the email of other system users, deliberate interference with the ability of other users to send/receive email, or the use of another person's email account is prohibited.

18. Users who identify or know of a security problem on the system must notify the Technology Coordinator or Administration office staff and must not demonstrate or

verbalize the security problem to other users.

19. Users should be aware that the inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state or federal laws. Violations can lead to prosecution.

20. Users shall maintain a strong password on CRESC computers and email at all times. **A strong password of at least 14 characters including 4 different types of character shall be maintained. (Uppercase, Lowercase, Number, Special Character)**

21. Peer to Peer (file sharing) programs (BitTorrent, Limewire, Kazaa, BearShare, and others) are prohibited on the CRESC network.

22. Student, staff and client information shall be safely guarded. All work related files should be backed up to your Google Drive account (Google File Stream).

23. If another user must use the Cooperative computer you may allow them to use a Guest account. If your Guest account is not enabled please see the Technology Coordinator.

24. DO NOT reset or wipe your computer operating system.

25. Computer games that came on your computer's operating system are allowed. Online games are not allowed on Cooperative computers. This includes any games originating through your web browser and any social media platform, for example Facebook games.

Signature Sheet

Acceptable Use Policy 2020-2021

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE COULD INCLUDE:

- Suspension or limitation of access to the system
- Revocation of the computer system account
- Disciplinary or legal action in accordance with Crowley's Ridge ESC policies and applicable laws.

As a user of the Crowley's Ridge ESC computer network, I hereby agree to comply with the above stated rules for using the Internet, networked and computers and other coop technology equipment.

Printed Name

Signature

Title

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I _____, an employee of the Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative, hereby certify that I have received a copy of the Cooperative Board Policy regarding the use, possession, manufactures, distribution or dispensation of illegal drugs (including alcohol). I realize that, as a result, of violating this policy, I may be suspension, dismissal, termination, arrested, fines, and incarceration.

I will notify the Cooperative of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction

PERSONNEL POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I _____, hereby certify that I have received a copy of the Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative Personal Policy Manual as evidenced by my signature below.

Printed Name

Signature

Date