



**Employee Manual**

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## Statement of Philosophy

Beliefs: It is not possible to significantly change what happens in the schools unless you significantly change the nature of the human relationships that form the educational process. (Olds & Pearlman, *Designing the New American School*)

The truly educated person is one who understands relationships, both academic and personal. By providing a more personal school with smaller class sizes, students can develop supportive relationships with peers, parents, teachers, and community members. By implementing engaging teaching methods, students will have access to their own knowledge and be enabled to integrate their thoughts thus achieving higher levels of thinking.

We are committed to the belief that education is a life-long process throughout which the classroom is only one arena. Learning best occurs in a creative yet disciplined environment, and through the involvement of parents and community members, we can develop a larger community of learners.

## Mission Statement

The mission of Forrest M. Bird Charter School, a public school incorporating middle and high school grade levels, is to create a community of learners equipped with two kinds of literacy necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

1. The ability to read, write, speak, and calculate with clarity and precision, incorporating technology.
2. The ability to participate passionately and responsibly in the life of their community.

To fulfill this mission, we are committed to upholding these practices:

- ◆ Limit our community to approximately 50 students at each grade level, 6-12. (Prospective enrollment of 350 students, not to exceed 400 total; actual grade level enrollments may vary.)
- ◆ Provide each student with at least one positive adult adviser/advocate to support student success.
- ◆ Provide students access to innovative pathways, maximizing their post-secondary academic and career opportunities.
- ◆ Facilitate a positive and safe community culture by fostering academic success through integration and project-based learning and promoting accountability through high behavioral standards.
- ◆ Focus on student-family-teacher relationships.
- ◆ Encourage individuality through embracing the needs of the student body as the primary focus of our school.
- ◆ Work in collaborative relationships within and outside the school to promote leadership and mentoring partnerships, and to service the greater community.
- ◆ Actively encourage creativity and fun within our school.

## Resolution

The FBCS Board offers a resolution of support regarding the mission and vision of the Forrest M. Bird Charter School and has adopted the following guidelines and direction regarding the overall focus and philosophy:

- FBCS primarily uses an electronic curriculum, rather than traditional textbooks.
- FBCS utilizes a project-based model and strives to provide meaningful and relevant project-based activities in all classes.
- FBCS High School is focused on providing early college access for all students willing to accept the challenge. In addition to Core academics, programs like P-TECH, which provide innovative pathways for students, will be supported by the school.
- The needs of the student body are the primary focus of our school. Teacher needs are also important, but supporting students is the principal aim of the school.

- FBCS offers several pathways to success for most of our students. However, as a small school with limited resources, we cannot always offer customized paths for each student.
- We are dedicated to building our cash reserves to sixty (60) days of operating expenses by July 1, 2016.

The purpose of this resolution is to support FBCS Administration as it moves forward with teacher hiring and evaluation, publicity and strategic planning, and the overall direction of the school as described at the FBCS Board meeting held on March 19, 2014.

## **Contracts**

### **Salary**

Paychecks are distributed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of each month. In the event that the 21<sup>st</sup> falls on a holiday or weekend, paychecks will be dispersed on the weekday prior to the 21<sup>st</sup>. Pay can be designed for a 10- or 12-month contract basis with pay averaged out, dependent upon which disbursement plan the employee chooses.

### **Benefits**

Employee benefits are contracted through Taylor Insurance in Sandpoint. FBCS benefits include medical, dental, and vision options. Employees can opt to include family members on their medical, dental, and vision plans, and that portion of coverage will be automatically deducted, pretax, from their monthly paychecks. Employees also have access to life insurance as well as other supplemental insurances. Insurance benefits are subject to change based on changes to insurance law and/or insurance policy options.

Teachers will be invited to attend insurance benefits meetings that affect changes in teacher coverage or premiums.

### **PERSI**

As Idaho employees, eligible teachers are enrolled in the Public Employee Retirement plan for the State of Idaho (PERSI). A percentage of employees' monthly pay is contributed to the plan, and is matched by the state. The PERSI website, [www.persiweb.state.id.us](http://www.persiweb.state.id.us), contains useful information under the "brochures" tab.

### **Contract Days**

Contracts are based on 190 working days; actual teaching days average approximately 175. The difference in days is to compensate for extra time spent working during events and meetings which complement our mission, such as the Middle School Camp Out, High School Lock-In, Parent Conferences, and end-of-year field trips. Faculty who perform school duties or activities beyond the 190 contractual days may be compensated as determined by FBCS Administration and/or the FBCS Board.

Faculty is to be in the building by 7:30 am and is expected to remain until 3:30 pm. These times are set outside the class schedules in order to accommodate collaboration meetings, parent needs, phone calls, student needs, planning, and other certified-related duties.

### **Contracted Time Off**

Full-time employees receive two (2) personal days and ten (10) sick days per year as part of their contract. Any faculty working .75 FTE will receive two personal days and ten sick days based on the .75 schedule. Employees working .5 FTE will negotiate their days off with FBCS Administration based on the .5 FTE schedule. Building Educational Leaders should be contacted by employees desiring to use these days. Reasons for personal/sick days are confidential for the employee.

### **Taking Days Off**

Except in the event of unforeseen emergency or illness, employees will submit a Personal Leave Request to the corresponding FBCS Educational Leader for approval of the planned absence at least five (5) days prior to requested date for approval. Failure to comply with the request procedure may result in a/an unpaid day(s). In the event of a pre-planned

absence, certified faculty members are responsible for contacting their own substitutes from the approved Substitute List. Prior to a planned absence, teachers are responsible for ensuring all substitutes have class rosters and lesson plans. Most requests made after the five-day period, if approved by FBCS Administration, require the teacher to seek Emergency Coverage.

### **Emergency Coverage**

Periodically, faculty may be called upon to cover other teachers' classes for a variety of reasons. If a teacher has an emergency during the day, Emergency Coverage will be utilized until a substitute can be found. If a substitute cannot be found that day, Emergency Coverage will continue. Emergency Coverage may also be utilized if a teacher requests a day off but fails to gain approval within the five-day approval period. Emergency Coverage will be used as a secondary source of coverage and utilized only in necessary situations.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Up to a total of five (5) days of absences shall be authorized by the immediate supervisor due to a death in the immediate family of the employee or employee's spouse. These five (5) days are in addition to accumulated Sick Leave and are not chargeable to Sick Leave. When extenuating circumstances exist, the Educational Leader may allow an exception. Bereavement Leave is non-cumulative.

### **Curriculum & Instruction**

Forrest M. Bird Charter School curricula are created on faculty and FBCS Board-based educational design and methodology. A curriculum is comprised of five components (listed below) which embrace the mission, philosophy, and resolutions of FBCS. Focus on distinct curriculum components is dependent upon grade level and primary building focus. Overall course curriculum will follow these components.

### **Advocacy/Advisory**



Students and faculty meet in Advocacy or Advisory groups at the beginning of each day. Advocacy and Advisory classes are intended to establish personal and supportive relationships with the students, and to learn communication and organizational skills, appropriate behavior, accountability, and school culture. This class is also used for reading time, checking on homework, and college planning. Full-time instructors are assigned an Advocacy/Advisory class. Teachers are responsible for connecting with their assigned families, facilitating necessary communication, and working in a team with parents. Individual Learning Plan meetings with students and parents are at the discretion of each Advocacy/Advisory teacher and may constitute communications such as face-to-face, telephone, email, or instant chat. Advisory teachers may suggest schedule changes to students and families, but are not academic counselors. Academic planning for FBCS graduation, dual-enrollment, financial aid, and other higher education information will be provided to students and parents by the FBCS academic counselor.

Advocacy is designed to provide students with an adult who checks in with them daily and aids them in maneuvering in our school community. It is also designed to give parents a single contact person with whom to ask questions, express concerns, or help with their own maneuvering of FBCS community. Teachers of Advocacy/Advisory will facilitate Individual Learning Plan meetings as well as assist student accountability and identify specific areas of learning needs. Teachers work with families and students and may suggest courses for the student's secondary career and graduation requirements. The FBCS academic counselor is available for graduation and further guidance.

## **Core Curriculum**

Core curriculum contains all coursework that is consecutive in nature. English (writing, speaking, and reading), Math, Science, and Social Studies are included in this category. Grade level curriculum and standards are defined by the State of Idaho, although students may be placed at different, appropriate levels based on individual assessments and abilities. Forrest M. Bird Charter School teachers teach to Idaho State Department of Education and FBCS standards.

## **Project-Based Curriculum**

Projects integrate Core curriculum across subject domains as possible to create meaningful and relevant learning. Projects are designed to be active, participatory, and engaging. Students may be placed in working groups and be tasked to work collaboratively to create products. Most evaluations of projects will be conducted through the process of the projects, end products, presentations, or community evaluation. Often, large projects manifest themselves in evening events which incorporate FBCS families. Faculty participate in creating and facilitating these events.

## **Elective Curriculum**

FBCS elective classes consider student interests, staff availability, and the needs of Core material. Electives may include classes such as Foreign Languages, Art, Band, Drama, Journalism, Photography, Technology, Cooking, and Challenge Science. Independent electives are also an option for high school students. Teachers may teach elective classes based on student interests, academic needs, and personal areas of expertise. Elective courses often result in unique projects, sometimes collaborating with Core courses as well as Elective department events.

## **Advanced Opportunities/Early College Access**

Students at FBCS High School will have an opportunity to become dual enrollment students in college classes prior to graduation. In order to ensure success in college-level courses, individual netbook computers, study labs, and counseling support are offered to every student. Motivated students may have access to state funding to help pay for college courses. Teachers focus on content, skills, and mastery of coursework with college preparation in mind. Advanced middle school students have opportunities to prepare for accelerated progression, and teachers must be prepared for such academic diversity.

## **Class Curriculum Expectations**

Curriculum designed in each teacher’s course(s) meets FBCS philosophy, resolution, and mission as well as identified guidelines, such as IEPs and differentiation of instruction. Curriculum meets Idaho Core Standards and/or national standards.

**Differentiation**

According to Carol Tomlinson, educator and author, differentiation is “an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for and attention to student differences in classrooms, in the context of high quality curriculums.” FBCS teachers plan and teach with differentiation in mind. Teachers work to understand their students’ lives, learning styles, and defenses. With that knowledge, teachers then devise opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding in various ways.

<b>What Differentiated Instruction Means for Teachers</b>	
<b>Teachers DO</b>	<b>Teachers DON'T</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide several learning options, or different paths to learning, which help students take in information and make sense of concepts and skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a separate lesson plan for each student in a classroom.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide appropriate levels of challenge for all students, including those who lag behind, those who are advanced, and those right in the middle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"water down" the curriculum for some students.</li> </ul>

Per Glencoe: [http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/subject/di\\_meeting.phtml](http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/subject/di_meeting.phtml)

**Field Trips**

FBCS encourages educational or service-based field trips as a way to bring to life the lessons from the classrooms. Trips will be announced to students in writing in advance by the teacher or school office. A permission slip must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school prior to a student attending a field trip. The faculty members in charge of the trip will provide a permission slip with details of the trip (destination, times, transportation, and cost) and a way for the parent to sign up to chaperone.

**Planning Period Expectations**

Each full-time teacher will receive one period in his or her eight-period schedule for planning, which equates to a period approximately every other day. The intention of this time is for curriculum design, grading, phone calls, updating Canvas and Gradebook, collaboration, and similarly, as determined by the professional discretion of each teacher.

## **Testing**

FBCS participates in mandated state testing as designated by the Idaho Department of Education. Faculty members may be scheduled to help in the facilitation of testing or to cover other faculty members while they facilitate. Teachers will use data compiled from state testing in order to create the best teaching techniques in their courses.

## **Grading**

### **Trimester System**

FBCS works on a trimester system rather than a traditional semester. There are three trimesters in a year. At the middle school level, this means that the grading period will occur three times in a school year; struggling students receive three opportunities to elevate overall grades as necessary. In the high school, each trimester acts as a semester course, thereby allowing students to progress at an accelerated pace, and allowing them to access college courses in their junior year (sophomore for some students).

### **Grading Scale**

All students should reach a proficiency level in their work. Students receiving a score less than 70% will receive a *No Credit* [NC] or *Incomplete* [I] mark on their report cards. D's and F's are not deemed proficient, and are therefore not assigned. Every effort will be made to assist students who are not reaching proficiency levels. The grading scale used by FBSC teachers follows:

100-97%	A+	
96-94%	A	Excellent
93-90%	A-	

89-87%	B+	
86-84%	B	Superior
83-80%	B-	
79-77%	C+	
76-74%	C	Satisfactory
73-70%	C-	

### **Homework Policies**

Once homework is completed by a student, teachers have a five-day turnaround time for grading the work and posting scores to Gradebook. If a student has missed days, the teacher must provide that student the equivalent number of days absent to complete any work missed.

### **Progress Reports**

Progress Reports in the High School occur every 3-4 weeks in a trimester. Teachers must post grades two days prior to when hard copies will be mailed.

### **Weekly Planner**

Middle school teachers will sign Student Planners indicating a current grade and any missed assignments. This is the most consistently used form of communication with parents to indicate what assignments are missing, how a student is progressing, and what homework the parents can monitor at home. Planner signing is completed every other week.

### **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued approximately one week after the end of each trimester. Students' grades are to be posted by teachers within one full day after the last day of the trimester.

## Daily Expectations

### **Staff Meetings**

All staff meetings are held during PD/EAD times, occurring approximately every two to three weeks. The agenda is sent to all faculty at least one business day prior to the upcoming meeting.

When the administrative group meets, they send emails with the logistic information to faculty. Faculty members are expected to read their emails for information important to the daily workings of the school as well as any upcoming events.

Building meetings are held on an as-needed basis. Department meetings may occur at any time during the contract year. As event dates near or student issues arise, FBCS Administration may call for additional meetings when needed.

### **Duties**

Teachers are assigned monthly and bi-monthly duties to help in the facilitation of FBCS operating smoothly. Duty schedules are distributed at the beginning of each trimester. If a teacher is not able to fulfill assigned duties, it is that teacher's responsibility to find someone else to cover the duty and notify office personnel of the change. If a teacher is absent, his or her substitute is responsible for assigned duties unless covered by another faculty member.

Teachers are entitled to a duty-free lunch on days they have no prep period. Teachers work together to make the schedule so these needs, as well as preferences, are addressed.

### **Building/Classroom Maintenance**

When faculty members encounter a problem with our facility (i.e., light burnt out, need for toilet paper, or broken chair or table), they should contact the building custodian. If the custodian is unavailable, office personal should be contacted. When faculty members

encounter a problem with technology (i.e., computer not working, projector bulb burnt out, cables missing, or internet connectivity issues), they should email the FBCS Tech Team at [techteam@forrestbirdcharterschool.org](mailto:techteam@forrestbirdcharterschool.org).

## **Building/Classroom Clean Up**

At FBCS, faculty members strive to teach students responsibility within the educational community. One lesson comes in the form of cleaning up the school in various ways. One regular duty involves a third period teacher taking his/her class to clean the lunch room after class has started (MS teachers sign up, HS study lab teacher facilitates clean up). At the end of each day, teachers and students in fourth period are asked to pick up trash, empty trash, stack chairs, and complete a general clean-up of the classroom which they occupy. General upkeep of the classrooms is a faculty and student responsibility.

## **Electronic Access/Professional Development**

### **EAD Definition**

Electronic Access Days are considered regular school days, and students report to school by logging into their courses electronically. Students will receive assignments electronically from each teacher and are accountable for all work assigned on EADs; due dates and late policies will apply. Students are not required to physically attend on EADs unless requested by a teacher. Students may be required to come in to school if they need additional help or are behind with assignments. For students who do report to school on an EAD, the school day starts at 11:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm. Students must sign into school at the front office and sign out when they leave. Those students in school are expected to be in dress code.

Note: if FBCS is over the allotted Snow Days and more are declared, those days automatically revert to EADs. All work and access to lessons for EADs occurs on Canvas (our school LMS). Teachers are required to have lessons prepared for EADs and to check student communications and progress. See Student Handbooks for student expectations.

## **Teacher EAD Expectations**

Assignments are to be designed to require a minimum of approximately 45 minutes of student time. An assessment must accompany any assignment and the late policy applies to EAD work due. The intention of any EAD assignment is that it supplements or provides an extension of work already happening in the classroom. These assignments are to be posted on the teacher's Canvas site. When PD meetings are finished, teachers check in with students who have come to the building to make sure they are working on key assignments and to answer any questions pertaining to assignments. If a teacher has asked a student to come in on an EAD, it is that teacher's responsibility to make sure the student is completing work.

Assignment Examples for an EAD:

- Reading selection with reflective questions
- Writing: essays, rough, revised, outlines, finals
- Worksheets – quizzes or tests
- Project with milestone completed
- Current Event – Power Point, speech, presentation
- Watch video with assessment questions

## **Professional Development Days**

Professional Development (PD) days are planned throughout the contract year and are mandatory for faculty. These days are devoted to collaboration on lessons/projects with colleagues, learning new techniques in teaching, and remaining current on State and Federal education legislation and policies. Teachers may opt to attend PD days outside of FBCS for professional development with prior approval by FBCS Administration.

Professional Development days follow the regular contract day of 7:30 am to 3:30 pm unless noted otherwise. Often, PD days will occur during Electronic Access Days (EAD) as well as scheduled Profession Development days.



## Technology

### **Canvas Expectations**

Canvas is FBCS's learning management system (LMS) which connects staff to parents and absent students. FBCS teachers will create and maintain their Canvas site year to year. Lessons, due dates, student materials, assessments, grades, and the like will be part of their Canvas site. It is an expectation that materials, communications, lessons, and grades are up-to-date on Canvas so students can access learning tools needed for each class and parents can view grades.

### **SchoolMaster/Gradebook**

SchoolMaster is FBCS's overall Student Information System (SIS) for keeping track of cumulative files, academic records, medical records, etc. of all students. Contact information for parents and student schedules can be accessed from SchoolMaster, as can attendance recording and reporting for students. Gradebook is the individual program for teachers attached to SchoolMaster whereby they record assignments, grades, and attendance. Teachers can also find parent information and run progress reports from Gradebook. Gradebook is to be maintained and updated for each progress report to maintain accuracy with Family Link.

### **Family Link**

Students and parents are assigned password-protected logins to Family Link where academic progress, attendance, class sign-up, and fees can be checked regularly. It is each teacher's responsibility to ensure material is graded in a timely manner and progress report grades are updated in Gradebook so that Family Link is as accurate as possible.

## Calendar

### **School Calendar**

At the end of the previous year, the calendar of the forthcoming school year will be available. The calendar contains the schedule of A/B/C days, holidays, Professional Development days, start and end dates, as well as trimester end dates. Many of these dates coincide with dates for our local district; however, they are not all the same. Please check to ensure you have the correct calendar.

## **Master Calendar**

A master calendar can be found in each building office and contains important dates and events for the year. It is the responsibility of faculty to monitor and note dates from the master schedule for their records to minimize conflicts. Teacher start and end dates are also part of this calendar.

## **Dress Code**

### **Philosophy**

The FBCS dress code philosophy is intended to assist in the creation of a positive culture in our school. By creating an easy-to-follow dress code, we can minimize the differences between students, promote a good attitude toward learning, and focus students' attention on schoolwork rather than what they are wearing. Teachers are expected to hold students accountable to dress code.

### **Faculty Dress Code**

It is the belief that FBCS faculty members are teaching professionalism to our students. All staff should dress for school with this in mind. If not dressed in school dress code, the expectation is that faculty wear appropriate, professional attire: slacks, dress shirts, dresses, skirts, and the like. Clothing should be neat and clean. Certain courses and events within a class may require different attire based on the nature of the course/event: P.E., hiking, gardening, field trips, etc.

### **Dress-Down Days**

Periodically throughout the year, students and faculty will be given the opportunity to dress down for the day--wear their choice of clothes, jeans, t-shirts, and the like. These days may occur as a reward for participation in some event, a fundraiser for a local charity, or other special privilege. While faculty is allowed to dress down for these events, faculty is expected to dress professionally in appropriate and clean attire. If a teacher's specific advocacy/advisory class is awarded a dress down day, that teacher may also dress down.

## Evaluations

### **Procedure**

FBCS follows the guidelines as set forth by the State of Idaho, specifically with the use of the Charlotte Danielson framework. FBCS Administration conducts formal and informal observations (via the classroom, Canvas, meetings, and in the halls) throughout the year in order to gather information on certified faculty performance. These observations will be used for Domains 2 & 3 in the Danielson framework. Certified faculty are responsible for preparing artifacts from their classrooms or uploading them to Canvas to demonstrate their skill sets in Domains 1 & 4 of the Danielson framework. Formal evaluations will be conducted during Trimester 3 prior to the state deadline.

### **Due Process**

Certified staff members are provided rights that are constitutional including substantive and procedural due process rights, including the right to receive cause and notice of nonrenewal of contract or termination and right to a hearing.

## Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators

FBCS certified staff members are expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators, as referenced in the Idaho Professional Educators Handbook, issued by the Idaho State Department of Education, Professional Standards Commission. FBCS Administration will provide training once every three years during PD to address Idaho's Code of Ethics and any updates or changes that occur.