**DMPS**

**ALTERNATIVE TEACHER/ BUILDING LEADERS IN URBAN EDUCATION CONTRACT**

HANDBOOK 2016-2017



Think. Learn. **Grow.**

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It is the policy of the Des Moines Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you believe you have (or your child has) been discriminated against or treated unjustly at school, please contact the Equity Coordinator, Isaiah McGee at 2323

Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312, 515-242-7662 Isaiah.mcgee@dmschools.org



*…becoming the model for urban education in the United States.*

Dear DMPS Teachers,

In the spring of 2012, the DMEA and DMPS leadership embarked on a bold plan to provide the most progressive teacher development opportunity in the country. Now, four years into the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract (ATC/BLUE), the entire plan has come to fruition. ATC/BLUE teachers are experiencing robust mentoring and support for their first four years, with additional professional development focused on supporting their efforts to effectively serve our most challenged learners. This past year brought two major developments to the ATC:

1. We now have a real name: the BLUE (Building Leadership in Urban Education) Contract; and more importantly,
2. Our first ATC/BLUE cohort of BLUE teachers are well on their way to completing their Masters of Science from Drake University in Education in Culturally Responsive Leadership & Instruction. Perhaps best of all, ATC/BLUE teachers will earn this master’s degree free of charge.

In the United States, teachers need just four years of college to become licensed teachers. The work of teachers, especially in an urban environment such as Des Moines, is complex, challenging, and demanding. A four year degree simply is not sufficient to adequately prepare you for the success that we want for you and our students. The ATC/BLUE contract is designed to provide you access to support that all new teachers need to develop into the best teachers in the country and to meet the needs of a diverse student population, many of whom live in poverty and whose first language is not English.

I’m proud of the ATC/BLUE contract and of our teachers that have signed on for this opportunity. I expect the ATC/BLUE teachers to become the next generation of leaders for DMPS – both in and out of the classroom. The ATC/BLUE contract will support you in becoming the best of the best. My goal with the ATC/BLUE contract is to improve teacher development; improve teacher longevity; elevate the professionalism of our teacher corps; and most importantly, improve results for our students.

Thank you for stepping up to take on the challenges and the many rewards of being a DMPS ATC/BLUE teacher!

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Ahart

**Thomas M. Ahart, Ed.D.** | Office of the Superintendent

2100 Fleur Drive | Des Moines, Iowa 50321 | P: 515-242-7766 | F: 515-242-7679 [www.dmschools.org](http://www.dmschools.org) facebook.com/dmschools

## PREFACE

This Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract Handbook (hereinafter referred to as the “Handbook”) is prepared for informational purposes only. This Handbook is intended to act as a supplement to the 2015-2016 Comprehensive Agreement between the Des Moines Independent Community School District (hereinafter referred to as the

“District”) and the Des Moines Education Association (hereinafter referred to as "DMEA"). In addition, this Handbook is intended to act as a supplement to the District’s Employment Information Handbook for All Employees (hereinafter referred to as the “Handbook for All Employees”).

This Handbook is a resource to help inform teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract of the expectations and services available. By thoroughly reading this Handbook, the teacher Comprehensive Agreement, and the Handbook for All Employees, teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract will be informed of benefits and opportunities as well as potential consequences for failure to meet the District’s expectations that are outlined in the Board Policy, Employee Handbook, and Iowa Teaching Standards.

The policies contained in this Handbook may be changed or amended at any time through collaborative agreement with DMEA. Teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract will receive one copy of this Handbook annually and are required to review this Handbook annually. In addition, teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract are required to certify that they understand their responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract. Violations of this responsibility may constitute cause for disciplinary action. A copy of this Handbook will also be placed on SharePoint to facilitate efficient notification of amendments throughout the year, if any.

Each year, all teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract must read, complete, and return to their principal a signature form called “VERIFICATION THAT TEACHER UNDERSTANDS THE CONTENTS OF THE ALTERNATIVE TEACHER/BLUE CONTRACT HANDBOOK,” indicating they understand the contents of this Handbook. Signed verification forms must be completed and returned to the Director of Teacher Development on or before September 25. Signed verification forms will also be retained by building principals.

## INITIAL APPLICABILITY

The Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract option is available to any regular full-time certified and regular part-time certified classroom teachers who are new to the teaching profession, as defined in the 2015-2016 Teacher Comprehensive Agreement.

It is the mutual expectation and understanding of the District and DMEA that part-time teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract will participate fully in the requirements of the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract.

## ENROLLMENT IN ALTERNATIVE TEACHER/BLUE CONTRACT

For the 2015-2016 school year, and in future school years, the District will allow any teacher who is new to the teaching profession the option of agreeing to work for the District under the terms of the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract. Teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract will receive documentation, including this Handbook, of their decision to work under the terms of the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract.

Teachers who successfully complete each year of the first four years of teaching under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE

Contract and complete the District professional development program will be renewed under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract for the following year unless the teacher requests to change to the traditional contract (see *Withdrawal from Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract*).

If the teacher does not successfully complete a year under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, he/she will revert to the traditional contract for subsequent years. Reasons why the District may choose not to continue a teacher on the Alternative Contract may include, but are not limited to, tardiness or absences that the District determines are excessive, poor evaluations, and difficulty or inability to perform the requirement of the alternative contract.

## DURATION OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHER/BLUE CONTRACT

It is the intent of the District, and of teachers choosing to work under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, that the teacher shall continue working under the Alternative/BLUE Contract through their first eight years of employment as a teacher with the District.

## WITHDRAWAL FROM ALTERNATIVE TEACHER/BLUE CONTRACT

If, during years one through three working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, a teacher wishes to opt out of future years in the program, they do so by submitting written notification to the DMEA president and to the Executive Director of Human Resources. Requests shall be submitted in writing before July 1st.

If, during years four through eight working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, a teacher wishes to opt out of future years in the program, they may request to do so by submitting written notification to the DMEA president and to the Executive Director of Human Resources. Written notice must be received by both on or before June 30th. The Executive Director of Human Resources will consider additional requests to opt out of the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract on a case-by-case basis. Requests shall be submitted in writing, stating the reason(s) for the request. If a teacher opts out of future years of the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, he/she will be required to reimburse the District for costs associated with the teacher's coursework toward his/her master's degree, per DMPS Board policy.

## EVALUATIONS

Years One through Three:

During the first three years under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, the District will utilize an evaluation team to evaluate teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract. The evaluation team will consist of the teacher’s principal, and two others, including, but not limited to the School Improvement Leaders, District curriculum coordinators, vice-principals, principals from other buildings, or District executive directors. The teacher’s building principal will serve as the evaluator of record. It is the intention that all members of the evaluation team should be certified evaluators; however, there may be limited instances where the evaluation team will consist of one noncertified individual. Prior to using the non-certified individual, the District will notify, and receive approval from, DMEA for the use of the non-certified individual.

The District will formally observe, for the purpose of evaluation, each teacher working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract at least two times during the first semester of each year and at least one time during the second semester of each year.

Years Four through Eight:

During years four through eight under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, the District will evaluate teachers annually. The evaluation will be performed by the teacher’s principal or vice-principal.

## SUPPORT TEAMS

During the first three years under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, the District will assign teachers a three-person support team. The purpose of this support team is to provide mentorship and non-evaluative support. The team will consist of an administrator, one teacher in the same content area or grade level, and one mentor teacher in the same building, as determined by the building principal.

Support teams may be required to mentor several teachers who are in their first three years working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract. The District will strive to ensure members of the support team are not over-burdened and that teachers working under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract have access to quality mentors.

The teacher, the teacher’s support team, or the teacher’s evaluation team may request that the teacher receive a fourth year of support. The request shall be made in writing and presented for approval of the Executive Director of Human Resources. An extension of Support into a fourth year under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract is not equivalent to an extension of the probation period under Iowa Code 279.19.

## TRANSFERS

It is the intent of the District to keep teachers in their original assignment. The District may allow teachers one transfer between buildings during their first eight years. To initiate a transfer, the teacher must notify the Executive Director of Human Resources or his/her designee of their interest to transfer on or before February 1st. (prior to the first round of transfers). An interview may also be held to determine the reason for the transfer. In addition, the teacher may request an interview with a DMEA representative. Upon receiving and accepting the transfer, the teacher must notify HR of the acceptance of the transfer.

Additional transfer requests will be considered by the Executive Director of Human Resources Management or his/her designee on a case-by case basis and will be based on the needs of the teacher and the needs of the school system as determined by the District.

During times of reduction in force, the District may transfer teachers to accommodate its reductions. This reduction in force transfer will not be considered as the teacher initiated transfer.

## WORKWEEK

It is the mutual understanding and expectation of the District, Association, and teachers working under the Alternative Teaching Contract that the teachers working under the Alternative Teaching Contract shall attend and participate in all scheduled professional development activities and additional Workweek activities.

Employees using appropriate leave pursuant to Article XV of the Comprehensive Agreement will not be expected to attend the professional development activities or Workweek activities on the day(s) absent.

Employees who are temporarily unable to perform their responsibilities under the Alternative Teaching Contract, for example, due to a documented medical leave, political activity leave, sabbatical leave, or other unforeseen life event, may request an extension of the Alternative Teaching Contract, not to exceed one school year. The request shall be made in writing and presented for approval to the Executive Director of Human Resources.

Attendance of the requisite professional development activities is expected and may be excused for building required parent teacher conferences. For all other absences that do not fall under Article XV or the aforementioned documented leaves, the teacher under the Alternative Teaching Contract must notify the Director of Teacher Development via e-mail and c/c their building principal 24 hours prior to the absence. Anything beyond 24 hours will be considered unexcused.

If the ATC/BLUE teacher is also a coach/supervisor for Des Moines Public Schools, they are not to miss more than twice regardless of if it is a practice, game, meeting, or event during the current school year. This policy only applies to DMPS coaches/supervisors and will not apply to ATC/BLUE staff member that coaches outside of the District.

If the absence is unavoidable, the following options are available in lieu of attendance of the designated session time/date.

* Attendance of another ATC/BLUE PD session within the same week or within the same ATC/BLUE PD grouping equivalent to the ATC/BLUE year and grade band level.
* Two excused absences are permitted over the course of the current school year.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Years One through Three and a Half (3.5):

During the first three and a half (3.5) years that a teacher works under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, the teacher shall participate in a series of professional development courses provided by, and collaborative developed with the District. Courses may include, but not limited to, topics such as working with students in poverty, working with ELL students, data teams, writing to learn, standards-based assessment, gradual-release instructional model, and classroom management.

Years Three and a Half (3.5) through Six:

Beginning in the second semester of the fourth year that a teacher works under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, the teacher will start coursework that will count toward the teacher’s master’s degree.

During years five through six that a teacher works under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, the teacher shall participate in a series of graduate courses developed collaboratively among the district, the DMEA and an accredited institution of higher education. Courses may include, but not be limited to, topics such as utilizing technology to engage students and improve student learning, content-specific instructional strategies, performance-based assessments, assessment literacy, utilizing data to guide/modify instruction, collaborative evaluation of student work, providing constructive feedback to students, and peer collaboration/feedback strategies.

Teachers who complete the aforementioned curriculum successfully, will fulfill the requirements for a Master’s Degree in Effective Teaching in Urban Education offered through DMPS in cooperation with an accredited institution of higher education.

Years Seven and Eight:

Teachers who successfully complete the District’s master’s degree program will remain with the District for at least an additional two years, serving under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract as teachers, teacher-leaders, mentors, or in other roles, with at least 50% of their time spent in direct contact with students.

If, under the terms of the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract, a teacher successfully completes eight years of teaching as well as the District’s professional development program, earning a master’s degree, the District will renew the teacher for year nine on the Certified Teachers Salary Schedule.

If, after beginning the master’s program, a teacher leaves employment prior to completing eight years of District service, the teacher will be required to reimburse the District for costs associated with the teacher's coursework toward his/her master's degree, per DMPS Board policy.

## ANNUAL CALENDAR

During years one through four, teachers working under the Alternative Teaching Contract shall have two additional days of service for the purpose of participation in professional development activities that are established collaboratively between the District and DMEA. Alternative Teaching Contract teachers will perform one day of service through a full-day professional development day scheduled at the beginningof the school year. Teachers will satisfy the second day of service by performing professional development in smaller segments (i.e., 30, 60, 90, minutes) that, over the course of the school year, accumulate to 7.75 hours.

During years five through eight, teachers working under the Alternative Teaching Contract shall have one additional day of service for the purpose of participation in professional development activities that are established collaboratively between the District and DMEA.

## ATTENDANCE AND LEAVES

It is the mutual understanding and expectation of the District, DMEA, and the teacher that teachers working under the Alternative Teaching Contract shall attend and participate in all scheduled professional development activities and additional workweek activities.

Employees using appropriate leave pursuant to Article XV (Leaves of Absences) of the Comprehensive Agreement will not be expected to attend the professional development activities or workweek activities on the day(s) absent. Employees who are temporarily unable to perform their responsibilities under the Alternative Teaching Contract may request an extension of the Alternative Teaching Contract, not to exceed one consecutive school year. The request shall be made in writing and presented for approval to the Executive Director of Human Resources.

Attendance of the requisite professional development activities is expected and may be excused for building required parent teacher conferences. For all other absences that do not fall under Article XV or the aforementioned documented leaves, the teacher under the Alternative Teaching Contract must notify the Director of Teacher Development via e-mail and c/c their building principal 24 hours prior to the absence. Any absence that does not meet these requirements, will be considered unexcused.

If the ATC/BLUE teacher is also an activities coach/supervisor for Des Moines Public Schools, they are not to miss more than twice regardless of if it is a practice, game, meeting, or event during the current school year. This policy only applies to DMPS activities coaches/supervisors and will not apply to ATC/BLUE staff members that coach outside of the District.

The following options are available in lieu of attendance of the designated session time/date, per the discretion of the Director of Teacher Development.

* Attendance of another ATC/BLUE PD session within the same week or within the same ATC/BLUE PD grouping equivalent to the ATC/BLUE year and grade band level.
* Two excused absences are permitted over the course of the current school year.

## COMPENSATION

Years One through Four:

During years one through four, teachers who successfully complete one year of service under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract will receive an increase of pay equivalent to 1% of their base pay.

If the Evaluation Team determines the teacher made adequate progress in the aforementioned professional development program, the teacher will, instead, receive a salary increase equivalent to 1.5% of their base pay.

Years Five through Eight:

During years five through eight, teachers who successfully complete one year of service and make adequate progress in the professional development and master’s program under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract will receive an increase of pay equivalent to 1% of their base pay.

If the Evaluation Team determines the teacher successfully achieved student learning growth targets (outlined below), the teacher will, instead, receive a salary increase equivalent to 1.5% of their base pay.

Year Nine:

Teachers who have successfully completed eight years under the Alternative Teacher/BLUE Contract will have earned a master’s Degree in Effective Teaching in Urban Education through the District program and an accredited university. Teacher will be placed on the Certified Teachers Salary Schedule at the appropriate cell commensurate with their years of District service and education.

## STUDENT LEARNING GROWTH TARGETS

Teachers in years five (5) through eight (8) will have the option of earning another 0.5% increase on their base salary by meeting student learning growth targets. Building administration and the teacher shall mutually agree on teacher growth targets and how they will be assessed. It is recognized that growth targets may vary from teacher to teacher, team to team, and building to building.

Growth targets shall be based on the needs of students and shall clearly demonstrate meaningful student learning. Growth targets shall be respectful of multiple intelligences, varied student needs, and different learning modalities, demonstrated through a variety of measures, including, but not limited to, portfolios, presentations, written work samples, essays, performances, projects, and tests. Growth targets must be based on the curriculum being taught and the district graduate ends and shall never be based solely on nationally available, norm-reference tests.

If the teacher meets student growth targets, the teacher shall receive the aforementioned additional compensation. If the teacher does not meet the student growth targets, there will be no evaluative repercussions. Teachers are encouraged, with support from their team, to reflect on student growth target results and consider if adjustments in the teacher’s practice and/or assessment method should be adjusted for the subsequent year.