

**MASTER AGREEMENT**  
Between  
**THE FREEDOM EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION**  
**NEA-NH**  
**&**  
**THE FREEDOM SCHOOL BOARD**  
Freedom, NH  
**July 1, 2024**  
to  
**June 30, 2027**

## Table of Contents

ARTICLE I: RECOGNITION.....	1
ARTICLE II: DEFINITIONS.....	1
ARTICLE III: SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORITY.....	1
ARTICLE IV: ASSOCIATION RIGHTS.....	1
A. Pay Deductions.....	1
ARTICLE V: WORKING CONDITIONS.....	2
A. Professional Staff Time Requirements.....	2
B. Paraprofessional Staff Time Requirements.....	3
C. Vacancies and Promotion.....	3
D. Teacher Student Relations.....	4
E. Complaints Against an Employee.....	4
F. Evaluation of Employees.....	5
G. Records.....	5
H. Discipline.....	5
I. Resignation.....	5
ARTICLE VI: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE.....	6
A. Purpose.....	6
B. Definitions.....	6
C. Submission of grievance.....	6
D. Procedure.....	7
ARTICLE VII: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	7
A. Course Reimbursement (Professional Staff).....	7
B. Course Reimbursement (Paraprofessionals).....	8
C. Educational Development (Paraprofessionals).....	8
D. Educational Development (Professional Staff).....	8
ARTICLE VIII: COMPENSATION.....	9
A. Salaries and Wages.....	9
B. Payment Schedule.....	9
C. Initial Placement on the Salary Schedule.....	9
D. Track Changes.....	10
E. Longevity.....	10
ARTICLE IX: BENEFITS.....	10
A. Medical Insurance (Professionals and Paraprofessionals).....	10
B. Flexible Benefits and Reimbursement Account.....	11
C. Retiree Medical Insurance (Professionals and Paraprofessionals).....	11
D. Dependent Care Reimbursement.....	11
E. Dental Insurance.....	11
F. Life Insurance.....	11
G. Long Term Disability Insurance.....	12
H. Early Retirement.....	12
ARTICLE X: LEAVES.....	12
A. Personal Illness.....	12
B. Family Leave.....	13
C. Personal-Business Leave.....	14

D.	Bereavement Leave.....	14
E.	Legal.....	14
F.	Other Leave.....	15
G.	Leave of Absence.....	15
ARTICLE XI: GENERAL PROVISIONS.....		15
A.	Savings Clause.....	15
ARTICLE XII: DURATION.....		15

## **ARTICLE I: RECOGNITION**

Subject to the terms of provisions herein after provided, and in accordance with provisions of RSA 273-A and other applicable New Hampshire State Law, the Freedom School District recognizes the Freedom School Employees' Association/NEA-NH as the exclusive collective bargaining representative for classroom teachers, specialists (music, art, physical education, media, reading), special education teachers, paraprofessionals, aides, guidance counselors, and nurses.

## **ARTICLE II: DEFINITIONS**

Within this agreement (CBA), the term “teacher” means an employee who is certified as a teacher, is under contract as a teacher, and whose primary work is teaching.

The terms “professional staff” and “professional employee” refer to teachers and other certified and or licensed, salaried professionals employed by the Freedom School District and are covered by this CBA. Such positions include guidance counselor, nurse, media specialist, speech/language therapist, and certified paraprofessionals.

The terms “employee” and “staff member(s)” mean all members of the bargaining unit, including non-exempt employees. Neither these terms nor this CBA apply to bus drivers, administrative assistant, custodians, or principal.

## **ARTICLE III: SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORITY**

Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement and to the provisions of the Revised Statutes Annotated relating to public schools, it shall be the exclusive function of the Freedom School Board and the superintendent of schools to control, maintain, operate, and supervise the educational activities in the Freedom Public School; to select, train, assign, transfer and promote the professional employees, and to periodically evaluate and determine their qualifications; to discipline, suspend, or dismiss employees in the manner provided by law; to establish, change and discontinue the duties to be performed by the professional employees including the right to introduce improved methods, facilities, operations, procedures, services and techniques; to establish, modify and enforce policies and regulations regarding studies, curriculum, textbooks, conduct, student or visitor discipline, schedules, and safety regulations; and all other rights pertaining to the operation and management of the school district.

## **ARTICLE IV: ASSOCIATION RIGHTS**

### **A. Pay Deductions**

Payroll deductions, in addition to those required by law, are possible under the following conditions.

1. The purchase of tax-sheltered annuities for all full time employees. Each participant authorizes the school district to withhold the premiums for the annuity from his/her salary.
2. Employees electing payroll deductions for direct deposit in a financial institution of their choice, shall notify the business office by completing a "Direct Deposit Authorization" form available on the SAU 13 website or Office. The business office will transmit deductions bi-weekly to the authorized financial institution of choice.
3. The Board agrees to deduct membership dues of the association upon proper written notification and authorization by the employee on the basis that the employee may withdraw at any time upon thirty (30) calendar day written notice. The board is held harmless for any disputes concerning the deduction of association dues.

## **ARTICLE V: WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **A. Professional Staff Time Requirements**

#### **1. Work Year**

The professional staff work year shall be the number of student days plus nine (9) days. Non-student days shall include one (1) classroom setup day, six (6) teacher workshop days, and two (2) parent conference days. The classroom setup day shall include no meetings scheduled by the employer; the day shall be self-scheduled by professional employees. Two (2) teacher workshop days shall be scheduled before the first student day. The other days shall be used for programs which provide meaningful professional growth and shall be established before the first work day of the school year. The work year shall not exceed 185 days. Newly hired employees may be required to attend a new staff orientation day in addition to the professional staff work year.

#### **2. Daily Time Requirements**

a. As a professional, each teacher is expected to work the time necessary to accomplish the task at hand. Each teacher recognizes the professional responsibility to provide the best possible opportunity to each student, and that responsibility carries beyond the normal school day. This responsibility includes availability to meet with students and parents, to attend department and other staff meetings designed to provide meaningful professional growth or to clarify school business in general, and to participate in other school related activities at the request of the administration.

b. The teacher's day usually shall not exceed one (1) hour beyond the student's normal day. Employees shall be required to be at the school no longer than seven (7) and one (1) half hours in a day with the following exceptions: Professional employees shall attend five (5) evening or weekend events during the school year lasting up to two (2) hours beyond the student day. Evening events shall include open house, the holiday concert, graduation, and two (2) additional community events. At least one (1) professional

employee shall attend each of the five (5) community events scheduled by the District no later than September 30.

## **B. Paraprofessional Staff Time Requirements**

### **1. Work Year**

The paraprofessional work year shall include the number of student days plus nine (9) days and shall coincide with the professional work year. Paraprofessionals shall be paid for a full workday for every day which the NH Department of Education credits as a full school day. The District will pay employees 1.5 times their regular hourly rate for paid hours in excess of 40 in a week.

The District may assign paraprofessional employees to attend five (5) evening or weekend events during the school year lasting up to two (2) hours beyond the student day. Evening events shall include open house, the holiday concert, graduation, and two (2) additional community events. At least one (1) paraprofessional employee shall attend each of five community events scheduled by the District no later than September 30.

### **2. Holidays**

All hourly employees working 20 hours per week or more shall be paid for the following holidays.

- Labor Day
- Indigenous Peoples' Day (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in October)
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Memorial Day

## **C. Vacancies and Promotion**

### **1. Assignment of Personnel**

The basic consideration in the assignment of personnel is the overall well-being of the program of instruction. The appropriateness of the assignment will have a significant impact on the morale of the professional staff and the effectiveness of the total educational program.

Personnel will be assigned on the basis of their qualifications, the needs of the district, and the staff member's expressed desires. When it is not possible to meet all three conditions, personnel shall be assigned first in accordance with the needs of the school district, second where the administration feels the staff member is most qualified to serve.

and third based on the expressed preferences of the employee(s). Under no circumstances will professional personnel be assigned to positions for which they are not qualified and certified.

## 2. Promotion

When an administrative position becomes vacant, the Freedom School Board and the superintendent will give careful consideration to members of the staff who might be qualified for the position.

## **D. Teacher Student Relations**

The Freedom School Board accepts the principle that the relationship of teacher and a student should be one of cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect.

As the director of learning experiences within the classroom, the teacher is expected to exercise good interpersonal relationships with each student. The teacher has a responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning, to help the student to develop an open and inquiring mind, and to motivate each student to perform at his/her capacity.

The teacher should seek an understanding of the individual student's interests, talents, and abilities; and strive to motivate him/her to the highest possible intellectual, moral, and physical development. This should include the development of an ability to study issues without prejudice, to withhold judgments while facts are being collected, assembled, and weighed and relationships seen before drawing inferences or conclusions.

The teacher shall strive to secure individual and group discipline by leading the students into interesting classroom activities and by forming the proper room environment.

Although kindness and sympathetic understanding shall prevail in handling and disciplining students, it should be backed by firmness. The two should be used together realistically.

## **E. Complaints Against an Employee**

1. Complaints against an employee will be addressed in accordance with the following procedure. Anyone who wishes to complain about an employee must (1) first meet with the employee, (2) if dissatisfied, meet with the principal, and (3) if still dissatisfied, with the superintendent of schools. As an exception to this procedure, anyone who desires to make a criminal charge against an employee may do so with a law enforcement agency. However, no action shall be taken on such a charge until the accused has been notified of the charge, been given an opportunity to make a statement regarding it, to face his/her accuser, to produce witnesses or other evidence in his/her behalf, to be represented by legal counsel, and to take any other action which is his/her right under the rules of due process. No member of the Freedom School Board will meet with any person wishing to complain about any employee until that person has followed the proper procedure.

2. No employee shall be disciplined except for a just cause.

## **F. Evaluation of Employees**

1. Employee evaluations shall serve four purposes:
  - a. To raise the quality of performance;
  - b. To aid the individual to grow in his/her position;
  - c. To identify the individual's strengths and weaknesses;
  - d. To aid the School Board in making a decision in regard to re-employment.

Each employee shall be given the evaluation report and shall have the opportunity to discuss such report with the evaluator. After such discussion, the employee shall sign the report, but the signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with its content. If the employee disagrees with the evaluation or report, he/she may add a written response to the evaluation report; which shall be placed in the employee's personnel file and attached to the related document(s). At the time of signing, the employee shall be given a copy of the evaluation.

## **G. Records**

1. Such records as the Freedom School Board deems necessary for the proper administration of the school system shall be kept on each employee. Upon written request, an employee shall have the right to review, at a time mutually convenient between the employee and the administrator, the contents of his/her file in the central office, excepting, however, any confidential references. At an employee's request, a witness of his/her choice may accompany the employee in such review. The review shall be made in the presence of an administrative staff member who shares responsibility for the safekeeping of such files. The employee may use District or SAU equipment to copy their personnel file.

## **H. Discipline**

1. In case of dismissal or failure to be re-nominated or reelected, in addition to the rights of hourly employees and non-teacher professionals contained in this Agreement, a teacher's rights are specified in sections 189:14, 189:14a, and 189:14b of the Revised Statutes Annotated relating to public schools.

## **I. Resignation**

1. Any employee wishing to resign shall give 30 days written notice to the chairperson of the Freedom School Board or the superintendent of schools. The superintendent may waive the 30-day delay in effective date if s/he feels doing so is in the best interest of the district.



- a. Any teacher who resigns after July 1 may be required to teach in the next academic year until the superintendent can find a replacement who is elected by the Freedom School Board and available to work, or until October 15, whichever comes first.
- b. Any staff member who resigns after July 1 may be required by the board to reimburse the district for pro-rated health and dental benefits between July 1 and the date their resignation is received by the board chairman or the superintendent.

## **ARTICLE VI: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The Board and the Association agree to the method defined in this Agreement to settle all grievances.

### **A. Purpose**

It is the policy of the Board and the Association that all grievances be resolved informally or at the earliest possible stage of this grievance procedure.

### **B. Definitions**

1. A "grievance" is any alleged violation of this Agreement or any dispute with respect to its meaning or application.
2. An "employee" is any person in the unit covered by this Agreement.
3. "Aggrieved employee" shall refer to the person making the complaint or the Association.
4. "Days" shall refer to days when employees are required to work.

### **C. Submission of grievance**

1. The Association or an employee may submit grievances, which affect them personally and shall submit such grievances to the building principal.
2. Before submission of a written grievance the aggrieved employee must attempt to resolve it informally.
3. Each written grievance shall identify the aggrieved employee, the provision of this agreement involved in the grievance, the time when and the place where the alleged events or conditions constituting the grievance existed and, if known, the identity of the person responsible for causing such events or conditions and a general statement of the grievance and redress sought by the aggrieved employee.
4. A grievance shall be deemed waived unless it is submitted within fifteen (15) days after the aggrieved employee knew or should have known of the events or conditions on which it is based.

The Board and the Association, for itself and as the representative of the professional employees, agree that the procedure defined in this Agreement shall be used to settle all grievances.

**D. Procedure**

A grievance shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

Step 1. A grievance shall be filed in writing with the principal, and there shall be a prompt discussion of the grievance between the aggrieved employee and principal. The principal shall respond in writing to the grievance received within five (5) working days.

Step 2. If the grievance is not settled in Step 1, the grievance shall be filed in writing with the superintendent of schools. The superintendent shall, upon request, confer with the aggrieved employee with respect to the grievance and shall advise the aggrieved employee in writing of the decision concerning the grievance within ten (10) working days after the superintendent receives it.

Step 3. If the grievance is not settled in Step 2, the aggrieved employee may request, in writing a hearing with the Freedom School Board, on the grievance, at their next regular meeting. Such request shall be given to the superintendent at least eight (8) working days prior to the board meeting so it may appear on the agenda. The Freedom School Board shall respond to the grievance within ten (10) working days after the meeting.

Step 4. Arbitration. If the decision of the board does not resolve a grievance to the satisfaction of the employee and s/he wishes review by a third party, s/he must so notify the association within 14 calendar days of receipt of the board's decision. The association may, at its discretion, then initiate a request for arbitration under Labor Arbitration Rules of the American Arbitration Association within thirty (30) calendar days of the board's decision. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding. However, the arbitrator's review shall be limited to interpreting the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. The arbitrator is prohibited from adding, subtracting, or amending any terms herein. An arbitrator's ruling is subject to judicial review only in cases when either of the parties believes the arbitrator's findings exceed his or her authority.

**ARTICLE VII: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**A. Course Reimbursement (Professional Staff)**

The Freedom School Board encourages professional staff to avail themselves of higher education opportunities. To this end, the district shall reimburse full-time professional staff members for pre-approved courses at an amount not to exceed the University of New Hampshire current, on campus, continuing education, graduate credit hour tuition rate for New Hampshire residents. In no instance shall professional staff receive more than the actual cost up to the maximum of twelve (12) credit hours in any one school year. For professional staff working less than full-time, he/she will be reimbursed at a pro-rated credit hour tuition rate based on his/her part-time

employment equivalency (PTEE) (e.g., a .40 PTEE professional will be reimbursed at 40% of the credit hour tuition rate). Approved courses are those that the superintendent deems to have direct and meaningful application to the position held by the employee. For reimbursement the course must be successfully completed with an A or B grade, or equivalent passing grade if letter grades are not given. The cost of no more than 42 total credits per year will be paid by the Freedom School District to its professional staff covered by this CBA. Distribution of the reimbursements is to be determined by the FEA (Freedom Employee's Association). The FEA acknowledges that its distribution of reimbursement funds must comply with all laws and with school district policy, especially anti-discrimination policies. The administration and board shall be held harmless by FEA members from accusations of discrimination in the distribution of reimbursable credits. FEA shall be solely responsible for non-discriminatory practices.

**B. Course Reimbursement (Paraprofessionals)**

The Freedom School Board encourages paraprofessionals to avail themselves of higher education opportunities. The district will reimburse full-time paraprofessionals for pre-approved courses at an amount not to exceed the University of New Hampshire current, on campus, continuing education graduate credit hour tuition rate for New Hampshire residents. In no instance shall paraprofessionals receive more than the actual cost up to the maximum of three (3) credit hours in any one school year. For a paraprofessional working less than full-time, he/she will be reimbursed at a pro-rated credit hour tuition rate based on his/her part-time employment equivalency (PTEE) (e.g., a .40 PTEE professional will be reimbursed at 40% of the credit hour tuition rate). Requests for course reimbursement must be approved in advance by the superintendent, who is authorized to approve only those that are likely to increase the employee's capacity to contribute to the school district.

**C. Educational Development (Paraprofessionals)**

Paraprofessionals shall be granted one or more paid day(s) per year to attend workshop(s) that pertain to their job. The total allowance for workshop fees per year is \$500 per employee. This amount is all inclusive and encompasses the workshop fee, travel (IRS rate applies), lodging, meals, materials, and all other associated costs. The exception is that when an employee is *required* to participate in a specific professional development activity, the full cost of the activity shall be reimbursable, without regard to the \$500 total per employee. The superintendent must approve workshop attendance in advance. Workshop fees are reimbursed upon receipt of proof of payment and proof of attendance.

**D. Educational Development (Professional Staff)**

1. The Freedom School Board agrees to pay reasonable expenses incurred for school activities, not to exceed a total yearly expenditure of \$500.00 per professional staff member, which shall include all costs, such as mileage (at the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate), meals, lodging, materials, and workshop fees. Such activities and expenses must be approved in advance by the superintendent and will be at his/her sole discretion. When the professional

development is required by the district, the number of days and amount of reimbursement per day may be exceeded, with all pre-approved costs being reimbursed.

2. If an employee's regular schedule requires travel to more than one site within a single work day, the board will reimburse the employee for mileage between the work sites at the IRS rate. This reimbursement requires the employee to provide records of the days and distances traveled. Reimbursement shall be at least quarterly. This is separate and above the above limitation described in paragraph one of this section.

## **ARTICLE VIII: COMPENSATION**

### **A. Salaries and Wages**

1. Salaries and wages shall be based on the salary and wage schedule corresponding to each year of this agreement as detailed under Appendix A.
2. Within the terms of this contract, additional monies for employee compensation will be considered by the board on the basis of merit. The amount and process for earning additional compensation must be agreed to by the association and the board and adopted as an addendum.
3. Employees employed for more than 90 days during the preceding year shall advance one (1) step on the wage or salary schedule on July 1.
4. Head teacher stipend of \$5,000, which may be a shared position between two eligible employees, is to be paid in two (2) installments, one on or before December 1, and the remainder in the final paycheck of the year.

### **B. Payment Schedule**

1. A professional employee's salary shall be divided either into 22 or 26 equal biweekly payments, at the employee's direction. The balance of salary will be paid in a lump sum on the last payment in June.
2. All paraprofessionals shall be paid bi-weekly.

### **C. Initial Placement on the Salary Schedule**

Steps on the salary and wage schedules shall correspond to years of experience. No newly hired employee shall be placed at a step higher than a current employee with equivalent experience.

**D. Track Changes**

Employees must inform the District of a potential track change by December 1, of the year before the track change is to take effect. Track changes are not retroactive and take effect on the first day of the contract year *after* the employee provides a transcript proving that the credits have been earned.

**E. Longevity**

1. Professional Staff who have worked for Freedom School District for 10 (ten) or more years shall receive an annual longevity supplement according to the following schedule:
  - a. 10 completed years of employment \$500.00
  - b. 15 to 19 years of employment \$1500.00
  - c. 20 to 24 years of employment \$3000.00
  - d. 25 or more years of employment \$6500.00
2. Paraprofessionals who have worked for the district for 15 (fifteen) or more years shall receive an annual longevity supplement of \$500.00.
3. This money is to be paid on or before December 1 of the school year.
4. Longevity supplements will be pro-rated from 37.5 hours for employees working less than 37.5 hour weeks.

**ARTICLE IX: BENEFITS**

**A. Medical Insurance (Professionals and Paraprofessionals)**

1. Freedom School District will pay 95% of the cost of a single and 80% of the cost of a two person or family policy for school years 2024-2025, 2025-2026, and 2026-2027 in a SchoolCare Yellow Open Access with Choice Fund for each employee who works 37.5 hours per week. Benefits will be prorated for individuals working 80% and above, no health benefit for professional staff working less than 80% FTE. Hourly staff working at least 30 hours per week are eligible for medical insurance. Hourly staff working fewer than 30 hours per week are not eligible for health benefits.
2. The CDHP is designed to avoid the Affordable Care Act (ACA) excise tax. If at any point the school district provided health care plan exceeds the ACA premium threshold, thus triggering the excise tax, then the parties agree to reopen negotiations on the subject of the payment of the excise tax.
3. The Freedom School District may obtain such insurance from a different carrier provided the

benefits are equivalent.

4. Each eligible employee who elects to decline medical insurance coverage will receive a salary supplement of \$10,000.00. This supplement is to be paid on or before December 1 of the school year. The supplement shall be pro-rated from 37.5 hours for employees working less than 37.5 hours per week. No benefits for staff working less than 30 hours per week.

**B. Flexible Benefits and Reimbursement Account**

1. Employee contributions to insurance will be paid through payroll deductions using pre-tax dollars in accordance with IRS Section 125 regulations.

**C. Retiree Medical Insurance (Professionals and Paraprofessionals)**

Consistent with NH RSA 100-A:50, the District shall permit employees upon retirement to continue to participate in the same medical insurance or health care group or plan as it's active employees. Coverage for spouses, other family members and beneficiaries of retirees shall also be permitted.

**D. Dependent Care Reimbursement**

The Freedom School Board will establish a Dependent Care Reimbursement Account consistent with federal and state law for employees who desire to take advantage of this tax reducing incentive. Employees may deposit up to the maximum amount allowed by law into this account.

**E. Dental Insurance**

The Freedom School Board agrees to pay for each employee who works 30 hours or more per week, the cost of a single membership for the following coverage: Delta Dental - Coverage A, 100%, no deductible; Coverage B, 80%, no deductible; Coverage C, 50% with a contract year maximum of \$1000.00. The Board further agrees to pay the above coverage on a pro-rated basis for each employee who works 20 or less regular hours per week. The Board agrees to include a family plan option with the employee paying the difference between the family coverage and the amount paid by the district as described above. The Freedom School District may obtain such insurance from a different carrier provided the benefits are equivalent.

**F. Life Insurance**

The Freedom School Board will pay the premium for each employee who works 30 hours or more for a Group Term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance Policy (\$20,000.00 life insurance / \$20,000.00 accidental death and dismemberment). The Freedom School Board further agrees to pay the above coverage, on a prorated basis, for each employee

who works 20 hours or more per week. The selection of the Group Term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Policy will be at the sole discretion of the Freedom School Board.

**G. Long Term Disability Insurance**

The Freedom School District will provide Long Term Disability Insurance for all employees who work thirty (30) hours or more per week. The insurance will replace 2/3 of the employee's salary in the event of a long-term disability after a 90-day exclusion period.

**H. Early Retirement**

1. Any full time salaried employee, with 20 years of service or more with the Freedom School District, may submit to the board a request for early retirement. The request will be a notification to the board of intent to retire early effective on June 30<sup>th</sup>, and will be in the form of a letter of resignation. The letter represents a conditional commitment and is null and void:
  - a. If the board fails to approve the employee early retirement benefits; or
  - b. If the employee chooses not to retire and notifies the board by December 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year the request was submitted. This date is in no way a deadline for submission of an early retirement request, only the date that an employee can rescind his or her letter of resignation to the Board.
2. All requests will be considered in order of seniority. The board will automatically approve the request of the employee with most seniority if she/he has provided 20 years or more of service to the district and may approve others in order of seniority.
3. Employees approved for early retirement shall receive either,
  - a. A contribution of \$14,000 per year for three years toward health insurance if they opt to continue to participate in the school's plan or
  - b. Cash payment of \$14,000 per year for three years.

**ARTICLE X: LEAVES**

**A. Personal Illness**

1. The District will grant employees twelve (12) days of sick leave annually, credited on the first work day of the school year for returning employees and accrued at the rate of 1.2 days per month for employees in their first year of employment. Any salaried employee working part time will receive twelve (12) days of leave at the employee's part-time daily rate. Hourly employees may use leave in increments of one half hour. Salaried employees may use leave in increments of one half day. Sick leave days may be used for an employee's

personal illness, to attend to an ill or injured family member. The term "family member" shall mean spouse, sibling, (step)children, and (step)parents, grandparents, and significant other. If in the opinion of the superintendent a relationship exists similar to that of the immediate family relationships, this leave may be granted. Sick leave days may be used to take a family member residing in the household or dependent upon the employee to a doctor's appointment. The District may require documentation from a medical professional for any leave longer than three (3) days.

Any employee who exhausts their leave may request additional leave from the Freedom School Board. All requests must be made in writing, explaining the nature of the illness, and providing a specific number of additional sick days requested. Employees shall notify the principal of their illness as soon as possible and in accordance with school guidelines in order to allow sufficient time for substitute arrangements, if necessary, to be made.

2. Absence due to injury incurred by an employee in the course of employment shall not be charged against his/her sick leave days. The Freedom School Board shall pay to such employee the difference between his/her salary, after statutory deductions and benefits received under Workmen's Compensation Act for the duration of the employee's contract and refers to only the dollar difference payment and not to the terms of the Workmen's Compensation policy which could extend beyond the terms of the employee's contract.

#### **B. Family Leave**

1. Any qualifying leave under the Family Medical Leave Act shall be paid leave.
2. The District shall waive the requirement for employees to have performed 1,250 hours of work during the previous twelve months to be eligible for FMLA leave.
3. If an employee becomes disabled, the District will pay the employer's share of medical, dental, and life insurance coverage for up to twelve (12) months after the date of disability.
4. Upon returning to service, the employee shall be assigned to the same duties, or those of a similar nature as determined by the administration, as were performed prior to the beginning of the absence.
5. Any employee returning to the employment of the Freedom School District from family leave shall be regarded as retaining the period of probationary service achieved prior to his/her family leave, but none of the time on family leave shall count toward continuing contract rights.
6. The board may extend leave beyond 90 days in response to a written request. The board may require the employee to provide the superintendent with documentation certifying the need for more leave and the likely length of the additional leave requested.



### **C. Personal-Business Leave**

1. The Freedom School Board will grant employees up to three (3) days of personal leave in any one year for the completion of legal, personal, or other business that can not reasonably be scheduled outside of school hours. Such leave shall not be cumulative from year to year.
2. The employee shall request leave from the principal as soon as is practical after they become aware of the need.
3. Use of personal leave shall only be granted with the approval of the principal, but approval shall only be withheld in such instance as in the judgment of the principal will hamper the school in its ability to fulfill its educating function. Prior approval from the superintendent will be required for days that are just prior to and just after a vacation period.
4. All employees will be required to certify that requested personal leave is for an approved reason only at the time of each request. However, employees will not be required to disclose their reason.
5. Personal days must be used in increments of no less than half a day.
6. The District shall buy back unused personal-business leave days at the rate of \$50 per day. Payment shall be issued in the employee's final paycheck of the year.

0. **E.**

### **Bereavement Leave**

Employees shall be allowed a maximum of five (5) days of leave per year with pay (not accumulative) in case of death of a member of their immediate family. These days cannot be carried over from the prior year. The term "immediate family" shall be construed to mean spouse, sibling, (step)children, and (step)parents, grandparents, and significant other. If in the opinion of the superintendent a relationship exists similar to that of the immediate family relationships, this leave may be granted.

ε. **F.**

### **Legal**

1. If it is necessary for an employee to serve as a juror, she/he shall be reimbursed the difference between his/her regular pay and jury pay.
2. If an employee is utilized as a witness or appears before a hearing officer or court as an employee of the School District, the individual shall be paid unless they are currently serving a leave without pay.

**G.**

### **Other Leave**

The Freedom School Board may grant other leaves of absence, with pay or without pay and with or without benefits. Every leave so granted, whether treated individually or collectively over a number of years, shall not be considered as custom, habit, or precedent to justify the rights to be granted leave of the same type in the future.

**H.**

### **Leave of Absence**

Leave of absence, without pay and with or without benefits, for an established period of up to one (1) year may be granted at the discretion of the Freedom School Board to employees who have worked for the district for three (3) or more years.

1. Employees taking such leaves shall retain all accrued benefits to which they were entitled at the date of their leave. Leave requests be submitted to the superintendent in writing by April 1st for leaves commencing September 1<sup>st</sup> and generally should be submitted 3 months or more prior to the leave. For leaves of one month or longer, the applicant will also verify their intended date of return two weeks prior to their return to work.
2. A teacher whose leave of absence has been approved may buy into, at their expense, the health and dental plans while on leave.
3. An employee returning from leave of absence shall be placed on the step of the salary or wage schedule he/she would have attained at the time he/she went on leave, and will not get a step for the leave of absence. Employees may earn a track change while on leave as long as the superintendent is notified consistent with Article VIII. Employees taking such leaves shall retain all accrued benefits, but may not be entitled to any benefits while on leave.
4. On return from a leave of absence, an employee will be assigned to the same position which he/she had at the time said leave commenced, if available, or if not, to an equivalent position as determined by the Freedom School Board.

## **ARTICLE XI: GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **A. Savings Clause**

If any provision of this Agreement is held to be contrary to law, then such provision shall be deemed invalid, but all other provisions shall be deemed valid and continue in full force and effect.

## **ARTICLE XII: DURATION**

This Agreement will be in effect beginning July 1, 2024 and expire on June 30, 2027.

By mutual written agreement the Board and the Association may extend this Agreement beyond the designated time limitations. Either party may request that the contract be reopened for negotiations during the term of the contract.

In witness where of the parties hereto have caused the Agreement to be signed by their respective Chairpersons attested by their respective secretary and/or clerk all on the day and year first written above.

FREEDOM EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

By/s/ [Signature]  
Chairperson, Freedom Employees' Association

6/5/24  
Date

Witness [Signature]

6/5/24  
Date

FREEDOM SCHOOL BOARD

By/s/ [Signature]  
Chairperson, Freedom School Board

5/9/24  
Date

Witness [Signature]

5/9/24  
Date

**Salary and Wage Schedule 2024-2025**

<b>Step</b>	<b>AA</b>	<b>BA</b>	<b>BA+15</b>	<b>BA+30</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>MA+15</b>	<b>MA+30</b>
1	37,850	46,250	47,500	48,500	52,000	53,750	55,750
2	39,929	47,901	49,308	50,588	54,258	56,484	58,621
3	41,107	49,552	51,116	52,676	56,516	59,218	61,492
4	42,286	51,203	52,924	54,763	58,774	61,952	64,368
5	43,464	52,853	54,732	56,851	61,032	64,687	67,635
6	44,643	54,504	56,540	58,939	63,290	67,421	70,106
7	45,821	56,155	58,348	61,027	65,548	70,155	72,977
8	47,000	57,806	60,156	63,114	67,806	72,889	75,848

**Paraprofessional Wage Schedule  
2024-2025**

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>
0	\$21.00
1	\$22.00
2	\$23.00
3	\$24.00
4+	\$25.00

The Title 1 Tutor position is a bargaining unit position and will receive hourly pay determined by the District and communicated to the Association, not less than the paraprofessional wage.

**Salary and Wage Schedule 2025-2026**  
3.50%

<b>Step</b>	<b>AA</b>	<b>BA</b>	<b>BA+15</b>	<b>BA+30</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>MA+15</b>	<b>MA+30</b>
1	39,175	47,869	49,163	50,198	53,820	55,631	57,701
2	41,327	49,578	51,034	52,359	56,157	58,461	60,673
3	42,546	51,286	52,905	54,520	58,494	61,291	63,644
4	43,766	52,995	54,776	56,680	60,831	64,120	66,621
5	44,985	54,703	56,648	58,841	63,168	66,951	70,002
6	46,206	56,412	58,519	61,002	65,505	69,781	72,560
7	47,425	58,120	60,390	63,163	67,842	72,610	75,531
8	48,645	59,829	62,261	65,323	70,179	75,440	78,503

**Paraprofessional Wage Schedule**  
**2025-2026**

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>
0	\$21.74
1	\$22.77
2	\$23.81
3	\$24.84
4+	\$25.88

The Title I Tutor position is a bargaining unit position and will receive hourly pay determined by the District and communicated to the Association, not less than the paraprofessional wage.

**Salary and Wage Schedule 2026-2027**

3.50%

Step	AA	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30
1	40,546	49,544	50,883	51,954	55,704	57,578	59,721
2	42,773	51,313	52,820	54,191	58,123	60,507	62,796
3	44,035	53,081	54,757	56,428	60,541	63,436	65,872
4	45,298	54,850	56,694	58,663	62,960	66,365	68,953
5	46,560	56,617	58,630	60,900	65,379	69,294	72,452
6	47,823	58,386	60,567	63,137	67,798	72,223	75,099
7	49,085	60,155	62,504	65,374	70,217	75,152	78,175
8	50,348	61,923	64,441	67,609	72,635	78,081	81,250

**Paraprofessional Wage Schedule  
2026-2027**

Experience	Hourly Rate
0	\$22.50
1	\$23.57
2	\$24.64
3	\$25.71
4+	\$26.79

The Title 1 Tutor position is a bargaining unit position and will receive hourly pay determined by the District and communicated to the Association, not less than the paraprofessional wage.