

ROCK HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

303 N. West Street
Mankato, KS 66956



Student Handbook

2024-2025

We use our P.A.W.S - (Pride, Attitude, Wise Choices, and Safety)
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USD 107 Mission Statement

Rock Hills Schools, in partnership with our communities, will provide opportunities to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

RHES Mission Statement

It is the mission of Rock Hills Elementary School that we will provide positive experiences where students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs will be nurtured.

FOREWORD

The USD 107 Board of Education and Rock Hills Elementary School staff extend a friendly welcome to all students and USD 107 families. Please feel welcome to arrange a visit to school at any time. Your participation in classroom experiences and during extracurricular activities is appreciated.

The purpose of this handbook is to furnish our students' families with information about the school. We want your experiences with USD 107 and Rock Hills Elementary School to be positive and productive.

We strive to equally meet our students' intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs. So that we may meet these needs, Rock Hills Elementary School will provide:

- A system of studies that provides for the intellectual development of students and prepares them for further studies.
- A safe, orderly, and nurturing learning environment.
- Instruction in appropriate social skills, citizenship, personal accountability, and responsibility to self and others.
- Opportunities for the physical and cultural growth of students.
- Ongoing communication with families of our students through agenda notes, newsletters, and class activities. The usd107.org website, RHES Facebook page, and *Swift K12* notification system are the primary modes of communicating information about school and district events.

SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

One of the goals of Rock Hills Elementary School is to provide a safe and orderly environment. A student is requested to inform a teacher or the principal if his/her safety is in question. A student may also call the **KANSAS SCHOOL SAFETY HOTLINE** at **1-877-626-8203** about safety concerns in his/her school. The statewide hotline is open 24 hours/day and callers may remain anonymous.

Rock Hills Beliefs

Learners:

All students need to learn, can learn, and must accept responsibility for learning.

Students have a right to an education that meets their individual needs.

Students should be encouraged to develop positive attitudes, and respect for themselves and others.

Students should establish goals, make decisions, and solve problems to adapt to a changing world.

School Staff:

Staff will model and help students develop social skills, responsibility, self-esteem, and self-worth.

Provide a safe and orderly environment for learning.

Staff will provide a solid educational background in Kansas College and Career Ready Standards so that the students can become productive citizens.

Staff will be prepared and willing to educate all students, recognizing individual differences.

Staff will communicate with the community about educational matters.

Parents:

Parents should emphasize the desire to learn and have high expectations for learning.

Parents should be aware of their child's progress in school and be willing to share the responsibility of their child's education.

Parents should send their students to learn.

Parents should share responsibility for maintaining open lines of communications between the school and home. Parents should be supportive of staff, policies, and educational goals.

Community:

The community must share in the responsibility of providing the necessary resources for the learning process to take place.

The community should demonstrate positive examples of life-long learning and be knowledgeable of the district's educational goals.

The community should responsibly act upon their ownership in the schools and help provide a safe, orderly learning environment.

The community should support schools.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone Fax Toll Free Website

Superintendent	785-378-3102	785-378-3438	N/A	usd107.org
Elementary	785-378-3822	785-378-3467	888-877-6998	usd107.org
Jr/Sr High School	785-378-3126	785-378-3530	888-877-6999	usd107.org

All Rock Hills staff may be contacted via email (first initial last name@usd107.org)

SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event of severe weather or storms that result in changes to school schedules or transportation routes, families of students and staff will be notified through *SwiftK12* notification system, and may also check the following television or radio stations:

TELEVISION

KOLN (Lincoln, NE) 1011now.com/weather/closings
WIBW (Topeka, KS) wibw.com
KWCH (Wichita, KS) kwch.com/weather/schoolclosings

RADIO

KVSV – 1190 AM/105.5 FM (Beloit) KREP – 92.1 FM (Belleville)
kvsradio.com kr92country.com
KDNS – 94.1 FM (Glen Elder) KRFS – 1600 AM/103.9 FM (Superior)
kdcountry94.com krfsfm.com

FACEBOOK

USD 107, Rock Hills Elementary School, and Rock Hills Junior/Senior High School pages

INCLEMENT WEATHER ROAD PLAN

In the event of unpassable rural roads due to weather conditions, those students living on a rural route will meet the bus at the following locations after being notified through the instant messaging system: Burr Oak, in front of former school; Esbon, in front of former school; Jewell, in lot east of former school; Formoso, at corner of Main and Patterson south of firehouse; Ionia, at Hwy. 128 and G Ave.; Lovewell, at 280 and V Road (if 280 is passable); North Branch, at Hwy. 128 and 100 Rd.; Montrose, at north side of Hwy. 36 and 225 Road.

BUS DELAY PROCEDURES

In the event that a bus is running more than 20 minutes behind schedule, the primary school center for those students shall be responsible for notifying the parents of such delays. The driver shall notify the school of the bus delay, where it is delayed, and an estimate of how long before it will be in service again. The school shall then use its route list to notify all the parents from that point on. It's the responsibility of the transportation director in these events to get the bus repaired as soon as possible.

ROCK HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FACULTY

Lacey Keller PreK-5 Principal
Jessica Shulda PreK
Hannah Fugate Kindergarten
Nikki Ost Kindergarten
Ashton Cates First Grade
Kimberly Brown First Grade
Megan Duskie Second Grade
Amy Rice Second Grade
Megan Badger Third Grade
Janice McMillan
Heather Garst Fourth Grade
Hadley Thyfault Fifth Grade
Rylee Richard Fifth Grade
Rachel Spiegel STEM
Terry Griffith PK-5 Physical Education
Barbara Elbracht K-5 Vocal Music; Fifth Grade Instrumental Music
Joan Unruh PK-5 Counselor
Sarah Warne MTSS Coordinator
Virginia McKeown K-5 Art

ROCK HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SUPPORT

STAFF Aundrea Badger PreK Paraprofessional
Joni Meier Food Service
Trevia Shotts Food Service
Sarah Ortman Secretary; District Data Quality Coordinator
Tandra Sholtz Head Custodian
Laurie Nielson Custodian
Ana Davis MTSS Paraprofessional
Shelly Haskins MTSS Paraprofessional

BELOIT SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE

STAFF Liz Holway K-5 Gifted Coordinator
Tina Boyles Special Education Teacher
Alicia Hoffer Special Education Teacher
Jana Coil Psychologist
Anna Schoen Speech/Language Services
Tricia Nelson Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Camryn Winkel Resource Paraprofessional
Jaycee Hiilegist Resource Paraprofessional
Taylor Solt Resource Paraprofessional
Maddie Moore Resource Paraprofessional

USD 107 BOARD OF EDUCATION

Bobbi Fogo, Marc Grout, Brandon Hollerich, Kenny Mizner, Justin Angleton, Brenden Wirth,
Wayne Frost

EDUCATIONAL MATTERS

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL: SCHOOL HOURS 8:05 A.M. – 3:25 P.M. BUSES; 3:30 TOWN OR PARENT PICK-UPS

The Elementary door will open at 7:40 a.m. Non-bus students are dismissed at 3:30 p.m. after the buses have departed. **Parents who wish to wait for students we ask that you wait outside the building on the sidewalk by the street. Not only does this minimize disruptions to end-of-day classroom procedures but because of the increased number of students it allows for a more safe flow for students and staff to exit the building for dismissal.** Please call and/or write in the student's agenda any transportation changes for students. PLEASE CALL BEFORE 3:00 P.M. TO CHANGE TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

One of the most important factors in determining a child's success in school. When a student is absent from class, it is impossible to recreate the situation that existed during that absence. Make-up work cannot take the place of having been in the classroom when instruction was given. It is important that each student be in the classroom every day possible. The habits of today will carry over to tomorrow. Students must learn responsibility, and as they grow older, assume responsibility for regular attendance. In order to provide this kind of experience, the following attendance policy will be followed at Rock Hills Elementary School.

Federal education law (ESSA) defines chronic absenteeism as a student being absent from school 10% or more of scheduled school time. RHES tracks and reports to parents and the Kansas Department of Education when a student is chronically absent.

KSA 72-3120 defines truancy as: Whenever a child is required by law to attend school and is enrolled in school, and the child is inexcusably absent on either three consecutive school days or five school days in any semester or seven school days in any school year, whichever of the foregoing occurs first, the child shall be considered to be not attending school as required by law. A child is inexcusably absent from school if the child is absent there from all or a significant part of a school day without a valid excuse acceptable to the school employee designated by the Board of Education to have responsibility for the school attendance of such child.

The building principal is authorized by the USD 107 Board of Education to determine whether individual student absences will be recorded as "excused" or "unexcused."

For the safety of your child, it is important for you to call the school when your child is absent. Please state the reason your child will not be at school. Include symptoms if your child is sick. If you have not called by 8:30 a.m., the school will make a phone call to you to verify the absence.

A "significant part of the day" is defined as ninety minutes per half-day session. A student who misses ninety minutes or more per half-day session is considered absent for that half day.

Students must have a written excuse explaining their absence or a telephone call to the building principal

or secretary from their parents prior to the absence or upon return to school. An absence will be recorded as unexcused if no reason is received **within three (3) school days**. Requests for homework may be made at the time of the call, and we will make every effort to collect homework for an absent student.

For grading purposes, **an excused absence allows the student the opportunity to make up the work missed for credit**. This may be done before or after the excused absence as agreed upon between the teacher and parent(s). **Students will be given one day plus the number of days absent to complete their work**. Work not received by the due date will result in a zero for these assignments.

Unexcused absences may result in a conference between student, parent, teacher(s), counselor, social worker and principal. Unexcused absences will have a direct bearing on a student's grade. **Excessive unexcused absences from school will lead to a truancy report to the Department of Children and Families.**

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND CLASS PARTIES

Parents are asked to contact their student's teacher to determine the most appropriate time to celebrate birthdays. Classroom teachers will schedule class parties and ask for assistance from parents to plan and coordinate them. Parents may send sealed boxes of prepackaged snacks with your student in his / her backpack. **RHES encourages parents to provide nutritious treats for birthday celebrations and classroom parties.**

DRESS

Students are asked to wear neat and clean clothing for school and school activities. Students are required to have P.E./playground tennis shoes (Velcro closure if students cannot tie shoes) to leave in their lockers. If a student's appearance disrupts a class or activity, administration has the right to address the situation. Hats or bandanas will not be worn in the buildings unless it is for a predetermined special event, and hoods will not be allowed to be up on hooded apparel in the buildings. Clothing advertising alcoholic beverages/tobacco products or those with obscene or questionable printing on them will not be allowed. Students are strongly discouraged from wearing flip-flops due to the potential for injury on the playground.

FIELD TRIPS

Class field trips are an extension of the regular curriculum. All students will participate in field trips as part of their grade-level instructional program unless a parent requests that the student be excused from school for the day. Whenever possible, field trip admission fees will be paid through RHES student funds acquired through school fundraisers. Food service staff will send a nutritious school lunch for each student attending a field trip through the lunch program. Teachers may ask for parent volunteers to accompany and supervise students on field trips.

FIRST AID AND MEDICATION

Only emergency first aid is administered at school. No internal medication will be administered without written instructions signed by a parent or legal guardian. Only medication in its original container sent to the school office by the parents with appropriate instruction pertaining to time and dosage will be administered. Due to the

possibility of an adverse reaction, initial dosage must be given at home, not at school. If medication is not in the original container or specific dosage instructions are not provided, a parent will need to come to the school to administer the medication.

In case of an accident or illness, an attempt will be made, if possible, to contact the parents or the emergency contact person prior to seeking treatment. If the parents are not available, pursuant to board policy emergency treatment will be administered as per the statement signed by the parents at the time of enrollment and the parents will be responsible for any transportation and medical cost.

FLOWER/GIFT DELIVERIES

Deliveries of flowers and gifts for students are not permitted at RHES because of the difficulties young students face transporting them home.

FUNDRAISERS TO BENEFIT OTHERS

RHES may conduct one fall fundraiser to benefit a local cause and one spring fundraiser to benefit a foundation.

FUNDRAISERS TO BENEFIT RHES

RHES raises money for field trips and other activities by collecting *Best Choice Labels* and *Boxtops for Education*.

GRADING

Grades reflect a student's progress in the adopted Rock Hills Elementary School curriculum. All teachers in grades 1-5 at RHES will grade students based on classroom Guided Learning and Assessments. No students will be allowed to grade other peers' work.

Examples of guided learning include homework, outlines, practice, daily practice, projects. Examples of assessments include quizzes, tests, projects, and performance tasks. Assessments require each student to independently demonstrate his/her mastery of knowledge and skills stated in the learning objectives.

Grades 1-5 will use the following letter grades and corresponding percentages:

A=100-90 B=89-80 C=79-70 D=69-60 F=59 and below

PreK and Kindergarten will use a standards checklist for reporting students' academic progress.

INDEPENDENT READING PRACTICE

RHES teachers strongly recommend that each RHES student practice reading independently for at least two minutes times the student's age each day. Regular reading practice helps students to excel in all content areas.

LEAVING THE BUILDING

If a student leaves school FOR ANY REASON during the school day, the student must first receive permission and check out through the office. Students who become ill during the school day should report to the office.

Office personnel will determine if the student should go home. IN ALL CASES, THE STUDENT IS NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE WITHOUT PARENTAL PERMISSION.

LOST AND FOUND

All lost and found articles are to be turned in to the office. Any items left will be donated to the thrift store at the end of the year.

MEALS, MILK BREAKS, CLASSROOM DRINKS, AND FOOD ALLERGIES

All students are required to eat in the designated cafeteria. **To comply with the USD 107 Wellness Policy, students may bring only milk, water, fruit juice, or vegetable juice to drink with a packed lunch.** Breakfast will be served to students at the elementary building from 7:40 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. RHES reserves the right not to serve breakfast or lunch to students who have \$50.00 or more billed. Morning or afternoon milk and milk purchased to consume with a packed lunch will be served only to those students who have a positive balance in their meal accounts. Notices will be sent to parents weekly. Parents may also access PowerSchool to check account balances. Students may resume eating school meals when the bill is paid or the amount owed is below \$50.00. Board policy requires an alternative meal of a peanut butter sandwich or cheese sandwich. Students are encouraged to consume plain water only in spill proof containers in classrooms. **Please send a water bottle with your child. Water bottle refill stations are available in the main building and the practice gym.**

USD 107 is committed to protecting the health of students and staff members who have identified food allergies. Rock Hills Elementary School will designate an allergy free seating zone in the cafeteria as needed; notify all families who have children in a classroom and on district transportation where a student or staff member has a food allergy; train staff members on the use of an epinephrine auto-injector; and take the appropriate steps to notify parents or emergency contacts and health emergency personnel if there is an allergic reaction emergency. Frequent and clear communication between school, home, and medical providers is critical when a food allergy exists.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Money and personal items are the responsibility of the student. It is advised that students leave money and personal items of value at home. The school is NOT responsible for a student's personal property.

REPORT CARDS

Periodic reports shall be issued to parents of all students on the academic progress of the student. Parent/teacher conferences will be held during the fall and spring. Teachers will notify parents when their child is failing or near failing. **Grades will be issued for each student at parent-teacher conferences. Report cards will be made available for your student quarterly. The year end report cards will be mailed home.**

SCHOOLWIDE DRILLS (Fire, Tornado, Evacuation, Heightened Security)

Schoolwide drills are practiced as required by law. Students are to maintain order during schoolwide drills. Students are to move to the designated area in a quiet, orderly manner. Teachers will remain with their class at all times.

STUDENT ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL

USD 107 Board of Education recommends that all students be covered by some type of accident insurance. USD 107 **does not** purchase accident insurance for students. Injuries occurring during the school day will be documented and these records will be placed in students' cumulative files.

STUDENTS STAYING AFTER SCHOOL

At the principal or teacher's discretion, a student may be required to remain after school for additional academic or social skills instruction. Incomplete or missing homework may result in a student being required to stay after school with the teacher. The student and/or teacher will contact parents to arrange after-school time.

VISITORS TO THE BUILDING

Parents are welcome at school. To avoid disruptions to teaching and learning, please arrange visits and birthday parties in your child's classroom with his/her teacher in advance. Visitors to school are asked to check in at the office so that office staff may announce your visit to teachers. If you have any questions about your child having a guest at school, please contact the building principal. RHES teachers respectfully request that visitors to classrooms make an appointment prior to visiting; limit their visits to one hour; turn off and put away cell phones; sit in a place designated by the classroom teacher; allow your child and all children to remain engaged and participating in the lesson; use the experience to observe the lesson.

ADDITIONAL PARENT INFORMATION:

The Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act provides federal funds to local school districts for supplemental education in qualified schools. Title I funds are provided to give additional help to students in reading and math.

Teachers, mentors, or MTSS para's are assigned to work with students in groups or individual basis. Rock Hills Students will receive supplemental educational services as a result of Title I.

Parents may request from the Elementary Principal information regarding the professional qualification of their student(s) classroom teacher.

Parents may request to get information regarding their student(s) state assessments scores from the Elementary Principal.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Here at Rock Hills Elementary the students will learn to use their Pride, Attitude, Wise Choices and Safety to become a Great Grizzly. All teachers will be using a social emotional learning curriculum called Second Step. This program emphasizes growth mindset, emotion management, empathy and kindness, and problem solving. The building will utilize the Grizzly Game Plan for all discipline matters. All students will be treated in a fair, equitable manner.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating, defined as copying another student's work and claiming it as one's own, and plagiarism, defined as using another person's original ideas or writing without giving credit to the true author, are both prohibited practices. Materials taken from electronic sources are covered by this policy. A student who engages in any form of academic dishonesty, including any individual who provides materials to be copied, will be subject to the loss of credit for the work in question. All decisions may be subject to review by the building principal.

BUS RULES

For the safety of all students and drivers and efficiency of district transportation,
USD 107 has the following expectations:

1. Students will conduct themselves as they would in the classroom.
2. The driver will assign a seat to each student. Students may move from the seat only if given permission by the driver. (See Rock Hills USD 107 Transportation Safety on pgs. 26-27)
3. The driver will wait approximately two (2) minutes for those who are tardy.
4. Students will stand safely off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
5. Students will converse with the driver only if necessary.
6. Students will keep arms, legs, or heads inside the bus at all times.
7. Students will sit on their bottom while on the bus.
8. Students will stay out of aisles while seated on the bus.
9. Students and drivers will keep the bus clean and sanitary at all times.
10. Students will wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before moving on the bus, entering the bus, or exiting the bus.
11. Students will report to the driver if they note or cause any damage to the bus.

The driver and/or administration may contact parents of students who do not meet these expectations. In certain circumstances, parents may be required to provide transportation to/from school for their student(s).

DESTRUCTION OR LOSS OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Any student who breaks, defaces, destroys, or loses school property will pay for the damage or loss. No student will attempt to repair any school-owned equipment.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are not allowed to use personal electronic devices during school hours (7:40 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.). Calling, texting, taking pictures or videos, and any other cell phone uses are also strictly prohibited on school sponsored activities, unless

approved by the teacher in advance. If a student brings his/her phone and has it out during this time, teachers will collect the phone from the student and return it when the class returns home. If a student needs to call his/her parents, permission to do so will be given to the student by the teacher before they can use their phone. Students using any of these devices will be required to turn them in to the office for the day and they will be given back at the end of the day. If it occurs a second time, parents will be notified of the situation and will have to come to the school and pick up the item.

HAZING/HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION/BULLYING/MENACING

Rock Hills is committed to providing a positive and productive learning and working environment. Hazing, harassment, intimidation, menacing or bullying is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated in the district. Any USD 107 staff member who witnesses bullying is required to report it to administration. Bullying is defined as any intentional gesture or threat creating an intimidating environment for a student or staff member by students, staff members (any person employed by the district) or parents (guardian, custodian, or other person with authority to act on behalf of the child). Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion. Staff whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Third parties whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by the Superintendent or Board of Education. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. (See USD 107 Board Policy JDDC- see website)

SEARCHES OF LOCKERS AND STUDENTS

Student lockers are the property of the school district and there is no expectation of privacy in a student's locker. Searches of lockers and students shall be conducted in accordance with the rules adopted by the board. No law enforcement officer may search any locker without a search warrant unless he/she has the consent of the principal and is accompanied by the principal or designated representative. In order to protect the health, safety or welfare of students under school jurisdiction, building principals or designated representatives are authorized to search students, but are prohibited from using unreasonable force when conducting the search. All searches shall be carried out in the presence of an adult witness.

The lockers in the schools of the district shall be under supervision of the building principal or designated representative and assigned to the student for storage of school materials and clothing necessary to school attendance. Students may supply their own lock for lockers, but must provide the office with either the combination or an extra key. It would be a good practice not to share the combination with anyone else.

USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Students are prohibited from possessing and using all forms of tobacco products, including snuff, chew, or electronic cigarettes, vaping products and equipment and illegal drugs any time while in attendance at school on school property or at any school sponsored event or any school activity at USD 107. All violations will be handled according to district policy.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

DISCIPLINE REFERRAL

School personnel will contact parents when necessary. All discipline issues will first be addressed by teaching/practicing the PAWS skills. Discipline consequences may include any or all the following: A suspension and/or expulsion, the

student's removal from the classroom or activity for a short period of time or to after-school time being assigned to the student, in which case parents will be required to provide transportation home for the student. These consequences can be found on the school's behavior matrix.

Repeated office referrals will result in counseling sessions to address behavior concerns either with the counselor or social worker and an MTSS (multi-tiered systems of support) plan initiated by the principal. If additional referrals occur, the MTSS team and the parents may consider implementing a behavior plan.

EMERGENCY SAFETY INTERVENTIONS (ESI)

USD 107 is committed to limiting the use of Emergency Safety Interventions. Please refer to USD 107 Board Policy GAAF, found on the usd107.org website, for more detailed information.

STUDENT SUSPENSION

If a serious or persistent discipline issue arises, in-school suspension may be used as a type of disciplinary action. While a student is under an in-school suspension he/she will spend the regular amount of time in school. He/She will do the regular amount of classroom work in a quiet, separate, supervised setting. Except as limited by Section 504 or IDEA, a student may be suspended or expelled for reasons set forth in Kansas law.

WEAPONS

A student shall not knowingly possess, handle or transmit any object that can be reasonably considered a weapon at school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored event. This shall include any weapon, any item being used as a weapon or destructive device, or any facsimile of a weapon.

Possession of a weapon and/or destructive device shall result in expulsion from school for a period of one calendar year, except that the Superintendent may recommend that this expulsion be modified on a case-by-case basis. (See USD 107 Board Policy JDCBC, on website)

**POLICY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 107
Jewell County, Kansas
(see Website www.usd107.org)**

GAAF Emergency Safety Interventions (See GAO, JRB, JQ, and KN)

IIBGA Children's Internet Protection Plan

JCDBB Weapons (See EBC, JDC, JDD, JHCAA and KGD)

JDDA Drug-Free Schools (See GAOB, JGFGB, JGFGBA, and LDD)

JDDC Bullying (EBC, GAAE, JCE, JDD, JGEC, JGECA, and KGC)

JGEC Sexual Harassment (See GAAC, GAAD, GAF, JDDC and KN in District Policy)

Rock Hills USD 107 Transportation Safety

Topic: Seating Charts

There are questions sometimes posed to a transportation department that are similar in nature, as to procedure or policy related to what or why we do things. The driver is charged with the task of safely operating a heavily regulated 30,000 pound commercial vehicle. Our drivers do this with a safety record significantly above the norm. Why do we have assigned seating and why is it important?

1. Drivers are required to have seating charts. They are following a directive for assigned seating. It is even part of their evaluation process.
2. The driver's main focus is the operation of the vehicle and for the most part is restricted to the driver's seat. This limits the driver's interaction with students. In a classroom, students are engaged in a task, and a teacher can position themselves to redirect off-task student behavior. A driver on a bus is strapped in a chair with their back to off-task students while driving down the highway.

Assigned seating is the backbone of discipline management and control for a driver. A driver uses seating to establish control and set the tone for authority on the bus. Seating can be used to help deal with disruptive behaviors, as some students are assigned to a seat on the bus that lessens their disruption on a bus. In some instances it is used to keep students separated that are in conflict with each other. It is also used to separate age or sex differences between students. If one student will not comply about where to sit, then that student may displace another student, causing a chain reaction of students being displaced and ultimately undermining order. If a driver has no control over student compliance with seating, then the students will believe the driver has no authority or control for anything else. This leads to increased discipline issues on the bus and dangerous distractions for the driver. Ultimately, the lack of order and respect for authority can spill back into the campus, undermining the atmosphere in the building and classroom.

3. Assigned seating serves many administrative purposes. It assists in the taking of attendance on the bus. Drivers are required to make certain that a bus is cleared of students at the end of each route.

If a student becomes unaccounted for or missing, it helps in the process of determining where to start looking for that missing student. It makes it easier to determine if the student was on the bus. Assigned seating also assists in the investigation of discipline issues by knowing which students may have information about an issue because of where they sit on the bus.

4. Assigned seating and a seating chart identify specific students to specific locations on the bus. If vandalism is found it makes it a lot easier to identify which student is responsible. Drivers are required to pre-trip and post-trip their bus. If a driver checks the bus before and after each run then they know when any damage appears. If only a certain student sits in that seat then it makes it easier to hold a student accountable.

5. In the event of an accident, even a minor one, the first thing law enforcement wants is a seating chart. They have to identify the location and age of every passenger on the bus. This information goes into the police report.

To not have this information delays the work of the police and keeps a bus load of students sitting longer than needed. This may lead to discipline issues.

If the accident is serious, multiple Federal agencies and crash engineers will be involved in an investigation similar to that which takes place with a plane crash. There will be an official and published report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) after the investigation. With fatalities the location of passengers helps with

the recreation of the accident. This helps in determining specifically what the contributing causes were in passenger deaths. Industry recommendations and improvements will be made as a result of the accident report. To help accomplish the goal of transporting the students in a district safely takes ownership and participation by all stakeholders in the district. Support and understanding the reasons for seating assignment helps in the mission.

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(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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