

VOLUNTEERS IN PORTLAND SCHOOLS

**VOLUNTEER**

**HANDBOOK**

Portland Public Schools, Portland, Maine

V O L U N T E E R H A N D B O O K

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction: History of the Volunteer Program -----	1
Letter of Welcome from the Superintendent of Schools -----	2
Volunteer Services: Classroom Assistance, One-to-One Tutorial,----- Library-Media Center, Clerical Assistance Human Resources (cultural resources, enrich- ment programs, career awareness)	3
To The Volunteer: Your Important Role, Qualifications, Training -----	6
Guidelines for Volunteers -----	8
The Role of the School: Principal, Staff Representative, School Volunteer - Chairperson, Teacher, Consultants and Special Teachers, Librarians and Media Aides	9
The Role of the Volunteer Coordinator -----	12
Special Services of the Portland School Department -----	13

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## INTRODUCTION

The education of our children is entrusted to the teachers and administrators under the direction of the school committee. However, in a broad sense, it is the responsibility of the entire community. There are, in every community, men and women with ability, interest, and time who may not be educators by profession but who can, by volunteer service, contribute much to the learning of its boys and girls. For this purpose, Volunteers in Portland Schools was established to recruit such volunteers and coordinate their efforts.

After a successful beginning as a pilot project started in 1966 by the Junior League of Portland, Maine, Inc., the program has operated since 1968 as a part of the Portland Public School Department. The volunteer coordinator oversees the recruitment, screening, training and placement of the volunteers under the guidelines of the National School Volunteer Program. An Advisory Committee representative of the schools and the community also gives guidance to the program. Volunteers services include classroom, tutorial, clerical and library-media center assistance. Community resource people are asked to donate their time to enrich the classroom experience by discussing their hobbies, travels, talents and occupations. Cooperation with the local schools, university and colleges, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program and other community groups and organizations has enlarged the corps of volunteers. The volunteer program has become a part of the philosophy of public education in Portland.

This handbook is presented as a guide to aid in the combined efforts of volunteers and school staffs working together to enrich the lives of the children and contribute to their learning progress.

# PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

331 VERANDA STREET  
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103

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Superintendent of Schools

To the Volunteers in the Portland Schools:

Welcome to the Portland Public Schools and many thanks for taking the time and effort to bring your interests, talents and energies to the schools. We need you.

We hope that you will find satisfaction and stimulation in the services which you will provide for students and teachers in the school where you work.

You will discover if you don't already know what a pleasure it is to work in a school for and with students. There is a special reward in helping directly with the learning process. Whether you become involved in tutoring on a one to one basis or find yourself helping in a media center or with some of the endless but important paper work necessary to keep schools going, we think you will find your experience rewarding.

Please be sure that whenever you have questions or need help in your activities you ask teachers, administrators or anyone who might help.

You are joining a very special group of more than 250 adults and young people who volunteer in our schools. Everyone in the School Department wishes you well in your efforts. We thank you for your help.

With best wishes,

  
Harold Reynolds Jr.,  
Superintendent of Schools

HR/h

## VOLUNTEER SERVICES

In general volunteer services will fall into the following categories depending upon the volunteer and the particular need of the school:

### CLASSROOM ASSISTANCE

General help to relieve the classroom teacher of non-teaching duties or to work with small groups of students under the direction and supervision of the teacher. Many of the following activities can successfully contribute to the better education of youth.

- Help in preparation and distribution of classroom materials.
- Help students with arts and crafts and other group activities.
- Storytelling or reading to small groups.
- Compiling picture and magazine article files pertaining to class study units.
- Assist in health programs: inoculations, vision tests, etc.
- Assist in lunchroom, playground, after-school recreational activities.
- Assist in individualized learning programs.

### ONE-TO-ONE TUTORIAL

Special help to an individual student, or several students on a one-to-one basis.

They work under the direction of the teacher, department chairperson or special consultant in their area who is responsible for the content and techniques and who will provide necessary instruction and materials.

- Tutors in elementary schools may be requested to:
  - reinforce the efforts of the teacher to generally motivate the student or give him security in the classroom
  - tutor in specific subject areas and assist students in the practice of basic skills.
- In secondary schools, requests may be made by the teacher or department chairperson for tutoring in specific subjects such as English, Foreign languages, mathematics, sciences, etc.

## LIBRARY - MEDIA CENTER

Media centers play a vital role in the total development of our children. They are centers where the use of all resources, print and non-print, is purposeful, planned and integrated with the teaching and learning program of the school.

Volunteers help staff school library-media centers under the direction of school librarians and media center aides by:

- Cataloging instructional media
- Assisting students in finding appropriate materials
- Arranging and shelving books and materials
- Compiling subject files of pictures and articles
- Arranging displays
- Reading to small groups of children
- Arranging special programs
- Production of instructional materials

## CLERICAL ASSISTANCE

Volunteers with clerical skills (filing or typing)

- Work in school offices assisting school staff as needed.
- Assist with the production of instructional materials.
- Operation of office equipment (mimeograph, etc.)

## HUMAN RESOURCE VOLUNTEERS

### Cultural Resources

Many volunteers have a special talent they can contribute to the classroom. Their assistance in programs of art, music, dance, dramatics or creative writing can be used in regularly scheduled programs or for special events.

### Enrichment Programs

Other volunteers have special collections, slide programs, hobbies or interests which are of value to students. They can contribute by:

- displaying special collections
- arrange special holiday programs

## HUMAN RESOURCE VOLUNTEERS

### Enrichment Programs (Cont.)

- act as resource people for science, social studies and other units in curriculum
- speak to classes about particular subject in which volunteer is knowledgeable
- show slides, films and souvenirs such as costumes, etc. from trips taken

### Career Awareness

Volunteers from the community are asked to speak about their occupations or professions to groups of interested students at all levels of education.

## TO THE VOLUNTEER

### YOUR IMPORTANT ROLE

The Portland Public School System expresses appreciation to you, the volunteer, for your interest in children. Your supportive role in the education of children is a challenging and satisfying one.

You have an excellent opportunity:

- to help a child make a happy adjustment to school life
- to get to know the child individually
- to foster in a child the feeling of belonging
- to help a child make greater educational progress
- to reinforce habits of acceptable behavior
- to make a difference

Just as the child frequently looks to the teacher as a model, he may also look to you. You should reflect attitudes and habits which set a good example for the child.

Volunteers serve the child, the teacher, the school and the community. You help improve learning without increasing costs by:

- providing needed services to individual children and small groups
- helping children develop more positive attitudes toward school and learning
- assisting teachers with nonteaching tasks to give them more time for instruction
- enriching school programs by furnishing human resources from the community
- strengthening relations between the school and the community

### QUALIFICATIONS

Volunteers must enjoy working with children and be willing to give regularly scheduled time and energy to the job.

Since volunteers work under direction, experience in teaching, a diploma or degree are not necessary. Anyone interested may volunteer.

All volunteers are required to have a chest x-ray or tuberculin tine test every two years.

## QUALIFICATIONS (cont.)

Other important qualities include:

- a basic acceptance of differences in people, values, standards, goals and ambitions coupled with respect for individual integrity
- warmth and friendliness in relating to people, patience and sense of responsibility
- commitment to the concept of volunteer work
- ability to accept direction and work happily within a structure
- ability to work without continued praise from others
- ability to neither impose personal values on others nor judge others by personal standards

## TRAINING

As a volunteer you will be asked to take part in the following training sessions:

General orientation - an introductory session for all new and prospective volunteers which covers the kinds of volunteer jobs available, the relationship of volunteers to children and the school staff and what is expected of volunteers in general.

School orientation - an introduction to the school where you will be working which includes a tour of the school building, meeting the school staff with whom you will work, finding out where you will work and sign in and hearing about school program and policies.

Training workshops - special training is offered periodically to all volunteers working in tutorial situations and in library-media centers. These workshops are conducted by the school staff in cooperation with the instructional staff of the school department.

## GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Please inform the school if for some reason you are unable to appear as scheduled.

- Go to the office and sign in each day when you arrive at the school.
- Let the teacher or supervisor know when you arrive and leave each day unless you are instructed otherwise.
- Let the children you work with know they are important to you and that you enjoy being with them.
- Be sure you are acquainted with the facilities and rules of your school.
- If any problems or difficulties arise, confer with the teacher or staff member under whose direction you work.
- If you feel the need for more training or instruction, discuss it with the coordinator.
- Never divulge confidential information to which you may have access in the classroom or school.
- Keep your reaction to a particular member of the school staff or child to yourself.
- Be sure you know the importance of the volunteer's role as an example to children in behavior, speech and dress.
- Volunteer service is a serious service which will demand reliability and quality of effort on your part. Remember, however, that it should be a rewarding experience and your relationships with the school staff and children should be happy ones. If your assignment is not working out as well as you had hoped, please discuss it with the volunteer chairperson at your school or with the coordinator.

## THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

### THE PRINCIPAL

Within the school, the principal, who is responsible for school staff, educational program, and facilities should serve as supervisor ex-officio of the individual school volunteer program. Some of the responsibilities of the principal should include:

- discussing the volunteer program with the school staff and enlisting their support
- assisting in the identification of the types of volunteer service needed by the staff
- appointing a staff representative to help coordinate the program at the school level
- working with the coordinator, staff representative, and school volunteer chairperson to arrange orientation to the school and in-service training for volunteers
- communicating goals and policies of the school to the volunteers and explaining the roles of the volunteer in the school
- terminating a volunteer's service when it is deemed necessary. The assistance of the volunteer coordinator or school volunteer chairperson may be requested should this step become necessary
- developing the best possible working relationships and morale among all staff and volunteers
- assisting in the evaluation of services performed by volunteers

### STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

Acts as a general liason, with the help of the School Volunteer Chairman, between staff and volunteers.

With the school principal, sees that staff is acquainted with VIPS, its goals, orientation and training given to volunteers and possible areas of volunteer assistance.

Works closely with volunteer chairman and/or coordinator to match staff requests with skills and available times of volunteers.

Prepares a master schedule for volunteers for the school.

Determines with principal the places where volunteers will work.

Works with the coordinator and volunteer chairman in planning orientation, training and recognition programs at the building level.

## SCHOOL VOLUNTEER CHAIRPERSON

Plans with the principal and staff representative the scheduling of volunteers and helps prepare a master schedule for the school building.

Plans for the orientation of the volunteers at the school in cooperation with the staff. This orientation should include:

- an introduction to the school and the community
  - policies and procedures of the school
  - goals of the school and any special programs
  - tour of the school and introduction to school staff members
  - facilities available to the volunteer (parking, rest room, etc.)
- the role of the volunteer with the school
- materials and resource teachers available

Provides staff representative and teacher with information about special interests and skills of volunteers.

Works as a liason person between the volunteers, school staff representative and volunteer coordinator. Contacts volunteers by telephone when necessary.

Cooperates with school staff representative and the volunteer coordinator in arranging for necessary training for volunteers. This may include a joint meeting early in the school year of volunteers and staff members.

Arranges for the maintenance of time sheets for volunteers to record their hours each day of service.

Notifies the coordinator of any new volunteers who join the program during the school year.

Notifies the volunteer coordinator of any volunteers who drop their volunteer assignment or don't fulfill their role satisfactorily.

Assures that each volunteer has a T.B. tine test or chest x-ray every two years.

## THE TEACHER

Teachers are assigned the responsibility for implementing the educational program of the children under their supervision. They will plan the duties and directions of their volunteer's work within the framework of the program.

Teachers direct volunteers who assist them as follows:

- plan for the most effective use of the volunteer and make time for conferences
- guide the volunteer in the use of materials and school resources and arrange the further training if necessary

## SCHOOL VOLUNTEER CHAIRPERSON (cont.)

- become acquainted with materials and services available from the volunteer office
- give the volunteer suggestions about approaches in working with the children

Teachers have certain commitments to the volunteer and should:

- encourage and support the volunteer, making sure the relevance and importance of each volunteer assignment is understood through regular planning sessions.
- release the volunteer if assistance is not needed full time, so that another teacher may use the volunteer help.
- assign responsibilities attuned to the volunteer's interest and ability. Do not leave a volunteer with too many children or too large an area to supervise.
- provide flexible job responsibilities for volunteers as they gain in knowledge and proficiency.
- always notify the volunteer ahead of time when assistance will not be needed on a specific day.

## READING CONSULTANTS AND SPECIAL TEACHERS

- take part in planning and conducting in-service training for volunteers in reading, math and other content areas.
- match tutors to individual pupils who need help.
- prescribe programs and materials for tutors to use with pupils.
- help with the tutoring sessions when necessary and help evaluate the child's progress.

## LIBRARIANS AND MEDIA AIDES

- take part in planning and conducting in-service training for volunteers in the library-media centers
- are responsible for the scheduling of volunteers in the library-media centers in cooperation with the school volunteer chairperson and the staff representative.
- direct the work of the volunteer attempting to have variety in the tasks assigned and utilize any special talents the volunteer may have.

## THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Is responsible for coordinating the School Volunteer Program within the Portland School System.

Recruits, interviews and places volunteers in the schools as requested. Keeps files and records of volunteer activities within the schools and maintains a service record for each volunteer.

Arranges for a general orientation to the school system for all new volunteers, and assists in planning orientation at the schools.

Cooperates with the school staff representative and volunteer chairperson to arrange for in-service training for volunteers, in conjunction with the instructional department of the school department.

Makes certain each volunteer has a chest x-ray or T.B. tine test every two years.

Supplies assistance to the school, staff representative, volunteer chairperson and volunteers and keeps them acquainted with new materials and services available from the Volunteer office.

Provides in-service training for teachers in the effective use of volunteers on request.

Meets regularly with the Advisory Committee.

Arranges for recognition of volunteer service within the school and the community.

Plans and conducts evaluation of the volunteer program periodically by surveying all teachers, volunteers and administrators involved in the program.

Keeps the public informed about the school volunteer program by disseminating information through the media, parents groups and community organizations.

## SPECIAL SERVICES OF THE PORTLAND SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

### READING

The Reading Director and Consultants work in the development of the basic intellectual skill that is indispensable as a medium of communication and a means of learning for each child. Workshops, in-service training, demonstrations and consulting visits are carried on throughout the year to help in the use of new techniques, approaches and materials in the field of reading.

The Director leads and coordinates the reading program from kindergarten through high school.

Consultants work with teachers and with other school department personnel in the process of screening and identifying children who need special programs within the classroom or referral for further evaluation. Assistance is given the teacher in carrying out the regular, on-going programs.

### MATH

The supervisor of math is primarily concerned with improving the teaching of math at the elementary level. In meeting this concern, the math supervisor conducts workshops for teachers after school hours in the Portland Teachers Center to introduce the teachers to new materials or content matter. The supervisor visits classrooms throughout the Title I school areas to consult and coordinate with administration regarding their program and to provide teachers with another source of math counsel.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

Learning Disabilities - Supportive instruction for the learning disabled child is given by specialists in conjunction with the student's regular classroom schedule.

Special Instruction - Many special services are provided for children who need them including tutoring in the home and hospital instruction.

Psychological Services - Specialists provide diagnostic services and staff members work with school personnel to help provide an appropriate program for each child.

### PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

Guidance Services - The guidance counselor's primary role is in individual and small group counseling wherein he assists the student to understand and accept himself as an individual and to develop in the student a greater ability in problem solving, decision making, and discovery of career possibilities.

## SPECIAL SERVICES

### PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES (cont.)

Attendance Services - The major responsibility of the attendance office is contact with the schools, in regard to pupil-oriented recordkeeping .

Social Work Services - Social workers work closely with the home and local agencies to help solve individual student problems.

### RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

A comprehensive program of testing, consisting of standardized achievement and aptitude tests is conducted each year. Test data are analyzed in a variety of ways to suit the needs of the teachers, principals, central office staff and other users.

Various programs such as Title I are evaluated as needed; survey research, involving the construction and use of questionnaires is the most common type of research conducted by the Department.

As part of an on-going, in-service training program, a newsletter entitled INTERCHANGE is published four times a year. Workshops on topics of interest to the professional staff members, are also conducted from time to time.

The Director and his colleagues serve as resource persons to members of the School Committee and the professional staff of the Portland Public Schools. Assistance in the collection and analysis of data is also provided to the members of the various committees of the school system.

### RESOURCE CENTER

OPERATION PRIME, The Regional Resource Center, 858 Brighton Avenue, Portland, offers many services to the Portland Schools and the schools of the surrounding communities. It is open year-round from 8 - 5. Summer, vacation and Friday hours are 8 - 4.

1. Professional Library
2. Audio-Visual Library - catalog in each school office
3. Graphics room - for production of classroom materials
4. Equipment repair
5. Print shop

### VOLUNTEERS IN PORTLAND SCHOOLS

Under the direction of a coordinator, volunteers are recruited, screened, trained and placed in Portland schools as requested in the following general areas of assistance: Classroom and tutorial, library-media center and special enrichment.