

2017-18

Employee Handbook



Pickens County School District

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2017-18 EMPLOYEE ASSURANCES FORM

About this Form

This form is utilized by the Pickens County School District (PCSD) to confirm all employees received specific legal and organizational information before working for the PCSD.

EMPLOYEE ASSURANCES

I certify that I have received a copy and have read the following documents:

1. Injuries on the Job	_____
	Initials
2. Panel of Physicians List	_____
	Initials
3. The Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators	_____
	Initials
4. FMLA Rights & Responsibilities	_____
	Initials
5. Non-Criminal Justice Applicant's Privacy Rights	_____
	Initials
6. Privacy Act Statement	_____
	Initials
7. Internet Use Policy	_____
	Initials

I certify that I have read the following documentation either in print or on the Pickens County School District's website (www.pickens.k12.ga.us):

1. Job Description	_____
	Initials
2. Employee Handbook	_____
	Initials
3. Drug-Free Workplace (BOE Policy GAM)	_____
	Initials

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

X _____
Print Name

X _____
Signature

Date

Carlton Wilson, Ed. D.
Superintendent



Board of Education
Daniel Bell, Chair
Delane Lewis, Vice-Chair
Sue Finley
Bryon Long
Katherine White

August 1, 2017

The Pickens County School District (PCSD) is excited you chose to work with one of the most promising school districts in Georgia. During your employment tenure, please feel free to let us know of anything we can do to make your time with us more productive, efficient, and enjoyable.

In Pickens County Schools, we put students first. Students and families are our number one priority, and our focus is high quality teaching and learning. The quality of our employees is the most important factor in providing the best educational opportunities possible for our children. An exceptional staff parallels an effective school system. Whether you are a teacher or a support staff member, you were chosen because someone believed you have both the knowledge and skills necessary to help us fulfill our vision of Graduation and Life Preparation for All!

Our school district is committed to continuous improvement across all areas and to achievement at the highest levels for all students. It is imperative that you, our employees, strive to be a dynamic part of this vision and mission. This personnel handbook provides information to assist you in your efforts to become more informed about your employment. Our school and district websites and eBOARD, the Board's on-line communication tool, also provide useful information.

You are a member of the PCSD team who strongly commits to making a difference in the lives of children and who genuinely focuses on improving the future of our community, state, and nation. On behalf of the Pickens County Board of Education, thank you for your commitment to building a high-quality school district.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carlton Wilson
Superintendent

Disclaimer

This handbook has been prepared to help familiarize you with some of our administrative rules and forms and to present the information in a form that will be readily available for reference. Although the contents of the handbook are based on administrative rules and forms of the Pickens County Board of Education, the actual administrative rules and forms, which are far more lengthy and detailed, have been summarized to make the handbook more useable. There are additional administrative rules and forms not discussed in the handbook. In the event of a conflict between the handbook and an administrative rule or form, the administrative rules, forms, and board policies shall control. Nothing in this handbook or the administrative rules and forms is intended to create a contract of employment or entitlement to any particular benefit or terms and conditions of work. The Pickens County Board of Education has the right to change or modify any of its administrative rules or forms at any time. For more detailed information or if you have any questions, please refer to the Board of Education policies Section G—Personnel located on the district's website (www.pickens.k12.ga.us), or in person at the Department of Human Resources at Pickens County School District:

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PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT: MISSION, VISION, COMMITMENT AND BELIEFS

Mission

We will educate our students in a safe, nurturing, and fiscally responsible environment that holds the highest expectations.

Vision

Graduation and life preparation for all.

Goals and Objectives

- We will educate our students and will communicate high expectations for academic performance.
- We will educate our students in a safe, nurturing, and orderly environment.
- All stakeholders in our school district will demonstrate a sense of ownership and responsibility for student success.
- Our school district will be fiscally responsible.
- We will improve communication both regularly and clearly with all stakeholders in our community.

Beliefs

We believe:

- Each student will have the opportunity to learn, to be successful, and to become a good citizen.
- All students can learn; however, they learn in different ways.
- Teaching and learning occur best in a safe and nurturing environment.
- The education of each student must be an effort that involves the support and participation of our schools, parents, and community.
- All stakeholders are accountable for student learning and should strive for continued improvement in student achievement.
- Quality education requires fiscally responsible expenditures for quality staff, programs, facilities, equipment, and technology.
- Recruiting, employing, and nurturing dedicated, well-qualified, and highly professional employees are important to successful educational programs.
- All staff should have access to standards-based, collaborative professional learning opportunities to improve their skills.
- All policies and educational decisions should be based on students' needs.
- Exposure to extracurricular, technological, and cultural arts activities is important in the overall development of students and contributes to academic success.
- Collaborative decision-making requires the input of all stakeholders.

SALARY DEDUCTION PROCEDURE

The Pickens County School District in accordance with state statutes and rules withhold authorized, monthly salary deductions.

Payroll deductions are authorized for the following reasons:

1. Dues for professional organizations;
2. Premiums on approved insurance plans;
3. Payments to tax deferred annuity plans with VALIC;
4. Voluntary contributions or other payments to agencies meeting the requirements set forth in regulations to be developed by the superintendent and staff; and
5. Legally mandated deductions, including those for federal and state income tax, social security, workers compensation, retirement plans and court ordered garnishments.

Upon employment, PCSD employees receive information on available professional organizations, insurance plans, annuity plans, local charity opportunities, approved credit union, state and federal income tax deductions, and retirement plans. At this time, employees make selections regarding each of these opportunities. The PCSD Human Resources Department obtains authorizations from employees in written and/or electronic formats for each deduction to be made.

Employees have the opportunity to review optional deductions annual during the open enrollment period. (Some qualifying events may allow for deduction changes outside of the open enrollment period.) The PCSD requires new authorization documentation to be completed by the employee upon request for a change in any deduction. Employees must make change requests through the PCSD Human Resources Department.

Garnishments are withheld by the PCSD upon receipt of a court order.

BENEFITS - POLICY DJCB

Benefits are a large part of the total compensation package for PCSD employees. To meet the changing needs of our employees, we are continuously reviewing and updating these benefits and their features. The following is an overview of the benefits provided by PCSD. Because of the importance of the benefits package, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the details of the various plans from a variety of sources, including the New Hire Packet and online information sources.

Open Enrollment is the period each year when employees may enroll or change options or coverage, subject to the conditions described in the plan. The open enrollment period, unless otherwise announced, occurs mid-October through Mid-November of each calendar year. Coverage changes or enrollments become effective the following January 1. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Benefits Specialist of any changes in the number of dependents and/or names of beneficiaries.

Standard Benefits

Health Insurance

Benefit eligible employees have the opportunity to enroll in group health insurance provided by the State Health Benefit Plan. Information on the health plan is available from the Benefits Specialist, or the **Active Decision Guide** found on the State Health Benefit Plan website (<http://dch.georgia.gov/state-health-benefit-plan-shbp>).

Insurance Plans

Insurance benefits become effective on the first day of the month following the completion of one full calendar month of employment. Temporary employees (regular substitutes and miscellaneous employees) or employees who work what is considered 49% are not eligible for benefits.

Medicare

All employees hired after April 1, 1986, are required to pay Medicare contributions, which provide medical benefits within the Social Security Administration.

Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia (PSERS)

Bus drivers, food service employees, some non-supervisory maintenance and custodial personnel, and other employees not eligible for membership in TRS are eligible for membership in the Public School Employees' Retirement System of Georgia. Further information is available on the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia website.

Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS)

Teachers, administrators, supervisors, clerical employees, paraprofessionals, and various central office staff are eligible members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. Benefits become available after 30 years of service, regardless of age, at 25 years of service with early retirement adjustments, or at age 60, after 10 years of service. Employees who have 20 years of TRS service are eligible to apply for disability retirement benefits if permanently disabled, as well as survivor's benefits paid to a beneficiary. TRS retirement benefits are funded by a combination of employee and employer contributions. Current contribution rates and additional information about TRS are available on the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia website.

Workers' Compensation

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. The injured employee must provide notice of the injury immediately, but no later than 30 days after the accident, to the employer, the employer's representative, or the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. The injured employee may select a medical care provider from the list posted by the Board of Education. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work-related injury. The Panel of Physicians is posted in conspicuous places in all locations maintained by the Board of Education, and a copy may be obtained through the Human Resources Office.

Not every injury that occurs on PCSD premises or during the work day is covered under Workers' Compensation. Following is a list of injuries that are not eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits:

- for injuries sustained going to or coming from work;
- during deviations from the scope of employment (e.g., employee making a delivery and drives to a place unconnected to their employment);
- as a consequence of imported danger (e.g., employee's own attire or a personal weapon causes injury to self);
- an employee engaging in a prohibited act;
- an employee engaging in horseplay;
- during voluntary participation in recreational or social activities;
- and during times in which the employee is not subject to the employer's control.

Each report of injury is reviewed in detail by Department of Human Resources staff, and a decision on coverage is made based on the available information. Questions may be addressed to an immediate supervisor or the Department of Human Resources.

OPTIONAL BENEFITS AVAILABLE

Accident Insurance

Accident insurance may be purchased for the individual employee and his/her family. The plan provides added financial resources to assist with the cost associated with an accident and follow-up care. Benefits are paid directly to the employee unless otherwise specified.

Cancer and Critical Illness Insurance

Benefit-eligible employees may enroll in the Group Cancer and Critical Illness Insurance Plan which supplements health care by helping with costs associated with a covered cancer or critical illness. Benefits are paid directly to the employee and supplement existing medical benefits once a diagnosis of a covered illness is confirmed.

Dental Insurance

Optional dental coverage may be purchased for the individual employee and his/her family. An In-Network or Out-of-Network Plan option is available. Both plans cover the same procedures, but the In-Network option pays a higher percentage on certain covered expenses.

Disability Insurance

Voluntary Long-Term Disability coverage is available on a payroll deduction basis. Long-Term Disability benefits may be received in conjunction with accrued leave usage.

Employee Charitable Donations

One of the benefits offered to employees of the Pickens County School District is an automatic payroll deduction to benefit a local charity. Deductions are easy to manage and tax-free. A minimum donation of \$5.00 per charity is required. The current list of available charities include:

- American Cancer Society
- American Heart and Stroke Assoc. of Pickens County
- American Red Cross
- Boys and Girls Club of North Georgia
- CARES Food Pantry
- CARES Snack Pack Program
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)
- Friends of the Pickens Library
- Georgia Special Olympics
- Good Samaritan Clinic
- Habitat for Humanity, Pickens County
- Hope House
- Horizon Outreach for Women/North GA Mountain Crisis Center Joy House
- March of Dimes
- Partners Scholarship Program, PCSD
- Pickens County Animal Rescue
- Pickens County Certified Literate Community Program
- Pickens County Community Resource (Thrift Store)
- Pickens County Family Connections
- Pickens Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy
- Prevent Child Abuse Pickens
- Ruth House Ministries
- Young Life

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

PCSD employees may deduct up to \$2,600 in pre-tax dollars per plan year to pay for eligible reimbursable medical health care expenses. Employees may deduct up to \$5,000 in pre-tax dollars per plan year to pay for qualifying dependent care expenses. Dependent care expenses are reimbursed up to the accumulated payroll deductions as services are provided.

IBM Federal Credit Union

As a convenience for employees, payroll deductions are provided upon request for contributions or payments to the IBM Federal Credit Union. For more information and telephone numbers, please visit the IBM Federal Credit Union website.

Life Insurance – Board Paid

Benefit-eligible employees are automatically covered by a \$20,000 group Term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy provided by the Board at no cost to the employee. Additionally, an employee may purchase Supplemental Term and/or Universal Life insurance for themselves and their dependents during the open enrollment or new hire process.

Life Insurance – Optional Employee Paid

Additional optional universal and term life plans are available through the Plan Administrator.

Tax Deferred Annuity and Other Investment Opportunities

PCSD offers employees the opportunity to participate in two tax-deferred retirement savings plans; the 403(b) Plan and the 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan. Both plans allow employees the ability to exclude a portion of their salary from taxable income and defer taxes on this money until the money is withdrawn, generally after retirement. Employees should consider the differences in the two plans and discuss investment decisions with the plan administrator. The Board has approved VALIC to market these plans to employees.

The Board has also made available to you through Horace Mann the "Tax Sheltered Annuity" for Educators 403(b).

Vision Insurance

Optional vision insurance may be purchased for the individual employee and his/her family. Vision insurance generally covers the cost of eye exams and other services and materials. Using in-network providers allows enrollees to receive care at no cost or minimal out-of-pocket expenses.

COMMUNICATION WITH EMPLOYEES AND THE COMMUNITY

The Pickens County School District (PCSD) is focused on presenting a clear framework for communicating with all stakeholders. Examples include:

- Employees' achievements and best practices in the classroom and support areas are recognized through internal communication vehicles including the district's website, internal email, and employee access to the student information system.
- Employee achievements at the local, state and national level may also be publicized through press releases prepared by Central Office staff for distribution to all relevant media. Any employee may submit information for recognition by sending it to Central Office staff.
- Parents and citizens have direct channels to provide input to their school board representatives through attendance at monthly board meetings. Information related to the district is shared through the district's website, eBOARD, social media (Facebook and Twitter), local news media as well as individual school communication sources. Ongoing, two-way communication between the school system and its internal and external audiences and positive media relations are a continued focus for Pickens County Schools.

Strategic Priority for Communication

The school district will establish and promote open, honest, reliable, two-way communication that builds trust and confidence within the school community. We will share accurate, timely, and relevant information with stakeholders through appropriate communication outlets. We will be committed to public engagement so that students, parents, staff and community members will be well-informed and able to provide meaningful input regarding district issues. Communication will promote and reinforce the school system's reputation, conveying a clear and compelling story of our instructional and operational success. Effective communication will be everyone's responsibility.

Partnering with Parents

Employees of the Pickens County School District will present themselves in a professional manner with parents, community members, colleagues, and supervisors. Parents are valuable members of the school community. They provide support through working with their children at home, serving on PTO and school advisory boards, and by volunteering in schools and at extracurricular activities. When working with parents, it is important to value their contributions and to work with them as equal partners. Oral and written communication should be in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand. Building ties between home and school promotes a sense of community and allows for opportunities to strengthen academic achievement. Positive communication with parents is part of the culture in the Pickens County School District.

Parents Right to Know

In compliance with the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Pickens County School District will provide parents, upon request, information regarding professional qualifications of their children's teacher(s) and/or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the student's teacher –
 - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
 - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which the State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
 - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Employee Recognition

Pickens County School District employees frequently receive recognition for awards and achievements of various national, state, and local accomplishments. Professional associations regularly recognize PCSD teachers for their excellence. Additionally, each school chooses a Teacher of the Year nominee during the fall. From the pool of local school Teachers of the Year, level winners and the PCSD Teacher of the Year are named. The school system shares employee, school and system accomplishments with the local news media.

COMPENSATION – POLICIES *GBC, GCRD*

To attract and retain highly professionally qualified teachers and support personnel, the Pickens County School District maintains competitive salaries by conducting regular job and market analyses of neighboring school districts as well as other regional school districts and not-for-profit employers in the Southeast. The PCSD reviews and adopts annually the Pickens County School District Salary Schedule. Salaries and benefits paid to employees from federal grant funds are paid based on the same schedules/annual salaries and receive the same benefit offerings as approved by the Pickens County Board of Education for any fund, federal or non-federal.

Classified Personnel Overtime Pay – Policy *GCRD*

Classified Employees of the Pickens County Board of Education may not work more than 40 hours per week unless authorized by a supervisor. Supervisors may not authorize overtime unless approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Creditable Service

The PCSD annually reviews certifications, evaluations, and full-time employment status to determine if an employee will be advanced a year of creditable service on the salary schedule.

A year of creditable service is defined as the employee worked at least the equivalent of 63% of full-time employment of the LUA defined school year for certified personnel. Creditable years of experience earned during one school year shall be credited at the beginning of the next contracted school year. Certified personnel shall not earn a creditable year of experience for any year the employee received an unsatisfactory performance evaluation as determined by the evaluation system approved by the GaDOE or the LUA.

Upon employment, new employees will be provided a PCSD Experience Verification Form. Each new employee will be required to obtain a completed PCSD Experience Verification Form from all prior employing LUAs. These verifications shall be returned to the Human Resources Department. Upon receipt of the PCSD Experience Verification Form(s) the Human Resources Department will determine the appropriate salary step for the employee. No contract will be issued until all LUAs have verified prior experience and evaluation ratings. Employees will have an opportunity to review the completed contract of employment prior to signing.

Name/Address/Phone Number Changes

It is the responsibility of employees to inform the Department of Human Resources of any changes in home address and/or phone number. Name change requests must be accompanied by a copy of the signed social security card reflecting the new name, before the request may be completed. Other requirements may be necessary to create a name change for certified employees with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GAPSC). All requests must be reported to the Department of Human Resources for further information and updates regarding name, address, and phone number changes.

Pay Statement/Direct Deposit

Employee pay occurs utilizing direct deposit to the bank account of the employee's choice. An Authorization Agreement for Direct Deposit is part of the New Hire forms packet and should be returned to the Department of Human Resources for processing. Employees may access their pay statements online via the Payroll Document Services Viewer. Information regarding the viewer is in the New Hire Packet.

Penalty for Failure to Meet Contractual Obligation

If fewer than 20 days of service are rendered under the contract, the daily rate may be equal to the substitute teacher rate.

Penalty for Failure to Provide Certification

The employment contracts issued to certified staff are contingent upon the employee securing and continuing to hold a valid in-field certificate issued by the GAPSC. Salary adjustments may be made to conform to the certificate level approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. If an employee is unable to be professionally certified, the daily rate of pay may be adjusted to that of a substitute employee retroactive to the beginning of employment under the contract.

LEAVE – POLICY GARH, GBRIG

Pickens County School District recognizes that our employees will encounter personal situations that may require employees to take time away from their job. Our leave options are designed to not only be flexible and consistent with employee needs but also to comply with state and federal laws.

Emergency Leave

The Board may grant emergency or other unpaid leave to an employee upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – Policy GBRIG

To the extent that any provision in this policy conflicts with or is superseded by the Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”), the regulations promulgated thereunder, or any other state or federal law, the provision of the FMLA, its regulations or other law, as the case may be, shall control.

PCSD is in full compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. The FMLA may grant qualified employees 60 working days of unpaid leave every twelve months, which may be used for the following purposes:

- birth of a child
- adoption of a child or the placement of a foster child
- care for a sick spouse, child, or parent
- employee’s own serious health condition
- military

To be eligible for FMLA, an employee must have been employed by the district for at least 12 months and must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the prior twelve-month period.

The district requires that any leave request based on a family member’s health condition, the employee’s own health condition, or military caregiver status, be supported by the appropriate FMLA form. Additionally, an approved health care provider’s release to return to work will be required for all employees who were on leave due to their own health condition.

The employee must provide at least 60 days notice of the employee’s intention to take leave when possible. The employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment in a manner that will not overly disrupt the operations of the district. With limited exceptions, any eligible employee who takes leave under FMLA is entitled to be restored to his/her job or an equivalent position.

Detailed information concerning FMLA is available through the Department of Human Resources or on the FMLA website at <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/fmla>.

Jury and Witness Leave

Each person employed by the Pickens County School system shall be allowed leave with pay for the purpose of serving as a juror in any court or when subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of the individual’s duties as a school system employee. Jury and/or witness leave related to a person’s employment with the school system shall not be deducted from an individual’s accumulated personal, professional, or sick leave. No employee utilizing jury and witness leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute to serve during his or her absence for such leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed for reasons arising out of their employment with the school system may keep the jury/witness pay and still receive their daily pay.

Military Leave

All employees of the PCSD are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen (18) days in any federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military leave duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. Employees also are entitled to leave not exceeding thirty days (30) in any one federal fiscal year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States armed forces. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the Superintendent or designee annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees’ duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

Observance of Religious Holidays

Employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays more than the days allowed for personal leave, the employee may take unpaid leave for such purposes provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

Personal Leave

Employees may take a total of three (3) days of personal leave in one school year from their accumulated sick leave if prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee’s immediate supervisor. A leave form must be filed and approved by the principal/supervisor prior to leave. Unless otherwise approved by the employee’s immediate supervisor and the Superintendent, personal leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days, the first or last week of school, or on the day before or day after holidays.

Professional leave will be approved at the discretion of the principal or the employee’s immediate supervisor.

Professional Leave for Certified Personnel

An employee may request leave to attend specific professional activities or to receive in-service training. Leave requests must be approved by the supervisor and submitted to the Professional Learning Department for approval at least two weeks prior to the requested absence. Approval of the request does not commit the system to payment of any expenses without appropriate prior approval of those related expenses.

Sick Leave

Each employee of the Pickens County Board of Education may earn sick leave, with full pay, on the basis of one and one-fourth (1 ¼) days for each completed month of service. All unused sick leave shall be carried over from one fiscal year to the next. Sick leave accumulated by certificated or administrative employees and bus drivers is transferable from one school system to another school system, up to a maximum of 45 days.

Sick leave is available only for personal illness, injury, or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness in the employee’s immediate family.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall have the right to require a physician’s certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. In the event that sick leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician’s certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member.

For the purposes of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as:

- spouse
- children
- father
- mother
- sisters
- foster children
- brothers
- grandparents
- grandchildren
- aunts
- uncles
- nieces
- nephews
- father-in-law
- mother-in-law
- sister-in-law
- any dependent as shown on the employee’s most recent tax return
- brother-in-law
- daughter -in-law
- son-in-law
- step-equivalents of the foregoing
- or other relatives living in the household

A physician’s certificate is required for any absence of three consecutive days or more in which sick leave is used.

Excellent employee attendance is vital to student learning and the efficient operation of the school system. After all earned sick leave is exhausted; the employee’s pay will be docked for any additional time absent from the job. The employee must then furnish a written excuse to the superintendent, within three days of returning to work, as to the reason(s) why the number of days absent from work has exceeded allotted earned leave. This documentation will become a part of the employee’s personnel file and may become a part of the employee’s annual evaluation.

Inclement Weather Leave

If an employee of the Pickens County School District, due to inclement weather or other reasons, is not able to get to their respective work place on a regularly scheduled in-service day, called in-service day or regular school day, he/she should contact his/her direct supervisor to inform him/her of the absences. At this time the employee and

supervisor will determine how the absence will be handled. The following five options are available to the employee in priority order:

1. Arrange to make up the day(s) missed with immediate supervisor where appropriate.
2. Twelve month employees may use a vacation day for each day of leave.
3. Take personal leave if the employee has not used the allotted three (3) days of absence.
4. Use sick leave (regular sick leave rules apply), BOE Policy GARH.
5. If the employee cannot use any of the four options above, the employee's pay will be reduced by the equivalent of one day's pay for each day of leave.

The employee will complete the appropriate documentation for the leave option as soon as possible.

Vacations and Holidays

Twelve-month employees of the Pickens County School District earn paid vacation. Each fiscal year, twelve-month employees receive two weeks paid vacation and such holidays as designated by the Board. Employees with ten years of completed service in the PCSD earn three weeks paid vacation, and employees with twenty years of completed service in the PCSD earn four weeks of paid vacation.

Vacation leave must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor prior to the leave. Vacation leave should be requested using the Pickens County School System Leave Form. Unless otherwise approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and the Superintendent, vacation leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days, the first or last week of school, or on the day before or day after holidays.

Vacation leave must be used in the fiscal year in which it is earned or not later than July 31 of the fiscal year following the year of accrual. Unused vacation time will be forfeited.

OPPORTUNITIES

Individuals employed by the Pickens County School District (PCSD) are selected by a systematic personnel screening process designed to identify highly-qualified candidates. This same commitment to quality is reflected in the system plans for enhancement of the skills and competencies of employees. The Professional Development Department coordinates professional growth opportunities.

Certification

It is the responsibility of all certified employees to obtain and maintain valid in-field Georgia certification. Employees may contact the Department of Human Resources for certification forms and requirements.

All paraprofessionals must hold a Paraprofessional Certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). Certification requirements may be found on the GaPSC website. Questions regarding certification should be directed to the Department of Human Resources.

Licensing

All vehicle operators covered by the commercial driver's licensing laws must have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and must successfully complete the training course prescribed by the State Department of Transportation and Pickens County School District. Other specialized positions may also require licensing.

Professional Development – Policy GAD

The Professional Development Department works with school and district leaders to:

- provide professional growth opportunities, products, and services that are designed to advance the district's vision, mission, and goals;
- to enhance employee performance;
- to develop employee capacity to lead in a variety of settings.

The district is committed to the development and support of professional learning that is research-based, data-driven, student-focused, continuous, and sustainable over time.

PCSD provides an assortment of professional learning experiences for teachers and administrators in content, pedagogy, and processes. These opportunities are based on individual needs of the schools and the district. They provide teachers and administrators multiple venues for gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to provide exceptional instruction to the students of our district.

Our belief is that learning is a life-long journey and a comprehensive plan developed by school and district leaders. Assessments may be included to address individual and instructional program needs for certified employees. It is our belief that all certified staff should earn staff development hours annually determined in collaboration with building and district administrators. Professional learning opportunities are intended to align directly with initiatives from needs assessments at the school and district level and to maintain certification requirements for a highly qualified staff. These opportunities are scheduled in local school staff development sessions, district-sponsored opportunities, and/or external offerings from approved agencies. Many of these opportunities will be communicated through email, school and district meetings, and postings. Professional opportunities for classified employees are determined by program directors and school administrators.

Performance Appraisal

Pickens County School System is committed to performance assessments that encourage continuous quality improvement for all employees. All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually as required by Georgia Code § 20-2-210. Certified educators are assessed using the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System, the Leader Keys Effectiveness System, or other appropriate evaluation programs as determined by the district. Certified employees not assessed through TKES or LKES and Classified employees are assessed through a job specific, locally developed evaluation program and the successful completion of a Contributing Professional Plan which is developed jointly by the employee and his/her supervisor.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Pickens County School District recognizes the importance of meeting employees' needs and utilizing employees' abilities. For effective district operations, it is necessary that sound personnel policies are known and understood by all employees. These policies ensure consistency and fairness for all employees.

Policy modifications and clarifications are subject to change. These changes are communicated to employees through email, administrative meetings, electronic retrieval through eBOARD, the district website, and system publications. Policies summarized in this handbook are meant to provide employees with only a general overview of Board policies related to personnel.

This handbook, the salary schedule, and references to the number of days to be worked should not be considered an employment contract. Since it is the responsibility of each employee to understand PCSD Board policies and administrative procedures, if clarification of information contained in policies and procedures is needed, an immediate supervisor should be contacted for assistance.

Fraud Prevention – Policy *DIE*

It is the purpose of this policy to implement the provisions of O.C.G.A § 45-01-0004, et seq. In accordance with the foregoing, it is the policy that the Board of Education shall not tolerate fraud of any kind and has an established system for the reporting of suspicious activities.

“Fraud” is defined as a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary fund from federal, state, or local grants and funds.

Employees and parties maintaining a business relationship with the District who suspect fraud, whether it pertains to federal, state, or local programs, should report their concerns to the Superintendent or his/her designee. If fraud is suspected by the Superintendent, such allegations should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Education.

All reports of suspected fraud shall be handled with the strictest confidentiality allowed under the law. Informants may remain anonymous as allowed by law but are encouraged to cooperate with investigators and to provide as much detail and evidence of the alleged fraudulent act as possible.

Any and all reports of suspicious activity and/or suspected fraud will be investigated. Results of an investigation shall not be disclosed to or discussed with anyone other than those individuals with a legitimate need to know until the results become subject to public disclosure in accordance with state and/or federal law.

Procedures and Responsibilities for Reporting Fraud, Waste, Abuse or Corruption

- 1 Anyone suspecting fraudulent activity should report their concerns to their immediate supervisors and in turn to the Pickens County Schools Superintendent or Chief Financial Officer at 706-253-1700.
- 2 Any employee (full-time or temporary) contractor, serving the Pickens County Schools, who receives a report of suspected fraudulent activity must report this information within the next business day.
- 3 Employees have the responsibility to report suspected fraud. All reports can be made in confidence.
- 4 The Pickens County Schools Board of Education shall conduct investigations of employees, providers, contractors, or vendors.
- 5 If necessary, the person reporting will be contacted for additional information.
- 6 Periodic communication through meetings should emphasize the responsibilities and channels to report suspected fraud.

Complaints and Grievances – Policy *GAE*

It is the purpose of this policy to implement the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-989.5, et seq. In accordance with the foregoing, it is the policy of the Board of Education that certificated personnel shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest possible organizational level. The Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible. This policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed.

Definitions

- 1 “Level One Administrator” means the principal of a school with respect to teachers and other certificated personnel assigned to that school. With respect to the certified administrators supervised by the

Superintendent, the "Level One Administrator" shall be the Superintendent. In any case not covered by this paragraph, the "Level One Administrator" shall be the supervisory certificated person responsible for evaluating the employee.

- 2 "Central Office Administrator" means the local school system Superintendent.
- 3 "Complaint" means any claim or grievance by a certificated employee of this school district who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of this school district with which the district is required to comply.

Scope of Complaint: Exclusions

- 1 Scope. Unless excluded by paragraph (b) hereof, this complaint procedure is applicable to any claim which is filed pursuant to this policy by any professional employee certificated by the Professional Standards Commission.
- 2 Exclusions. This procedure shall not apply to:
 - a. Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluation and professional development plans pursuant to Code Section 20-2-210; however, such exclusion shall not apply to procedural deficiencies on the part of the school or system in conducting the evaluation;
 - b. Professional development plans;
- 3 Job performance;
 - a. The termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee, as set forth in Code Section 20-2-940; and
 - b. The revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee, as set forth in Code Section 20-2-984.5.
- 4 Certificated. A certificated employee who chooses to appeal under Code Section 20-2-1160 shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

Hearing Rights; Evidence; Representation; Decisions; Records

1. Hearing; evidence. The complainant shall be entitled to an opportunity to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses at each level, but the complainant may not present additional evidence at the Second or Third Hearing levels unless notice of the complainant's intention and the evidence to be presented are submitted in writing five (5) days prior to the hearing to the Administrator who will preside at such level, and in the case of the local board, to the Superintendent. When hearing an appeal from a prior level, the local Board of Education shall hear and decide all appeals de novo.
2. Representation. The complainant and the administrator against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is appealed shall be entitled to the presence of an individual, including an attorney to assist in the presentation of the complaint and the response thereto, at the Central Office Administrator and at the local Board of Education level. The presence of any individual other than the complainant and the Administrator at Level One is prohibited, except witnesses who present testimony or documents.
3. Hearing Officer. The local Board of Education may appoint a member of the State Bar to serve as law officer who shall rule on all issues of law and other objections, but such attorney shall not assist in the presentation of the case for either party.
4. Overall Hearing Time Schedules. The overall time frame from the initiation of the complaint until rendition of the decision by the local board and notification thereof to the Complainant shall not exceed sixty (60) days.
5. Automatic Referral to Next Level. Any complaint not processed by the Administrator or the local unit of administration within the time frame required by this policy shall be forwarded to the next level for determination.
6. Records. Accurate records of the proceedings at each level shall be kept; the proceedings shall be recorded by mechanical means; all evidence shall be preserved and made available to the parties at all times; and all costs and fees shall be borne by the party incurring them unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties; except that the cost of preparing and preserving the record of the proceedings shall be borne by the local Board of Education; provided however, the cost of transcribing the transcript of evidence and proceedings before the local Board shall be borne by the party requesting same, and all costs of the

record on appeal to the superior courts and appellate courts shall be paid by the party required to do so by the laws relating thereto.

7. Decisions. Each decision shall be made in writing and dated and shall contain findings of fact and reasons for the particular decision reached. The decision at each level shall be sent to the complainant by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery or hand delivered by a person designated by the Superintendent.
8. Notice to the Complainant. Notice to the Complainant shall be deemed to have been made on the date of hand delivery to a statutory overnight delivery service or on the date of deposit in the U.S. Mail by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address stated in the complaint or, if not contained in the complaint, to the last known address of the Complainant on file with the Board of Education.

First Level; Presentation; Time; Contents.

The complaint shall be presented in writing to the Level One Administrator within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. The complaint shall include the following:

1. The mailing address of the Complainant to which all notices and other documents may be mailed;
2. The intent of the Complainant to utilize this complaint procedure, clearly stated;
3. A reference or description of the statute, policy, rule, contract provision, or regulation that is alleged to have been violated, misinterpreted or misapplied;
4. A brief statement of the facts reasonably calculated to show how such statute, policy, rule, or regulation was violated or misapplied, and how it substantially affects the employment relationship of the Complainant; and
5. A statement of the relief desired.

The Superintendent or designee shall prepare forms for use in accordance with the foregoing requirements.

First Level Hearing and Decision.

The Level One Administrator shall record the date of filing on the complaint, and shall give notice as provided in Section 4, to the Complainant of the time and place of the hearing. The Level One Administrator shall conduct a hearing on the complaint and render a decision thereon within ten (10) days of the filing of the complaint. The decision shall be dated and a copy shall be sent to the complainant as provided in Section 4.

Second Level; Appeal from First Level to Central Office Administrator.

A Complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the first level shall be entitled to appeal to the Central Office Administrator by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant is notified of the Level One decision. The Central Office Administrator shall record the date of the filing of the appeal, and shall notify the complainant in writing of the time and place of the hearing in the same manner as provided in Section 4. The Central Office Administrator shall obtain copies of all minutes, transcripts, documents and other records relating to the complaint and shall conduct a hearing and render a decision within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the filing of the appeal, or the hearing may be conducted by any designated representative of the Central Office Administrator, who shall promptly submit his or her recommendations and findings to the Central Office Administrator for final decision. The decision shall be rendered and served on the complainant and his or her attorney in accordance with Section 4.

Third Level; Appeal to Board of Education.

A complainant or Level One Administrator dissatisfied with the decision of the Central Office Administrator may appeal to the Board of Education by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the decision as provided in Section 4. The Superintendent shall record the date of filing on the appeal, and shall promptly give written notice in the same manner as provided in Section 4 to the complainant of the time and place of hearing. The complainant and the Administrators against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is being appealed shall be entitled to appear before the Board of Education and be heard. The Board of Education may direct that a pre-hearing conference be held prior to the hearing to identify issues and facilitate presentation. The local board shall conduct a hearing and render its decision in writing within twenty (20) calendar days after the hearing, and perfect service thereof on the complainant and his or her attorney, all in accordance with Section 4.

Appeals to State Board.

Appeals from the decision of the local Board of Education shall be governed by the State Board Rule governing appeals and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1160.

Reprisals Prohibited.

No certificated personnel shall be subjected to reprisals as a result of filing any complaint under this policy. Any reprisals may be referred to the Professional Standards Commission.

Collective Bargaining Disclaimer.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to permit or foster collective bargaining by or on behalf of any employee or group of employees.

Complaint Procedure for Federal Programs under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

The Pickens County School District is committed to open communications in order to reach the goal of educating all students. The following procedures have been developed for use by staff, parents, community members, and/or vendors to report complaints dealing with federal programs, services, and staff members. All federal program complaints are to be directed to the Director of Federal Programs using the procedure outlined below.

Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization, or agency ("complainant") may file a complaint with the Pickens County School District Board of Education if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that a violation of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 has occurred. The complaint must allege a violation occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

Federal Programs for which Complaints Can Be Filed

- 1 Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Program Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- 2 Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children
- 3 Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
- 4 Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
- 5 Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Fund
- 6 Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6111: State Assessment Program
- 7 Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503: Participation of Private School Children
- 8 Title X, Part C: McKinney – Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Filing a Complaint

A formal complaint must be filed in writing to the Pickens County School District's Superintendent or his/her designee. The Pickens County School Federal Programs Complaint Form can be found on the PCSD website at www.pickens.k12.ga.us.

The complaint must include the following:

- 1 A statement that the LEA has violated a requirement of a federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
- 2 The date on which the violation occurred;
- 3 The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the federal statute or regulation);
- 4 A list of names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
- 5 Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position; and
- 6 The address of the complainant.

Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, the Director of Federal Programs will review the complaint form. The Director of Federal Programs will contact the originator(s) of the complaint in order to resolve the complaint. This will usually occur with ten (10) working days after receipt of the complaint. The Superintendent will be notified of the complaint. If additional information or an investigation is necessary, the Superintendent will have sixty (60) days for receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings. If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, corrective action will be required and timelines for completion will be included. The timelines outlined above may be extended, if exceptional circumstances exist.

Right of Appeal

All efforts are made to resolve complaints at the local level. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level, the complainant has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the Superintendent's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

The complaint must be addressed to:

Georgia Department of Education
Title I Office
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE
2052 Twin Tower East
Atlanta, Ga 30334

Conflict of Interest – Policy BHA

Any employee, officer, or agent of the PCSD must not have an interest as defined below and as defined in our personnel handbook in awarding a firm in which they have a financial interest in an award.

A conflict of interest arises when the following has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award.

- employee, officer, or agent;
- any member of the person's immediate family;
- that person's partner; and
- an organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above or has a financial interest in the firm selected for award.

Contracts

Contracts for certified employees and other Board-approved personnel are issued for no more than one school year. A contract of employment is made by and between an employee and the Pickens County Board of Education for a position within the district and not for a specific location. Employment contracts of teachers, principals, and other Board-approved personnel shall be in writing, and such contracts shall be signed by such personnel on their own behalf and by the Superintendent on behalf of the Pickens County Board of Education.

An employee who is fulfilling a full-year contract for the current year must be notified by May 15 if a contract for the ensuing year will not be offered. An employee who holds a contract for less than one full year will not necessarily be offered a full contract for the ensuing year.

Definitions

1. Tenure – Tenure in Georgia is defined as the acquiring of the right to expect continuous employment in the currently employing system. This is done in two ways. For a teacher not previously holding tenure in the state of Georgia, tenure is acquired upon the offer and acceptance of the fourth full-year contract with the same system, or for a teacher previously holding tenure in the state of Georgia, tenure is acquired upon the offer and acceptance of the second full-year contract with the same system.
2. Full-year – The Pickens County Board of Education defines full-year for the acquisition of tenure as the employment prior to the first student day of school through the remainder of the school year. Anything less than this is considered a partial year as related to tenure. For payroll full-year is defined as 63% or greater of the school year.

Equal Opportunity Employment – Policy GAAA

It is the policy of the Board not to discriminate based on gender, age, race, color, disability, religion, or national origin in any educational program, activity, or service or admissions to facilities operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Board. It is the express policy of the Board to comply with all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination now in effect or hereafter enacted including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and all accompanying regulations.

Employee Background Checks – Policy GAK(1)

In order to be employed for the first time by the Pickens County Board of Education, any applicant(s) for any position must first submit to a fingerprint and criminal records check which will be conducted through the office of the law enforcement official of Pickens County as required by Georgia State Law 20-2-211(e)(1). The law enforcement official shall forward the prospective employee's fingerprints and appropriate request to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) for a criminal record check under standards adopted by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Such fingerprinting and criminal record check shall be required even though the applicant may already have undergone fingerprinting and criminal record checks by another school district in Georgia or elsewhere. Such fingerprinting and criminal record check must be made prior to the issuance of any regular contract for first employment.

Subsequent criminal record checks will be conducted on all personnel in accordance with state laws, state board rules and rules of the Professional Standards Commission. All certified personnel whose employment is continued with this school district shall have a criminal record check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission. All classified employees whose employment is continued with this school district shall have subsequent criminal record checks on a periodic basis using procedures and schedules to be determined by the Superintendent or his designee.

The fingerprinting and record checks shall be initiated by the school district at the appropriate time, and the fee for such shall be paid by the applicant(s).

Employee Background Checks Procedure

Candidate for hire, both as an employee or as a contracted service worker, in the Pickens County School District must submit to a criminal background check prior to employment. A contract will not be offered until a clear CBC is obtained. Contracted service workers are employed as new hires annually.

Established employees must submit to a criminal background check every five years and/or any time certification renewal is required. All employees must have a clearance certificate which will require a CBC. In some cases this will require multiple CBC within the five year period.

The employee or candidate for employment should call the Jasper Police Department to schedule an appointment for fingerprinting. All criminal background checks must be completed by the Jasper Police Department.

The employee or candidate for employment should be prepared to pay the processing fee at the time of fingerprinting. The fee is \$55.00, but fees could be subject to change.

After fingerprinting occurs the JPD will process the CBC and submit these to the PCSD. Copies are not accepted from the employee or candidate for employment.

Upon receipt of the CBC from the JPD, it will be reviewed by the PCSD Department of Human Resources and appropriate actions will be taken.

Employee Tobacco Use – Policy GAN

The Pickens County School Board recognizes that the use of tobacco products is a health, safety, and environmental hazard for students, employees, visitors, and school faculties. The Board acknowledges that adult employees and visitors serve as role models for students and that the Board's acceptance of any use of tobacco products implies school approval, if not endorsement, of such use. In addition, the Board recognizes that it has an obligation to promote positive role models in schools and promote a healthy learning environment, free from unwanted smoke for the students, employees, and visitors to the school campus.

Finally, the Board recognizes that it has legal authority and obligation pursuant to the Georgia Smoke Free Air Act of 2005 (O.C.G.A. 31-2a-1 et seq.) the federal Pro-Children Act (Title X of Public Law 103-227), and the Georgia Youth Access law (GA. Code ANN. 16-12-171 2204).

Tobacco Use Prohibited – Policy GAN

No student, staff member or school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product, including e-cigarettes, at any time, including non-school hours 24 hours per day, 7 days per week while:

- In any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by the PCSD;
- On any schools grounds and property including athletic fields and parking lots owned, leased, rented or chartered by the PCSD; or
- At any school-sponsored or school-related event on-campus or off-campus.

- Volunteers and visitors on school property will be reminded of this policy in a tactful and courteous manner and will be asked to adhere to the policy.

Any employee who violates or permits a student to use tobacco products will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension with or without pay or termination.

Harassment – Policy GAEB

It is the policy of this School District to prohibit any act of harassment of employees by other employees based upon race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability at all times and during all occasions while at school, in the workplace or at any school event or activity. Any such act shall result in prompt and appropriate discipline, including the possible termination of employment.

Sexual harassment may include conduct or speech which entails unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, taunts, threats, comments of a vulgar or demeaning nature, demands or physical contact which creates a hostile environment. There may be other speech or conduct which employees experience as inappropriate or illegal harassment which should also be reported; harassment can take many forms and it is not possible to itemize every aspect of the harassment forbidden by this policy.

Any employee or applicant for employment who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination as prohibited by this policy should promptly report the same to the principal of their school or to the appropriate coordinator designated in policy GAAA, who will implement the board's discriminatory complaints procedures as specified in that policy. Employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination.

It is the duty of all employees to promptly report harassment forbidden by this policy. All supervisors will instruct their subordinates as to the content of this policy and, through appropriate professional learning activities, enlighten employees as to the varied forms or expression of prohibited harassment. The principals of all schools shall ensure that employees are informed through handbooks, training materials and verbally that such harassment is strictly forbidden, how it is to be reported and the consequences for violating this policy.

Health and Safety – Policies GANA, GAN, GAMA

The Board recognizes the responsibility for ensuring the safety of all employees. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to take all practical steps to develop and implement a safety program for all employees, which will provide and maintain safe and healthful working conditions, adequate protection equipment, and develop operating procedures and practices that comply with federal, state, and local legislation pertaining to accident prevention.

To help ensure safe working conditions, an employee is responsible for:

- Knowing the potential hazards of the job.
- Learning and following the safety practices required by management.
- Using health and safety devices required by the job.
- Correcting and/or reporting safety hazards immediately.
- Immediately reporting any accident or injury to supervisor.
- Obeying "No Smoking" regulations. All students are prohibited from tobacco use on campus or at school activities, functions, or events. While fulfilling their duties as district employees, staff members shall not use tobacco in the presence of students or on school system property. Please refer to the section titled "Personnel Smoking" for additional information.
- Operating machinery or equipment only if qualified to do so.
- Maintaining good housekeeping practices including keeping all fire exits clear and firefighting equipment accessible.

Identification and Security Badges

All employees of PCSD will have picture identification badges. When an employee terminates, his/her direct supervisor should inform the Personnel Office to ensure any security access is canceled upon termination. Badges for terminated employees should be returned to the Personnel Office and destroyed.

Non-School Employment

PCSD employees are reminded that their job assignments within the district are their first obligation and if outside employment is taking time or energy from this position or affecting their performance, they will be asked to choose one or the other.

Each principal/supervisor has direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel assigned. Employees seeking employment in any private business or outside activity during the term of their contract shall first receive permission from their respective principal/supervisor before entering into such supplementary employment.

Personnel Attire

The Pickens County School District acknowledges that an appropriate appearance promotes respect and contributes to a positive learning environment. Each employee's manner of dress should convey a high level of professionalism. Employees should be neat, well-groomed and dressed in an appropriate manner for their individual work assignments. This includes practice or participation in any extracurricular activity while on duty. This dress expectation includes modesty and proper personal hygiene.

Each principal or supervisor is responsible for maintaining an acceptable standard of dress for employees under his/her supervision. Staff members will adhere to all dress code standards set for students in the PCSD Student Code of Conduct, as well as those appropriate for the position held. Failure to maintain appropriate dress will result at a minimum a warning for the first offense. Subsequent offenses may result in employee disciplinary actions by the principal or supervisor. Continual violations of the appropriate manner of dress may be referred to the Department of Human Resources.

Personnel Records

The information contained in an employee's personnel file is kept strictly confidential except as may be required by law, requested by the employee, or requested by authorized officials on a need-to-know basis. Otherwise, requests for information not specifically approved by the employee will be referred to the Personnel Director. There are specific document types that are protected from public disclosure, as stated in the Georgia Open Records Act. These documents include medical records, home address information, Social Security numbers, insurance information, and confidential evaluations.

Employees may review their personnel records by contacting the Department of Human Resources to schedule an appointment. Confidential reference documents are not available for review.

Personnel Time Schedule

All full-time employees of the Board of Education work a minimum of 40 hours per week. The principal or program manager sets a schedule for the time of arrival and departure of all employees assigned to his/her operation.

In order for an organization to achieve its desired goals, excellent attendance and punctuality are necessary. Therefore, regular and prompt attendance is expected and required of all employees. If it is necessary to be absent or late to work, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor at least one day in advance, if possible. Absences should be logged in the electronic absence management system as early as possible.

In case of emergency or other circumstances when it is impossible to give advance notice, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor or designee before time to report to work.

Special school related events require that certified staff members be present. These events are vital to our system, students, parents and community. The principal or program manager should set the schedule of dates and times and publish a calendar of events to allow certified staff members to make arrangements to be present at scheduled events. When appropriate, with principal or program manager permission, certified staff members may share the workload for these events. When an employee is unable to attend an event, the employee should inform the principal or program manager in a timely fashion.

Privacy and Confidentiality – Policy JR

Schools and school districts are mandated by Federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to protect educational records. "Educational records" refers to those data elements that are (1) directly related to a student; and (2) maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting on behalf of the agency or institution.

FERPA permits school districts to disclose information designated as “Directory Information” without consent of parent or student. Directory information is considered information which is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes student information found in athletic and extracurricular programs, yearbooks, honor roll, and other recognition lists, and graduation programs. Among the items considered director information are:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student’s Name • Address • Telephone listing • Electronic email address • Photograph • Date and place of birth • Major field of study • Dates of attendance • Grade level • Degrees, honors, and awards received | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in officially recognized activities and sports • Weight and height of members of athletic teams • The most recent educational agency or institution attended • Student ID number, user ID, or other unique | <p>personal identifiers used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. A student’s SSN, whole or in part, may not be used for this purpose</p> |
|---|---|---|

Extra care must be taken to protect “non-directory” student information as well as personally identifiable information contained within student records, either in electronic or paper form. Among the items considered non-directory information are

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisement records • Courses taken • Disciplinary actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades • Schedule • Student number | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student’s SSN • Test scores |
|---|--|--|

Personally identifiable information in education records is defined as a student’s first and last name with one or more of the following data elements:

- A list of personal characteristics that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.
- Any other information or identifiers that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.
- Name of student’s parent(s) or other family member(s).
- Social security number.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

Definition of Terms Used in PPRA:

“Instructional Material” – Instructional material that is provided to a student, regardless of format, including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital formats (such as material accessible through the Internet). The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

“Invasive Physical Examination” – Any medical examination that involves the exposure of private body parts, or any act during such examination that includes incision, insertion, or injection into the body, but does not include a hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.

“Personal Information” – Individually identifiable information including: (1) a student or parent’s first and last name; (2) home address; (3) telephone number; or (4) social security number.

Requirements:

No student shall be required to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or

8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student.

A parent of a student may, upon request, inspect any survey created by a third party containing one or more of the items listed as (1) through (8) above before the survey is administered or distributed by a school to a student and may choose to opt the student out of participation in the survey. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for: (1) granting a request by a parent for reasonable access to such survey within a reasonable period of time after the request is received, and (2) making arrangements to protect student privacy in the event of the administration or distribution of a survey to a student containing one or more of the items listed as (1) through (8). The requirements of PPRA do not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

A parent of a student may, upon request, inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for granting a request by a parent for reasonable access to instructional material within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

Parents shall be notified prior to the administration of physical examinations or screenings that the school may administer to students. This notice shall offer the parent the opportunity to opt the student out of any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is (1) required as a condition of attendance; (2) administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and (3) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, or of other students.

The parent of a student shall be notified prior to the commencement of activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose). Such notice shall offer the parent the opportunity to inspect, upon request, any instrument used in the collection of such information before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student and to opt the student out of such activities. The Superintendent shall develop procedures that: (1) make arrangements to protect student privacy in the event of such collection, disclosure, or use, and (2) grant a request by a parent for reasonable access to such instrument within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

Reduction in Force – Policy GAKA

The most important functions of the Pickens County Board of Education are to employ personnel and manage resources within the limitations defined by the funding sources of the school system. Consequently, it shall be the prerogative of the Board of Education to abolish job positions, to reduce the length of the work year and salary and/or to reduce the number of employees when seeking to cope effectively with program changes or financial exigency.

The Board shall consider a reduction in the professional workforce to include the abolition of job positions, the downgrading of an employee's position, and/or the reduction of the number of employees, as a response to the following:

1. A decrease in student enrollment in the school district which would necessitate a decrease in personnel or a discontinuation of programs;
2. A change in state or local curriculum, personnel or financial practices which would necessitate a change in or elimination of program or services provided by the school district;
3. A loss of funds due to a reduction in state funds, reduction in local funds or other funds that make necessary a reduction in spending;
4. A lack of funding for programs, personnel, or services provided by the school district; and
5. Any reasonable reorganization plan to include the elimination of programs or services, to achieve a more efficient school district.

The determination of employees to be demoted or terminated is based upon approved procedures established by the Board and school system administration. Contracted employees have certain due process rights. Employees not under contract are considered "at-will."

Responsible Use of Technology

The Pickens County School District recognizes that the use of technology is prevalent in society. Students and staff have access to the Internet, cell phones, games, and a variety of personal technology devices. Students and staff utilize social media websites and applications as well as a variety of other digital resources that allow them to

interact, share, create, and innovate. Staff members use these same resources as a means to effectively engage and motivate student learning and collaborate with colleagues.

Access to more technology leads to more data access, as well. Regardless of the source, PCSD staff and students are reminded to follow the policies and procedures that protect data access, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), and the Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA).

While the school board supports anytime/anywhere access to PCSD business-related data, all staff members share the responsibility to protect sensitive data in a professional manner. Regardless of the device or the computer with which PCSD data is retrieved, staff members are expected to protect PCSD-related personal and sensitive information at all times. This includes PCSD purchased devices as well as devices owned, rented, or used by PCSD employees.

Staff Meetings

Regular staff meetings are a necessary part of the district operations. Each school shall have a schedule for staff meetings on a regular basis. The principal shall call special staff meetings for professional learning, accreditation, and/or workshops as deemed necessary. All staff members are required as part of their teaching/employment responsibilities to attend any and all such meetings as designated by the principal.

Staff Members’ Social Media Use

As online technologies become more interactive, PCSD is providing new methods for supporting teaching and learning, including social media and enhanced online resources. Social media includes all types of communication shared in an electronic format, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, wikis, email, social networks, instant messaging, and video-hosting sites, as well as emerging technology that encourages sharing and electronic collaboration. Each vehicle has its own style and privacy options. These technologies must meet PCSD standards and expectations for communication with students, parents, staff, and community members.

Some additional guidelines around social networking are important to remember:

- Treat school-related social media as a secondary form of communication with parents and students. District-approved or district-hosted communication tools (such as email and the school website) are the primary resources for communication to parents and students about school-related matters.
- Communicate with students and parents about school-related matters through district-approved or district-hosted electronic accounts and applications, such as district email and the school or department website.
- Do not share information, pictures, or work examples of PCSD students unless parents have approved such use of their child’s information, images, and work examples on social network sites.
- Do not share information, pictures, or work examples of PCSD staff members on social network sites without their approval.
- Consider the information being distributed and its impact on your credibility as a staff member and your ability to perform your duties.
- Only allow “true friends” access to your personal information and carefully consider what you post about your professional activities and environment on personal social networking sites.
- Directly connect the use of social networking to the academic purpose of the classroom when maintaining a site for teaching and learning purposes.
- Remember that staff members are expected to follow the ethical and professional standards for educators and associated procedures. If you choose to post information about your work, strive to post only information that is a positive reflection of your efforts to educate students and interact with others.

Tobacco Use Prohibited

No student, staff member or school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product at any time, including non-school hours 24 hours per day, 7 days per week while:

- In any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by the Pickens County School System;
- On any school grounds and property – including athletic fields and parking lots – owned, leased, rented or chartered by the Pickens County School System; or

- At any school-sponsored or school-related event on-campus or off-campus.
- Volunteers and visitors on school property will be reminded of this policy in a tactful and courteous manner and will be asked to adhere to this policy.

Any employee who violates or permits a student to use tobacco products will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension with or without pay or termination.

Transfers – Certified Personnel

The placement preference process provides an opportunity for certified personnel to express interest for a lateral transfer to a different location for the next school year. It is not necessary to determine the existence of a vacancy to list a school as a preference. Principals receive electronic notification regarding all transfer requests to and from their schools. Transfer requests will be considered as principals fill positions for the coming year.

This procedure is designed to establish guidelines for making routine staffing decisions; however, it must be construed in light of the Board's ultimate responsibility to control and manage the school system. Consequently, notwithstanding any other provision of this procedure, the Board expressly reserves its right and responsibility to place within the limits of its discretion employees at any school within the system to the extent the Board deems it necessary for the orderly and effective management of the school system.

The following guidelines will be adhered when accepting transfers to a new school:

- The needs of the instructional program and after-school activities of the school(s) involved will carry the highest priority.
- Teachers must hold a valid, in-field educator's certificate in the field where the transfer is needed.
- Employees who are currently on a Professional Development Plan (PDP) or received an overall Level I, Level II, or Unsatisfactory evaluation are not eligible for a transfer to new schools.

Tutoring

Teachers may not offer private instruction on a fee basis to any student who is presently enrolled in their classes. It is incumbent upon professional staff members to assist students in their classes after school and whenever feasible.

It is preferable that a tutor is a person not on the staff of the school in which a student is enrolled. Tutoring must be done in such a way as not to interfere with the orderly routine of the teacher's regular day and school responsibilities.

Use of Electronic Resources and Social Media

It is the belief of the Pickens County Board of Education that the use of technology for the purpose of information acquisition, retrieval, manipulation, distribution, and storage is an important part of preparing children to live in the 21st century. The Board further believes that a "technology rich" classroom can significantly enhance both the teaching and learning process. This technology includes computer hardware, software, local and wide area networks and access to the Internet. Due to the complex nature of these systems and the magnitude of information available via the Internet, the Pickens County Board of Education believes guidelines regarding acceptable use are warranted in order to serve the educational needs of students.

It shall be the policy of the Pickens County Board of Education that the school system shall have in continuous operation, with respect to any computers belonging to the school having access to the Internet:

1. A qualifying "technology protection measure," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b) (1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000;
2. Procedures or guidelines developed by the superintendent, administrators and/or other appropriate personnel which provide for monitoring the online activities of users and the use of the chosen technology protection measure to protect against access through such computers to visual depictions that are (i) obscene, (ii) child pornography, or (iii) harmful to minors, as those terms are defined in Section 1703(b) (1) and (2) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000. Such procedures or guidelines shall be designed to:
 - a. Provide for monitoring the online activities of users to prevent, to the extent practicable, access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and the World Wide Web;

- b. Promote the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- c. Prevent unauthorized access, including so-called “hacking,” and other unauthorized activities by minors online;
- d. Prevent the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and restrict minors’ access to materials “harmful to minors,” as that term is defined in Section 1703(b) (2) of the Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000.
- e. Provide for students age-appropriate instruction regarding safe and appropriate behavior on social networking sites, chat rooms, and other Internet services, behaviors that may constitute cyber bullying, and how to respond when subjected to cyber bullying.

15 Useful Social Media Tips

1. Do not share confidential information.
2. Obey applicable laws and the Code of Ethics for Educators.
3. Respect PCSD time and property. You should participate in personal social media conversations on your own time.
4. Use your best judgment. What you write may have serious consequences. Once you post something on social media, you can’t “get it back.” Even deleting the post doesn’t mean it is truly gone. Ultimately, you bear sole responsibility for what you post.
5. Replace error with fact. When you see misrepresentations made about your school or district in social media, you may certainly identify and correct the error. Always do so with respect and with the facts.
6. Be aware of the image you present. Any time you engage in social media, you are representing yourself and PCSD. Don’t do anything that discredits you or your service as a professional educator or employee.
7. Be cautious with information sharing. Maintain privacy settings on your social media account, change your passwords regularly, and don’t give out personally identifiable information. Be cautious about the personal details you share on the internet.
8. Avoid the offensive. Don’t post any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.
9. Don’t violate privacy. Don’t post any information that would infringe upon the proprietary, privacy, or personal rights of others.
10. Don’t violate copyright. Don’t post information or other material protected by copyright without permission of the copyright owner.
11. Don’t misuse trademarks.
12. Make no endorsements. Don’t use your school or the district’s name to endorse or promote products, political positions, or religious ideologies.
13. Do not misrepresent yourself. Don’t disguise, impersonate, or otherwise misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any other person or entity.
14. Don’t promote yourself for personal or financial gain. Don’t use your school system affiliation to promote, endorse, or benefit yourself or any profit-making group or agency.
15. Follow terms of service. Be familiar with a social media site’s terms of service and follow them. For example, having two personal profiles on Facebook violates its terms of service.

Volunteer Background Checks Procedure

When the principal or program manager receives a request to volunteer, he/she should follow the following procedure.

Candidate for volunteer in the Pickens County School District must submit to a criminal background check before volunteering. Principals or program managers should provide the volunteer with volunteer training and obtain a volunteer application. Copies of the application should be sent to the Department of Human Resources to be matched with the volunteer’s CBC.

The candidate for volunteer should call the Jasper Police Department to schedule an appointment for fingerprinting. All criminal background checks must be completed by the Jasper Police Department.

The candidate for volunteer should be prepared to pay the processing fee at the time of fingerprinting. The fee is \$55.00, but fees could be subject to change.

After fingerprinting occurs the JPD will process the CBC and submit these to the PCSD. Copies are not accepted from the candidate for volunteer.

Upon receipt of the CBC from the JPD, it will be reviewed by the PCSD Department of Human Resources and appropriate actions will be taken.

Volunteer is defined as, but not limited to, any person not employed by the PCSD who is given limited responsibility for students' safety, who may be with students unsupervised, who is frequently unsupervised throughout the school building, and/or who is supervising a fieldtrip.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOLS

It is important for the PCSD to continually provide information about the performance of our schools. Test scores alone do not determine how effective our schools are. However, asking students to participate in testing provides our district and the state with information on how well our students are learning what is being taught. Within our district, teams of teachers and administrators have also selected evaluation tools as both formal and informal measures to assess student growth.

Our district, like all public school districts in the state of Georgia, are legally required to administer state tests. In addition to state-mandated testing, students may choose to participate in college preparatory classes and/or career training programs that involve testing. Examples include: AP classes, College/Military Entrance Exams (ASVB, PSAT, SAT, ACT), *Move on When Ready* college courses, and CTAE certification courses.

As a result of national and state accountability ratings, standardized testing has become important to all states. When tests are properly administered, scored, and interpreted with a high degree of professionalism, all stakeholders can be guided to make reliable and appropriate decisions. A good testing program provides the following benefits:

- Students, based on their individual test scores, will know the skills and knowledge they have mastered and how they compare to other students.
- Parents can evaluate whether their children are obtaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful during and after their school experiences.
- Teachers can determine if students have mastered the skills and knowledge needed to advance to the next level and if not what skills and knowledge are weak and should be improved.
- Community members have a measuring stick to compare year-to-year improvement and to compare local student performances of students in other locations.

Assessments are the basis for many reports and accountability measures. Because of the priority in national and state expectations, the administration of tests shall be held to the Code of Ethics. An essential component is that all personnel perform their assigned responsibilities to maintain test integrity and for the process to be appropriately implemented.

PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOL LEVEL ASSESSMENT PLAN

Plan for All District / Statewide Testing

The annually published Georgia Student Assessment Handbook is distributed to each school and a copy is placed on the Employee Portal web site for easy access by all district personnel. It is the expectation that this Handbook is annually reviewed by School Test Coordinators and all personnel who are involved with student assessment. All protocols for State and District mandated tests will be followed.

Security Plan - Before Test Materials Arrive at the School:

Training

Training of School Test Coordinators (TC) occurs before each test administration. Sign-in sheets for these trainings are maintained by the Pickens County Testing Coordinator. School Test Coordinators are expected to redeliver the training to all examiners at the school level. These trainings are documented with sign-in sheets which are maintained at the school. School personnel are expected to follow all training guidelines and the Georgia Code of Ethics while testing.

Delineation of Responsibilities (these can be found in Assessment Handbook)

All Responsibilities as outlined in GaDOE Assessment Handbook are reviewed with appropriate personnel. These responsibilities are an expectation of job responsibilities.

Scheduling

A district-wide testing calendar is published before the beginning of the school year. All dates are in accordance with published state testing schedules. All schools/personnel are expected to adhere to published testing calendar dates. If any variance is needed during the school year, the School Testing Coordinator will contact the Chief

Accountability Officer. The CAO will then contact the Georgia Office of Accountability and Assessment to verify the validity of such a change.

Accommodations

Testing accommodations are included in student IEP/TPC/504 Plans. School level personnel are instructed to regularly review accommodations and to create a testing plan which includes meeting all prescribed accommodations. All accommodations will be followed during any state testing.

Rosters

Rosters are uploaded to the testing software prior to testing. If paper tests are given, rosters will be provided at the school level. When appropriate, test security codes are included on the roster in order to track test materials.

Security Plan - When Test Materials are Delivered to the District/School:

Who receives materials?

At the district level, the Chief Accountability Officer (CAO) accounts for all materials which are delivered to a secure closet with limited access. For the school level materials, the School Testing Coordinator or school principal signs out and picks up the materials from the CAO at the Central Office.

Inventory

The School Test Coordinator or Principal pick up all testing materials from the Central Office. Prior to signing for the materials, a packing list of materials is provided. Due to the online testing format, there are no provided overage materials.

Storage of materials (who has access/keys?)

All testing materials are stored in a secure testing closet with limited access. Only the School Testing Coordinator and the Principal have keys and handle the materials when returned.

Security Plan - During Testing Week(s):

Inventory control

Upon arrival to the school, the School Testing Coordinator checks the inventory. Due to the online testing format, this inventory is very limited.

Overnight storage

All testing materials are stored in the testing closet with limited access. All concerned personnel have received training related to heightened security when test materials are in the closet.

Security Plan - Shipment of Test Materials:

Inventory control

When available, security codes are recorded. All materials are accounted for when they leave the closet and when they are returned. After testing, all test materials are returned to the central office for shredding. Online test tickets are treated as secure testing materials and are maintained in a secure location at the school for reference after testing is complete.

Procedure for return of materials

School Test Coordinators deliver materials to the county office immediately after testing is complete. Materials are re-inventoried and discrepancies are resolved with school level personnel.

Security Plan - Handling of Test Results:

Procedure for distributing results

When results are reported through the GaDOE portal, the Chief Accountability Officer uploads the pdf or spreadsheet to a secure portal unique to each school. Principals have immediate access to this portal. When hard copy results arrive, the School Test Coordinator is notified and picks them up from the Central Office. School results are reviewed by school level administrative personnel. Upon directive from the Superintendent or Chief Accountability Officer, the results are sent to parents and hard copy placed in student's cumulative record files.

Confidentiality

All school level personnel receive training regarding the confidentiality of individual student assessment results. This is part of the Georgia Educators Code of Ethics.

505-6-.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS – EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2018

(1) Introduction. The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

(2) Definitions

(a) “Breach of contract” occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

(b) “Certificate” refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.

(c) “Child endangerment” occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.

(d) “Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

(e) “Student” is any individual enrolled in the state’s public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.

(f) “Complaint” is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A “complaint” will be deemed a request to investigate.

(g) “Revocation” is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator. \

(h) “Denial” is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.

(i) “Suspension” is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.

(j) “Reprimand” admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(k) “Warning” warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(l) “Monitoring” is the quarterly appraisal of the educator’s conduct by the Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.

(m) “No Probable Cause” is a determination by the Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

(3) Standards

(a) Standard 1: Legal Compliance - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an

adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

(b) Standard 2: Conduct with Students - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
7. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

(c) Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
2. being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc).

(d) Standard 4: Honesty - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
4. reasons for absences or leaves;
5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.

(e) Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. misusing public or school-related funds;
2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

(f) Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and

4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

(g) Standard 7: Confidential Information - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
2. sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
3. violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
4. violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

(h) Standard 8: Required Reports - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

(i) Standard 9: Professional Conduct - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

(j) Standard 10: Testing - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
2. compromising the integrity of the assessment.

(4) Reporting

(a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).

(b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

(5) Disciplinary Action

(a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);
5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate
6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16-13-111); and
7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

(b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

POLICY GAMA

Drug-Free Workplace

The Pickens County Board of Education declares that the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of controlled substances, marijuana and other dangerous drugs in an unlawful manner or being at work under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, marijuana or other dangerous drugs is a serious threat to the public health, safety and welfare. With this in mind, the Board declares that its work force must be absolutely free of any person who would knowingly manufacture, distribute, sell or possess a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug in an unlawful manner. This prohibition specifically includes, but is not limited to, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol in the employee's workplace. This prohibition also includes, but is not limited to, an employee being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on duty.

Any employee who is convicted for the first time, under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be subject to disciplinary action. At a minimum, such an employee shall be suspended for a period of not less than two months and shall be required to complete, at his or her own expense, a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the board. At a maximum, such an employee may be terminated from his employment with the school system. Any employee who is convicted for a second or subsequent time under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be terminated from his or her employment and shall be ineligible for employment for a period of five years from the most recent date of conviction.

If, prior to an arrest for an offense involving a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug, an employee notifies the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee that the employee illegally uses a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug and is receiving or agrees to receive treatment under a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the Board, the employee shall be entitled to maintain his or her employment for up to one year as long as the employee follows the treatment plan. During this period, the employee shall not be separated from employment solely on the basis of the employee's drug dependence, but the employee's work activities may be restructured if practicable to protect persons or property. No statement made by an employee to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee in order to comply with this code section shall be admissible in any civil, administrative or criminal proceeding as evidence against the public employee. The rights granted by this policy shall be available to an employee only once during a five year period and are intended to be and shall be interpreted as being the same as those minimum rights granted pursuant to the Georgia Drug-Free Work Force Act and any subsequent amendments thereof.

As a condition of employment, each employee must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the Board within five days after any arrest on any drug-related criminal charge and further notify the Board within five days of any conviction of a drug-related offense.

A copy of this policy shall be disseminated to all employees either directly or through employee handbooks.

The Board of Education shall not consider for employment any applicant who has been convicted for the first time of any drug offense as described above for a three month period from the date of conviction nor shall the Board of Education consider any applicant for employment who has been convicted for the second time of any drug offense as described above for a five year period from the most recent date of conviction.

For purposes of this policy, "conviction" refers to any final conviction in a court of competent jurisdiction, specifically including acceptance of a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or any plea entered under the First Offenders Act of Georgia or any comparable state or federal legislation.

No certified employee or employee with a contract for a definite term shall be subject to suspension or termination pursuant to this policy except in compliance with the provisions of the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia, Official Code of Georgia Annotated §§ 20-2-940 through 947. This policy is not intended and shall not be interpreted as prohibiting the school system from taking appropriate disciplinary action against any employee where there exists evidence that an employee uses, distributes or sells illegal drugs even though the employee has not been convicted of any criminal offense or where there exists evidence that an employee is under the influence of alcohol while on duty,

except that the school system may not use the statement of any employee to the Superintendent requesting treatment as described in this policy.

The school district shall provide such staff development as required by state or federal law to inform employees of the dangers of drug abuse, the availability of employee assistance and drug counseling and treatment and the terms of this policy.

Pickens County Schools

Date Adopted: 2/8/2018

NOTES

SCHOOL HOURS

Elementary Schools

7:45 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Middle Schools

8:30 a.m. – 3:40 p.m.

High School

8:10 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

SCHOOLS



Harmony Elementary

550 Harmony School Road
Jasper, GA 30143
Phone: (706) 253-1840
Fax: (706) 253-1845



Hill City Elementary

600 Hill Circle
Jasper, GA 30143
Phone: (706) 253-1880
Fax: (706) 253-1885



Jasper Elementary

158 Stegall Drive
Jasper, GA 30143
Phone: (706) 253-1730
Fax: (706) 253-1735



Tate Elementary

5630 Highway 53 East
Tate, GA 30143
Phone: (706) 253-1860
Fax: (706) 253-1805



Jasper Middle

339 West Church Street
Jasper, GA 30143
Phone: (706) 253-1760
Fax: (706) 253-1765



Pickens County Middle

1802 Refuge Road
Jasper, GA 30143
Phone: (706) 253-1830
Fax: (706) 253-1835



Pickens High

500 Dragon Drive
Jasper, GA 30143
Phone: (706) 253-1800
Fax: (706) 253-1815

ADMINISTRATIVE

Department	Phone/Fax	Website
Central Office	Phone: (706) 253-1700 Fax: (706) 253-1705	pickenscountyschools.org
Athletics Department	Phone: (706) 253-1700 Fax: (706) 253-1712	pickensdragons.org
Food Service	Phone: (706) 253-1700 Fax: (706) 253-1708	
Student Registration	Phone: (706) 253-1770 Fax: (706) 253-1771	
Student Services	Phone: (706) 253-1700 Fax: (706) 253-1712	
Transportation	Phone: (706) 253-1727 Fax: (706) 253-1729	

JULY 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

3 Independence Day Holiday
25-31 Pre Planning

AUGUST 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1 First Day of School
31 Progress Reports

SEPTEMBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

4 Labor Day Holiday
18-22 Fall Break

OCTOBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

10 End of 1st 9 Weeks
13 Report Cards

NOVEMBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

8 In-service
9 Progress Reports
21-25 Thanksgiving Holidays

DECEMBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

22 End of 2nd 9 Weeks
22-30 Christmas Holidays

JANUARY 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

5 In-service
8 Students Return to School
12 Report Cards
15 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

FEBRUARY 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

9 Progress Reports
19-23 Winter Break
21-23 Potential Inclement Weather Make-up Days

MARCH 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

16 End of 3rd 9 Weeks
23 Report Cards

APRIL 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2-6 Spring Break
20 Progress Reports

MAY 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

25 Last Day of School
26 Graduation
28 Memorial Day Holiday
29-31 Post Planning

JUNE 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

1 & 4 Potential Inclement Weather Make-up Day for Teachers

