

2024
2025



Student/Parent Handbook



2024-2025 School Calendar

BESSEMER BOARD OF EDUCATION

1621 - 5th Avenue, North

Bessemer, AL 35020

Board Approved March 19, 2024

Aug 1	New Employee Orientation
Aug 2	Teacher Work Day
Aug 5	Employee Institute/ PD
Aug 6	District-wide PD
Aug 7	Local PD/ Teacher Work Day
Aug 8	First Day for Students
Sept 2	Labor Day
Oct 4	E-Learning
Oct 25	Fall Break
Nov 11	Veterans Day
Nov 25 - 29	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 20	End of 1st Semester
Dec 23 - Jan 8	Winter Holiday
Jan 6, 7	Professional Development Day
Jan 8	Students Return
Jan 20	Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday
Feb 14	E-Learning
Feb 17	Presidents' Day
Mar 24 - 28	Spring Break
Apr 28	E-Learning
May 22	Last Day for Students
May 23	Teacher Work Day
May 26	Memorial Day
Jun 19	Juneteenth

Holidays	
Sept 2	Labor Day
Nov 11	Veterans Day Observed
Nov 25-29	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 23- Jan 3	Winter Holiday
Jan 20	Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday
Feb 1	Presidents' Day
Mar 24-28	Spring Break
May 26	Memorial Day
June 19	Juneteenth
Weather Days	
Feb 14	
Mar 24, 25	

July 2024						
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August 2024						
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September 2024						
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November 2024						
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December 2024						
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March 2025						
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April 2025						
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May 2025						
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June 2025						
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29	30					

Professional Development Days

Aug 5, 6
Jan 6, 7

Teacher Work Days

Aug 2, 7
May 23

Student/Employee Start & End Dates

12 Month	July 1-June 30
11 Month	July 15-June 20
10 Month	July 24-June 6
9 Month	Aug 2-May 23
Students (180 Days)	Aug 8-May 22

Testing Dates e-Learning Days

PreACT Oct 8-10	Oct 4
WorkKeys Nov 5-7	Feb 14
ACT Mar 11	Apr 28
ACAP Summ April 1-25	
ACAP Supp June 23-27	

- School Closed
- Teacher Work Day
- E-Learning

- Professional Development Days
- Progress Reports
- Report Cards

- Weather Days
- First & Last Day of School
- End of Grading Period



BESSEMER CITY SCHOOLS

Teaching Effectively, Leading Successfully

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BESSEMER CITY
SCHOOLS

Teaching Effectively, Leading Successfully

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome back for the 2024-2025 academic year! We hope you had a restful and enjoyable summer break. As we prepare to embark on another year of learning, growth, and discovery, we are thrilled to welcome both returning and new members to our school community.

This upcoming school year promises to be one filled with new opportunities and adventures. Our dedicated team of educators have been hard at work over the summer, refining our curriculum, planning engaging activities, and preparing for students to return to a safe and supportive learning environment.

To help you navigate through the exciting journey ahead, we are pleased to introduce the 2024-2025 edition of our Student/Parent Handbook. This comprehensive guide is designed to provide you with important information about school policies, procedures, resources, and expectations.

Whether you are a seasoned veteran or a newcomer to our school, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook to ensure a successful and fulfilling academic year.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding our schools, please don't hesitate to contact your school's administration or our Parent Engagement Coordinator, Kimbley Gaston. She can be reached at (205) 432-3049 or kgaston@bessk12.org.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child education. Here's to a fantastic year ahead!

With Bessemer Pride,

Dana Arreola

Dana Arreola, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools



Dana Areola Superintendent

District Leadership

Patricia Stewart	Chief School Financial Officer	205.432.3000
Sharon Sanders	Director of Child Nutrition	205.432.3020
Dr. Florence Williams	Director of Technology	205.432.3027
Dr. Shaya McCray	Director of Student Services	205.432.3028
Dr. Curt Green	Director of Human Resources	205.432.3014
Dr. Renee Holley	Director of Special Education	205.432.3054
	Director of Federal Programs	205.432.3021
Dr. Jameka Thomas	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	205.432.3005
Reginald Mitchell	Director of Facilities and Maintenance	205.432.3900
Dr. Santonia Davison	Transportation Supervisor	205.432.3910
Iverson Dudley	Director of Career and Technical Ed	205.432.3778
Kimbley Gaston	Family and Community Eng. Coord.	205.432.3049

Schools /Principals

Mildred Posey	Abrams Elementary School 1200 23rd Street North, Bessemer, Al 35020	205.432.3100
Angela Bedgood	Greenwood Elementary School 5012 Roselyn Road, Bessemer, Al 35020	205.432.3200
Adriene Evans	C. F. Hard Elementary School 2801 Arlington Avenue, Bessemer, Al 35020	205.432.3300
Erica Tanks	Jonesboro Elementary School 125 Owen Avenue, Bessemer, Al 35020	205.432.3400
Dr. LaKeshya George	Westhills Elementary School 710 Glenn Road, Bessemer, Al 35022	205.432.3500
Lisa Heard	Bessemer City Middle School 100 High School Drive, Bessemer, Al 35020	205.432.3600
Stoney Pritchett	Bessemer City High School 4950 Premiere Parkway, Bessemer, Al 35022	205.432.3700
Edith Hunter	New Horizon Alternative School 1701 6th Avenue North, Bessemer, Al 35020	205.432.3036

Our Strategic Plan Development Process

In February 2021, the Bessemer City Board of Education contracted with E3 Strategic Solutions LLC (E3) to facilitate the development of a new strategic plan for the school system. The planning process spanned a period of six months, March 2021 to September 2021. The end-result and final strategic plan is *Vision 2026: ReImagine Bessemer City Schools 2021-2026 (Vision 2026)*. Vision 2026 will serve as a guide for growth and improvement in Bessemer City Schools through the year 2026.

Vision 2026 is a product of a multitude of stakeholder input opportunities. One of the most valuable sources of input was the collaborative work of 125+ individuals who participated through ten different stakeholder committees – Teaching Staff; Support Staff; Students; Parents; Principals and Assistant Principals; Directors; Board Members; Faith-Based Leaders; Business and Community Leaders; and Steering Committee. These committees were engaged individually on multiple occasions, which resulted in 30+ total sessions. In addition to the input received from stakeholder committees, more valuable input was garnered from data, comments, and suggestions received through several different means, including an organizational audit, parent surveys, a public forum, and general public input surveys.

Considering all the input from the various sources, E3 and the Steering Committee completed a total of five strategic plan drafts. Upon the completion of each draft, groups were reengaged for additional input. The core items developed for the strategic plan were: 1) Guiding Principles (Purpose, Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs, Motto, and Theme), 2) Strategic Goals, and 3) Action Items.

The final draft was presented to the Board at a work session conducted on September 7, 2021. The Board approved Vision 2026 on September 9, 2021.

Standards-Based Strategic Plan

The strategic plan for the Bessemer City School System was developed using the AdvancED/Cognia Performance Standards as a framework. Every five years, in an effort to promote excellence and continuous growth throughout our organization, the school system completes the AdvancED/Cognia accreditation process. This process entails a comprehensive program of evaluation and external review, which is supported by the three Domains under which the research-based AdvancED/Cognia Performance Standards are organized. The Domains are:

- Domain 1: Leadership Capacity Domain
- 2: Learning Capacity Domain
- 3: Resource Capacity

Our Strategic Goals address the three AdvancED/Cognia Domain areas. Furthermore, we created two additional goals to more specifically address the areas of organizational purpose and direction (Strategic Goal 1), and continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication (Strategic Goal 5).

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Purpose – *WHY we exist as an organization*

The purpose of Bessemer City Schools is to educate and empower our students to successfully compete in a global society.

Vision – *WHAT we want to achieve as an organization*

The vision of Bessemer City Schools is to serve as a model of excellence by preparing all students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in their unique endeavors.

Mission – *HOW we want to achieve our vision*

The mission of Bessemer City Schools is to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment that meets the needs of the whole child through quality instruction, programs, and resources.

Core Beliefs – *WHAT we stand for & HOW we behave as an organization*

- Student-Centered Focus
- High Expectations
- Collaborative Relationships
- Integrity
- Respect for All
- Accountability for All
- Diversity and Inclusivity

Teaching Effectively, Leading Successfully

#Reimaginebessemercityschool

Strategic Goals

Bessemer City Schools will:

Establish and communicate organizational guiding principles, strategic goals, and strategies, and consistently ensure our work aligns accordingly.

Provide effective governance and leadership to positively support and enhance learning, teaching, and the overall functioning of the school system.

Establish and maintain a highly effective learning culture and environment through high expectations, quality teaching, and excellent programs.

Provide quality resources and effectively allocate those resources to ensure effective teaching and programs, high levels of learning, and fiscal efficiency.

Implement a comprehensive framework for continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication.

STRATEGIC GOAL

Bessemer City Schools will establish and communicate organizational guiding principles, strategic goals, and action items, and consistently ensure our work aligns accordingly.

ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:

- 1.1 Regularly communicate guiding principles in schools and throughout the community using signage, publications, documents, websites, social media, and other available avenues;
- 1.2 Engage staff regularly at all levels to communicate expectations regarding the alignment of their behaviors and work to the guiding principles;
- 1.3 Develop explicit implementation plans for each action item, to include oversight responsibilities, timelines for completion, and detailed metrics;
- 1.4 Regularly engage all leadership in reviewing progress toward executing the strategic plan, developing next-step strategies, making needed revisions, and annually evaluating progress toward meeting our strategic plan goals; and
- 1.5 Annually communicate progress toward meeting strategic plan goals and provide for stakeholder opportunities to evaluate progress and make amendments, as needed.

STRATEGIC GOAL

Bessemer City Schools will provide effective governance and leadership to positively support and enhance learning, teaching, and the overall functioning of the school system. (Leadership Capacity)

ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:

Governance

- 2.1.1 Provide Board members with high quality orientations and continuing education which promote effective Board operations and the improvement of teaching and learning in the school district;
- 2.1.2 Support Board members' commitment to meeting all continuing education requirements;
- 2.1.3 Consistently establish policies, procedures, and practices that ensure effective administration of the school system;
- 2.1.4 Ensure an annual review and revision of policies and procedures to reflect current educational laws, regulations, requirements, and best practices;
- 2.1.5 Ensure proper understanding and execution of roles and responsibilities for the Board and administrators, so that school leadership has the autonomy to establish and meet teaching and learning goals and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.

- 2.1.6 Properly address expressed concerns according to established roles and through established protocols;
- 2.1.7 Establish and regularly conduct Board evaluations;
- 2.1.8 Work to establish and maintain internal and external relationships which promote positive community support and relationships for the school system;
- 2.1.9 Seek and maintain supportive relationships with other governmental entities;

Leadership

- 2.2.1 Communicate to all stakeholders the high expectations for student learning and positive continuous improvement results;
- 2.2.2 Recruit, develop, and retain highly effective and innovative school leaders;
- 2.2.3 Establish a leadership development program for both aspiring and newly-appointed administrators;
- 2.2.4 Establish and communicate effective operational school procedures and processes;
- 2.2.5 Create and implement evaluation protocols and procedures for all employees;
- 2.2.6 Establish and maintain adequate job descriptions of all positions;
- 2.2.7 Develop and maintain an organizational chart that effectively conveys the internal structure of the school system;
- 2.2.8 Hold staff accountable for their annual review of Board policies and established procedures for both school and system levels;
- 2.2.9 Refine student attendance policies to be clear and consistent, and create a uniform approach to combat tardies and absences, including an early-warning policy, automated calls, teacher and administrator expectations, and other appropriate measures;
- 2.2.10 Establish and maintain a positive work environment that improves the school culture and student learning; and
- 2.2.11 Ensure roles, responsibilities, and duties of all faculty and staff are well defined and communicated and established on a fair and equitable basis.

STRATEGIC GOAL

Bessemer City Schools will establish and maintain a highly effective learning culture and environment through high expectations, quality teaching, effective use of assessment, and excellent programs. (Learning Capacity)

ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:

Teaching/Learning

- 3.1.1 Establish and maintain a learning environment characterized by non-threatening student and teacher interactions centered around relevant, standards-based instruction that respects intellectual freedom and ensures equitable learning opportunities.

- 3.1.2 Develop and maintain a viable, well-articulated, and uniform curriculum that is delivered to fidelity;
- 3.1.3 Ensure vertical curriculum alignment and teacher opportunities for vertical planning;
- 3.1.4 Continue to streamline curriculum resources to those which promote effective teaching and student learning;
- 3.1.5 Evaluate grading practices and establish authentic, uniform grading policies for elementary and secondary levels;
- 3.1.6 Establish plans and practices that ensure equitable distribution of support programs for all students, including the English Learner (EL) student populations;
- 3.1.7 Establish a plan for all schools to increase courses, programs, and/or activities to address the needs and interests of the advanced learner;
- 3.1.8 Develop a plan that organizes the course selection and scheduling process for teachers and students;
- 3.1.9 Provide staff with training and guidelines to promote effective collaboration between regular and special education staff, making sure to address issues involving misidentification of students;
- 3.1.10 Create a plan to ensure diversity within the Career and Technical Education program (student and teacher diversity);
- 3.1.11 Ensure appropriate monitoring of instruction and create plans to adjust processes as necessary to positively impact performance;
- 3.1.12 Provide staff training and expectations in the integration of technology into instructional and learning activities which engages students in the use of technology;
- 3.1.13 Establish tutoring programs involving peers and teachers;
- 3.1.14 Use data at all levels in order to plan instruction to address identified gaps and/or weaknesses;
- 3.1.15 Develop a focus on career awareness and related information at all grade levels;

Assessment

- 3.2.1 Develop and maintain a PK-12 Comprehensive Assessment Plan to include both summative and formative assessments (e.g., benchmark) used;
- 3.2.2 Ensure effective use of formative assessments at the classroom level so that results are used to adjust instruction and meet the needs of learners;
- 3.2.3 Establish a data collection system to be used in the collection, analysis, and use of all assessment data to improve instruction and academic achievement;
- 3.2.4 Regularly engage staff in assessment data meetings to evaluate effectiveness of instructional practices and programs.

Programs

- 3.3.1 Develop programs designed to engage students in the community through community service, leadership opportunities, and other means;
- 3.3.2 Develop college and career-ready pathways that guide students into successful opportunities in the workforce and/or higher education using programs designed to prepare students for success in the workforce such as Career and Technical Education, Ready-to-Work, pre-apprenticeship programs, dual enrollment, co-op, career fairs/expos, STEM/STEAM, STREAM etc.;
- 3.3.3 Provide a comprehensive K-12 fine arts program;
- 3.3.4 Develop a plan for establishing STEM/STEAM/STREAM programs in elementary and middle schools;
- 3.3.5 Explore the development of career academies for middle and high school students;
- 3.3.6 Continue to expand, revise, and improve extracurricular programs and activities at all levels which meet the needs and interests of students, function on a premier level, and enrich students in manner that develops a sense of school belonging and ownership; and
- 3.3.7 Develop strategies to refine and enhance the athletics programs to ensure student-athletes remain within the district.

STRATEGIC GOAL

Bessemer City Schools will provide quality resources and effectively allocate those resources to ensure effective teaching and programs, high levels of learning, and fiscal efficiency. (Resource Capacity)

ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:

Human Resources

- 4.1.1 Establish a teacher recruitment and retention plan for the district;
- 4.1.2 Develop a comprehensive teacher induction, mentoring, and coaching program to promote employee success and retention, instructional improvement, and student learning;
- 4.1.3 Develop a progressive action plan that includes practices and procedures to address personnel matters;
- 4.1.4 Annually complete a professional development needs assessment, and use the results to assist in developing a yearly professional development focus and related plan for specific professional development activities and a timeline for implementation;
- 4.1.5 Consider the establishment of programs providing opportunities for students to embrace education as a profession;
- 4.1.6 Provide a comprehensive program for substitute teachers, which shall include training, guidance, expectations, classroom standards, and other appropriate items to ensure learning continues during the absence of a teacher.

- 4.1.7 Research salary and supplement schedules to determine disparities and consider appropriate changes in salaries to ensure fair and equitable compensation;
- 4.1.8 Develop programs, procedures, practices, incentives, and activities designed to recognize the value of all teachers and support staff, promote a sense of team, and enhance their work performance;
- 4.1.9 Develop a plan that communicates professional expectations for employee behavior and ensures professional etiquette amongst staff and others during daily interactions;
- 4.1.10 Create an authentic professional learning environment that allows employees to exchange best practices with others within the district and outside the district;
- 4.1.11 Examine and revise district policies governing staff attendance, making sure to enforce current board policies and to consider incentives for good attendance;

Facilities/Physical Resources

- 4.2.1 Maintain facilities, services, and equipment to provide a clean, healthy, attractive, and safe physical environment;
- 4.2.2 Engage appropriate professionals to conduct a comprehensive facilities assessment;
- 4.2.3 Using results from the facilities assessment, develop a long-range plan to address facility needs with the district;
- 4.2.4 Complete a technology equipment and infrastructure assessment and use the results to develop a comprehensive plan to provide and maintain adequate technology resources;

Safety and Security

- 4.3.1 Study and revise safety and security plans and practices with goals of increasing the presence of law enforcement, securing other needed resources, and implementing effective practices and procedures;
- 4.3.2 Review bullying and harassment protocols and ensure all schools comply with local, state and federal policies and guidelines;

Financial/Fiscal Resources

- 4.4.1 Develop a plan for examining all district funding to establish the best, most useful spending options;

Support Systems

- 4.5.1 Enhance/create a career guidance plan that guides students toward their profession of choice.

- 4.5.2 Ensure the alternative school program is well organized and resourced in the following areas: transitions; age appropriate settings; communications; staff/teacher responsibilities; academic needs/outcomes; delivery of instruction; status checks; behavioral needs; counseling services; mentoring programs, and positive; well-structured environment;
- 4.5.3 Create a comprehensive college or career pathway that guides a student from ninth through twelfth grade;
- 4.5.4 Establish and implement a positive behavior support system;
- 4.5.5 Develop comprehensive transition plans for students at all levels, being sure to address student/parent expectations, developmental abilities, and social, emotional, and academic requirements;
- 4.5.6 Examine discipline practices and consider training and plans to ensure coordinated discipline options that positively impact students; and
- 4.5.7 Use School Incident Report (SIR) data to identify students who exhibit problematic behaviors and direct appropriate services.

STRATEGIC GOAL

Bessemer City Schools will implement a comprehensive framework for continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication.

ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:

Continuous Improvement

- 5.1.1 Ensure the development of effective continuous improvement plans at all schools to improve student achievement, by providing guidelines, monitoring execution, completing evaluations, and requiring year-end reporting;
- 5.1.2 Establish plans and routines to collaboratively analyze data on a district-wide basis to positively affect student achievement;
- 5.1.3 Ensure appropriate personnel have access to assessment data to inform instruction and promote continuous school improvement;
- 5.1.4 Annually conduct stakeholder surveys regarding their perceptions of school effectiveness and use the resulting data in the continuous improvement process;
- 5.1.5 Establish annual academic and performance goals for all schools, school levels, and the district;
- 5.1.6 Monitor the yearly progress toward meeting academic and performance goals, engage staff in reviewing the data, and formulate improvement strategies to address areas of weakness;
- 5.1.7 Acquire and effectively use a data disaggregation system that allows for the development of a comprehensive profile of individual and group student achievement data.

- 5.1.7 Acquire and effectively use a data disaggregation system that allows for the development of a comprehensive profile of individual and group student achievement data;
- 5.1.8 Track and analyze both individual and group achievement data, and plan instruction to address identified gaps or weaknesses;
- 5.1.9 Ensure all discipline infractions and attendance are properly documented in the district's data system;

Stakeholder Engagement

- 5.2.1 Create partnerships with local industry and colleges in an effort to prepare students for college and career opportunities, while simultaneously addressing local business and industry needs;
- 5.2.2 Develop a comprehensive parent engagement plan that provides programs and strategies designed to bridge the gap between parents and school staff; provide a welcoming environment for parents; offer academic-related involvement; offer regular interaction opportunities; establish effective relationships; provide opportunities for consistent parent-teacher communications; provide staff with sensitivity/customer service training; and establish protocols for parent/teacher conferences;
- 5.2.3 Develop a plan for promoting/increasing engagement of stakeholders within the community;
- 5.2.4 Engage business and industry to create career awareness;
- 5.2.5 Develop a collaborative plan (involving business/industry, faith-based, city and other government officials, law-enforcement, etc.) dedicated to resolving community issues that damage the district's perception;

Communication

- 5.3.1 Communicate to all stakeholders the high expectations for staff, students, and the school district;
- 5.3.2 Create and publish a staff directory that effectively and efficiently communicates to stakeholders the job duties and responsibilities of staff; (Descriptions, Organizational Chart, Staff Directory)
- 5.3.3 Create an internal communication framework within the district to insure effective and consistent communications to all levels, groups, and individuals;
- 5.3.4 Develop a comprehensive communication plan to ensure consistent availability of relevant district information to external stakeholders (calendars, social media, websites, publications, school marquees, announcements, media protocols and contacts, etc.);
- 5.3.5 Develop staff protocols and expectations for both internal and external communications; and
- 5.3.6 Publish an annual report of the school system, which communicates accomplishments and other important information for the school.

Bessemer City Schools Parent-Student Handbook



**This Parent-Student Handbook is an abbreviated version for the agenda.
Visit bessk12.org for the full version of the Parent Student Handbook.**

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Bessemer City Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in any of its programs and activities and provides equal access to Board approved youth groups.

COVID Declaration

For the past few years, throughout a world-wide pandemic, Bessemer City Schools has steadily forged forward, while educating our students. Whether remote, virtual, or face to face, teaching and learning transpired. As we continue to navigate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Bessemer City Schools will continue to follow the evidence-based practices and guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and local health officials. Our school system believes in protecting the students, employees, parents, and community from the spread of COVID-19 and all infectious diseases. As a result, Bessemer City Schools will continue to promote vaccination clinics, social distancing, COVID-19 Testing, and proper hygiene practices in order to enhance a safe learning environment and face to face learning opportunities, so that we can make a profound difference in the community in which we thrive.

All parents want their children to find success in school and to be happy in the process. Fortunately, statistics tell us that the two goals are actually one and the same. Happy children do well, and those who do well are happy. Statistics also tell us that parents play a major role in helping their children achieve these goals.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Gifted Education

Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. The children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. Alabama Administrative Code, §290-8-9-.12(1).

HOW DO WE IDENTIFY GIFTED STUDENTS?

A student may be referred for consideration for gifted services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities. Additionally, all second grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist. For each student referred, information is gathered in the following three areas:

- Aptitude - Aptitude should be accessed through an individual or group test of intelligence or creativity.
- Characteristics - A behavior rating scale designed to assess gifted behaviors is completed by a classroom teacher.
- Performance - At least three indicators of performance at a gifted level must be submitted. These may include, but are not limited to, achievement test scores, grades, products, work samples, and/or portfolios.

The scores from the assessments/items used are entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services.

For more information and/or to make a referral, contact the Gifted Education Teacher at your child's school.

Child Find

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires all school districts serving children with disabilities to develop and implement procedures that ensure that all children within their jurisdiction, birth to twenty-one, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who need special education and related

services are identified, located, and evaluated. Child Find also applies to children with disabilities who attend private schools, including children attending religious schools, within the district's jurisdiction highly mobile children with disabilities (e.g., migrant children), homeless children, or children who are wards of the State, and children who are suspected of having a disability and are in need of special education, even though they have not failed, been retained in a course or grade or are advancing from grade to grade. If your child is birth-five and you suspect your child has a disability and may require special education services, please contact the Special Education Department at 205-432-3025 or 205-432- 3054. If you suspect your school age child has a disability and may require Special Education Services, please contact your child's local school.

Services

Special education services are provided for exceptional students in accordance with the federal and state mandates concerning education for students with disabilities. Procedures for evaluation and eligibility are provided to each school within the system. Alabama State Department of Education criteria is used to determine a student's eligibility in one of the following areas of special education:

Autism	Other Health Impairment
Deaf/Blindness	Orthopedic Impairment
Developmental Delay	Specific Learning Disability
Emotional Disability	Speech and Language Impairment
Hearing Impairment	Traumatic Brain Injury
Intellectual Disability	Visual Impairment
Multiple Disabilities	

Information regarding referral procedures may be obtained by contacting your child's school or the Special Education Department at 205-432-3025 or 205-432-3054.

Attendance

The expectation is that children will attend school. However, there is the understanding that there may be situations that will necessitate a child missing either a portion of or a full day of class. If that should happen, in order for the absence to be considered an excused absence, the parent/guardian must provide the school's Attendance Office with a written and signed explanation as to why the student was absent. Parents will have three days to provide the note. If the parent/guardian does not provide the note, the absence becomes an unexcused absence, and the student will receive a grade of zero for work on the day(s) he/she was absent. For more information visit our website, Bessk12.org and visit the Department of Attendance, Safety and Security.

Child Nutrition Program (CNP)

Students will have the opportunity to eat breakfast and lunch in our cafeteria/classroom each day, at school. All students have the opportunity to eat at no charge breakfast and lunch.

Bus Rules

School officials are charged with the safe transportation of students to and from school as well as during many school-sponsored activities. School officials expect students to follow school rules, to display appropriate behavior, and to conduct themselves as good citizens. Disruptive and inappropriate behaviors or conduct are not allowed. Students unwilling to conduct themselves as good citizens may forfeit the privilege of riding a school bus.

Therefore, school officials expect that all students will:

- Not stand or play in a public road while waiting for their buses.

- Make sure the bus is completely stopped boarding or getting off their buses.
- Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus at all times.
- Never use the emergency door except during an emergency.
- Not participate in any activity that may divert the driver's attention from driving.
- Always remain in their seats until it is time to leave the bus.
- Remain in their seats until the driver says otherwise.
- Assist the driver in assuring the safety and comfort of small children.
- Follow expectations of items that they may bring onto the bus. For instance, live, dead, or preserved animals or objects larger than 24" X 24" are not permitted on the bus. Band instruments, sports bags, etc. may be allowed on the bus at the driver's discretion.
- Be at their designated stops five minutes prior to the expected bus arrival.
- Always show courtesy and respect for the rights of others.
- Not engaging in vulgar language, profanity, or loud noises is prohibited.
- Never throw any object in or from the bus.
- Ride their assigned buses and board or get off at their designated stops, except by permission from the students' parents and the principal/her designee.

Students who fail to identify themselves to the bus driver or to other staff may be suspended and lose the privilege to ride the bus.

When students have a bus violation, administrators will notify parents and enforce the Bessemer City Schools' Student Code of Conduct.

Bus Discipline Procedures for Bessemer City Schools

For Class I type bus violations:

1. Documented driver contact with the parent/guardian of the student is required before bringing a student to the office for habitual, minor offenses.
2. First office referral — Warning and/or other appropriate consequence at the discretion of the school administration.
3. Second office referral - 1 (one) day bus suspension and/or other appropriate consequence at the discretion of the school administration.
4. Third office referral — 2 (two) day bus suspension.
5. Fourth office referral — 5 (five) day bus suspension and mandatory conference with the school administration, bus driver, parent/guardian and student prior to readmitting the student to the bus.

School administrators will address Class II, III, or IV type offenses in accordance with the appropriate consequences as outlined in the school system's Parent-Student Handbook and Code of Conduct.

Conferences with Teachers

From time to time, school staff may invite parents for conferences concerning their children. These conferences, which do not necessarily reflect problems, are attempts on the part of school staff to improve

a child's education. Parents feel free to initiate conferences. Staff will schedule conferences at times convenient for both teachers and parents. Staff will try as much as possible not to conduct conferences during the school's instructional time. Parents should call the school office for an appointment.

Dress Code

Bessemer City Schools has a standard dress code to ensure all students are provided safe and appropriate educational environments and opportunities. These opportunities should be free of disruption and/or outside influences and should also instill in students the need to dress appropriately, showing respect for others and for authority. Bessemer City Schools will strictly enforce the dress code and will not allow students to attend class if students are wearing inappropriate or questionable attire.

The Board is aware that personal dress and appearance constitute individual expression, and within certain limits, wishes to allow students the freedom to express themselves in their own unique manner. The faculty and administration shall encourage students to be aware that dress and personal appearance may, in a very real manner, influence the perception and attitude others may have of the student as an individual. Therefore, each student should consider reasonable judgment, tact, and decency in the selection of clothes for school and for personal appearance.

In general, all students must dress appropriately for school. Dress and appearance must not present health or safety problems or cause disruptions.

General guidelines for appropriate dress include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Clothing conducive to learning and respectful of the learning environment.
- Clothing which covers the shoulders, cleavage, abdomen, and back.
- Clothing that is appropriate for a student's size.
- Pants/slacks at the natural waistline.
- Shoes appropriate for the activity and safety, class, gym, and shop, etc.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses no more than two inches above the knee.

Students are prohibited from wearing certain attire, such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Sunglasses in the building, except with a doctor's prescription
- See-through, skintight, spandex, jeggings, yoga pants, and/or revealing clothing
- Open or chain belts, unbuckled belts, electronic belts for buckles, or cap "fish hooks"
- Unfastened overalls
- Pants/slacks that sag.
- Hats, caps, headgear, and any other head covering in the buildings on campus except for religious head coverings.
- Curlers, picks, combs, or chopsticks
- Bandannas or sashes anywhere as a part of dress
- Clothing with holes above the knee
- House shoes/slippers unless approved by the school administration.
- Clothing depicting unacceptable and/or inappropriate decals, slogans, or pictures; profanity; language containing or referring to suggestive or immoral behavior; gang activity; alcohol; drugs; or tobacco
- Any clothing and/or headgear which directly or by innuendo disrespects (or is perceived to disrespect) a student's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability and/or creates, supports, or promotes a hostile learning environment contrary to the anti-harassment policies of the Board of Education (including negative feelings, disharmony, racial or religious discord, intimidation, embarrassment and/or fear)
- Trench coats or Matrix coats, pajamas, blankets or stuffed animals shall not be worn at school or brought to school
- Bessemer City Middle & High School - Slides/Open toe shoes
- Bessemer City Middle & High School - Hoodies (throughout the school day.)

Exceptions may be made to any of the above when physical or other circumstances warrant or for certain groups during performances or special activities as authorized by the administration.

The Attorney General of Alabama, in *Safe Schools for Alabama's Children*, ruled that students may be expelled or suspended for noncompliance with the dress code.

Emergency Closing Procedures

Occasionally an unforeseen emergency arises which makes it necessary to close school before the usual time. Such emergency circumstances might be snow, a severe storm, or floodwaters. When this occurs, BCS will follow the procedures noted below:

- School Cast, radio and local television stations will inform parents and the community of the emergency and schedule for school closing.
- Buses will transport students to their usual home station.
- Parents who normally pick up their children should come to the school immediately after hearing or receiving the emergency announcement.

*For updates and the latest information during the emergency, parents should refer to the school's Facebook and website pages.

Please observe the following during the closing:

- Remain calm.
- Do not call the school unless there is an emergency.
- When possible, make every effort to be at the bus stop to meet your child(ren).
- Make arrangements beforehand, so that your child will know where to go in the event of an emergency.

Late Check-In/Early Check-Out

Students arriving after the 8:00 a.m. (elementary and middle schools) and 8:30 (high school) bells are tardy and you must report to the office for a check-in slip. Check-ins and check-outs are considered absences in classes missed. In order to be excused, a written explanation for the absence must be submitted following the same guidelines for excused or unexcused absences. In the case of an emergency or an illness, a student's early dismissal is considered excused.

If, for any reason, a parent checks out a child before 11:30 a.m., the child is considered absent from school for that day. **No checkouts will be permitted after time identified by the school.**

Medication at School

Parents/Guardians should give their children their medications at home whenever possible. Students requiring medication at school due to illness or medical conditions must adhere to the Student Health Services Medication Guidelines.

Some key points of the guidelines are as follows:

- A School Medication Prescriber/Parent Authorization form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian and the prescribing physician before ANY medicine will be given.
- A new Prescriber/Parent Authorization form is required for each new school year and for any change in dose, time, or method of administration during the year.
- All medication must be transported to and from school by a parent/guardian or designated adult unless the medicine is one used for emergency care or chronic illness and has been approved through the school nurse for student transport. Consult the administrator or the school nurse for securing permission for a student to carry and self-administer an emergency medicine or medicine that is required for a chronic illness.
- Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy labeled container that provides the time for the medication to be given at school. Inhalers must have a prescription label on the inhaler.

- Over-the-counter medication must be in an unopened original manufacturer's container with the student's name clearly written on the container without obscuring the manufacturer's instruction.
- The parent/guardian must pick up student medications by the last day of school or within one week if it is discontinued during the year. Medication that is not picked up will be destroyed.

Individualized Health Care Plans

In the registration portal, there will be a State of Alabama Department of Education Health Assessment Record for you to complete. The information requested is essential for the school nurse to meet the health needs of your child. An individualized health care plan (IHP) is an organized plan that outlines specific medical, nursing, and emergency care for an individual student. An IHP is recommended for students who are identified as having a health condition that affects or has the potential to affect their participation and performance in school. Students with conditions such as asthma, life-threatening allergies, seizures, diabetes or any health condition requiring professional observation or intervention at school should have a health care plan specific to the student's needs. The parent/guardian of any student who may need an IHP should contact the administrator or school nurse with information about the student's health condition and work with the school to put a plan of care into place for the student.

Missing the Bus and/or Leaving School

If a child misses the bus in the afternoon, he/she should go immediately to the office for assistance. Parents, please discuss potential dangers involved should a child not follow this procedure. Any student leaving campus without permission will be considered truant and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Parent Teacher Organization

Bessemer City School is actively seeking parents to strengthen its Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). This organization is crucial in order to provide the best education for our students. We encourage you, if not already, to become an active member of our PTO. We are grateful for the provided support - emotionally and financially - that we receive.

School Hours

School begins promptly at **8:00 a.m. (elementary and middle) and 8:30 a.m. (high school)**. Car riders are dismissed at **3:05 p.m. (elementary and middle) and 3:30 p.m. (high school)**. Bus riders are dismissed according to school times.

Use of Telephone

To minimize classroom disruptions please do not ask the office staff to deliver telephone messages to their children. Each student should have an understanding before leaving home about what he/she is to do in the afternoon. Ideally, the school telephone is used for school business and for cases of emergency. Parents need to make after-school arrangements with their children before they leave home.

Also, parents should not call their child's cell during school hours. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during school hours. Phone calls to the office regarding changes in after-school arrangements must be received prior to 2:30 p.m.

Visitors' Passes

We have COVID-19 precautions in place, BCS administrators reserve the right to limit visitors. The office staff will check the temperatures of all visitors. We reserve the right to allow parents to enter the building by appointments due to COVID-19.

Physical Education Classes

It is our policy that each student experience success and enjoyment, as they stay as active as possible. Our goal is that all students will be fit and skillful movers while here at school and throughout their lives.

Clothing – All students should dress for activities every day. For a student’s safety, students should wear athletic shoes with rubber soles (no cleats).

Medical Limitations – Parents should notify the physical education teachers (in writing) of any **doctor** diagnosed medical limitations which will affect a child’s performance during their his/her time.

Illness – If a child is unable to participate in classes due to illness or other physical ailments/injuries, parents should provide a written note from the attending **physician**. The student will report to physical education class as usual and will receive an alternative lesson with provisions, according to his/her needs.

Visitors – Students are instructed not to communicate with anyone outside of class while on the playground, lap area, etc. If parents/guardians need to speak with their student, they will be directed to the main office for a visitor’s pass.

Jewelry – Students should remove and/or leave at home jewelry items such as, loop earrings, necklaces, bracelets. These items are easily broken and lost as well as being able to cause serious injury.

Items Brought to Class – Students must not bring anything to physical education classes with the exception of a jacket/coat when necessary. Students should secure money or other valuables in their lockers. If a teacher confiscates an item, he/she will return the item to the parent at the earliest convenience or during a parent-teacher conference.

Candy – Candy, throat lozenges, cough drops, and gum can be swallowed easily during active times. Therefore, students should not bring them to class. This is strictly enforced.

Eye Glasses – If your child can participate comfortably without his/her glasses, for safety reasons, it would be better to leave the glasses in the classroom.

Hair items – Any item worn in the hair should be soft and not unsafe in nature (hair sticks, clamps, combs, etc.)

GRADING/REPORTS

Report Cards

Report cards are for transmitting an evaluation of student progress to the student and his/her parents/guardians. Parents will check report cards and progress reports at least four (4) times during the scholastic year. Parents will access Report Cards in PowerSchool on the following dates. We will not mail or print report cards because of COVID-19.

1st 9 Weeks – October 15, 2024

2nd 9 Weeks – January 13, 2025

3rd 9 Weeks – March 21, 2025

4th 9 Weeks – May 22, 2025

Progress Reports

Parents will check progress reports in the Parent PowerSchool Portal at the end of the 4th of week of each nine-week grading period.

Grading Scale

Rationale

An academic grade should reflect the teacher's most objective assessment of the student's academic achievement. Academic grades will not be used as a means of maintaining order in a classroom.

Student Responsibilities:

- To become informed of the method of grade determination in each class
- To maintain standards of academic performance equal to ability and to make every effort to improve performance upon receipt of notification of unsatisfactory progress

Student Rights:

- To be knowledgeable of a teacher's method of grade determination in each class at the beginning of each year or semester course
- To receive periodic progress reports

A numerical system will be used as the uniform grading scale. The key to grades should be listed on the report cards and permanent records. Each teacher should have a minimum of one grade per week (homework, daily work, tests, etc.) for each week in a grading period. Grades may not vary from this scale without board approval.

A = 90 – 100% B = 80 – 89% C = 70 – 79% D = 60 – 69% F = 0 – 59%

Transcripts containing letter grades from a regionally accredited school will be converted to numerical grades if school officials of the school the student previously attended cannot or will not convert the letter grades to numerical grades. The letter grades will be converted to numerical grades as follows:

A+ = 99	B+ = 89	C+ = 79	D+ = 69	F = 59 or below
A = 95	B = 85	C = 75	D = 65	
A- = 90	B- = 80	C- = 70	D- = 60	

PARENT PORTAL

The Parent PowerSchool Portal provides parents and students with a way to check grades, assignments, attendance, and discipline using the internet. To use the program, you must first obtain a username and password, which will be sent home from schools. The Parent PowerSchool Portal can be accessed through any device with internet access, including smartphones and iPads.

Awards' Day Program Schedule (Times / Locations TBA)

School administrators will announce these dates later during the school year on the school's website, on its Facebook page, and via our school messaging system.

**This Parent-Student Handbook is an abbreviated version for the agenda.
Visit bessk12.org for the full version of the Parent Student Handbook.**

SUMMARY OF CIVIL LIABILITIES AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES

The following summaries of laws relate to civil liabilities and criminal penalties for violence or other misbehavior by students on school property or against school employees. Local Boards of Education are required to provide notice to parents, guardians, and students.

Attendance and Conduct (§16-28-12)

Each parent/guardian or other person having control or custody of a child required to attend school who fails to require the child to enroll, to regularly attend school, or to compel the child to properly conduct himself/herself as a pupil in accordance with the written policy on school behavior adopted by the local Board of Education shall be guilty of a misdemeanor (may be fined up to \$100 and may be sentenced for hard labor up to 90 days).

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (§26-14-1)

Certain persons and institutions are required by law to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect under a penalty of a misdemeanor, fine or sentence. Those who are required by law to report are: hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, nurses, school teachers and officials, peace officers, law enforcement officials, pharmacists, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, or any other person called upon to render aid of medical assistance to a known or suspected victim of child abuse or neglect. Besides those persons who are required by law to report child abuse and neglect, any person may make such report, if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.

Drug Dealing (§6-5-72)

A person who unlawfully sells, furnishes, or gives a controlled substance to a minor may be liable for injury or damage or both suffered by a third person caused by or resulting from the use of the controlled substance by the minor, if the sale, furnishing, or giving of the controlled substance is the proximate cause of the injury or damage.

Drugs, Alcohol, Weapons, Physical Harm, or Threatened Physical Harm (§16-1-24.1)

The school principal shall notify appropriate law enforcement officials when a person violates the local board of education policies concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person. If any criminal charge is warranted, the principal is authorized to sign the appropriate warrant. If that person is a student, the local school system shall immediately suspend that person from attending regular classes and schedule a hearing within 5 school days. If a person is found to have violated a local board of education policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, the person may not be readmitted to the public schools until criminal charges, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities and the person has satisfied all other requirements imposed by the local board of education as a condition of readmission.

Firearm Possession (§16-1-24.3)

All city and county boards of education shall develop and implement local policies and procedures requiring the expulsion of students, for a period for one year, who are determined to have brought to school or have in their possession a firearm in a school building, on school grounds, on school buses, or at other school-sponsored functions.

Sexual Harassment (§26-14-3)

A student who believes that he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment shall immediately report the matter to a teacher, the school counselor, principal, or the Superintendent.

Any student who suspects that another student is being sexually harassed shall immediately report the information to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or the Superintendent. A student's request to make his or her report to someone of the same sex will be granted.

Teacher Assault (§13A-6-21)

A person commits the crime of assault in the second degree (Class C felony) if the person assaults with intent to cause serious physical injury to a teacher or to an employee of a public education institution during or as a result of the performance of his or her duty.

Tobacco Possession (§28-11-13)

It is unlawful for any minor to purchase, use, possess, or transport tobacco or tobacco products within this state (See Alabama Law §28-11-14 for additional reference.)

Vandalism (§6-5-380)

The parents, guardian, or other person having control of any minor under the age of 18 with whom the minor is living and who have custody of the minor shall be liable for the actual damages sustained to school property, plus the court costs, caused by intentional, willful, or malicious act of the minor.

Weapons in Schools (§13A-11-72)

No person shall knowingly with intent to do bodily harm carry or possess a deadly weapon on the premises of a public school. Possession of a deadly weapon with the intent to do bodily harm on the premises of a public school or school bus is a class C felony. (Note: Deadly weapons include but are not limited to hand grenade, explosive or incendiary device; a pistol, rifle, or shotgun; or a switch-blade knife, gravity knife, stiletto, sword or dagger; or any club, baton, billy club, black-jack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles.)

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS OF EDUCATION ARE REQUIRED TO PUBLISH THE FOLLOWING ACT AND SECTION

Expectations of Parents Regarding Attendance and Behavior in Public Schools, Alabama Code §16-28-12

“(a) Each parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of any child required to attend school or receive regular instruction by a private tutor who fails to have the child enrolled in school or who fails to send the child to school, or have him or her instructed by a private tutor during the time the child is required to attend a public school, private school, church school, denominational school, or parochial school, or be instructed by a private tutor, or fails to require the child to regularly attend the school or tutor, or fails to compel the child to properly conduct himself or herself as a pupil in any public school in accordance with the written policy on school behavior adopted by the local board of education pursuant to this section and documented by the appropriate school official which conduct may result in the suspension of the pupil, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) and may also be sentenced to hard labor for the county for not more than 90 days. The absence of a child without the consent of the principal teacher of the public school he or she attends or should attend, or of the tutor who instructs or should instruct the child, shall be prima facie evidence of the violation of this section.”

“(b) Each local public board of education shall adopt a written policy for its standards on school behavior. Each local public school superintendent shall provide at the commencement of each academic year a copy of the written policy on school behavior to each parent, guardian, or other person having care or control of a child who is enrolled included in the written policy shall be a copy of this section. The signature of the student and the parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of the child shall document receipt of the policy.”

“(C) Any parent, guardian or other person having control or custody of any child enrolled in public school who fails to require the child to regularly attend the school or tutor, or fails to compel the child to properly conduct himself or herself as a pupil in accordance with the written policy on school behavior adopted by the local board of education and documented by the appropriate school official which conduct may result in the suspension of the pupil, shall be reported by the principal to the superintendent of education of the school system in which the suspected violation occurred. The Superintendent or his or her designee shall report suspected violations to the district attorney within 10 days. Any principal or superintendent or his or her designee intentionally failing to report a suspected violation shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor. The district attorney shall vigorously enforce this section to ensure proper conduct and required attendance by any child enrolled in public school.”

Seclusion and Restraint for ALL Students, Alabama Administrative Code §290-3-1-.02(1) (f).

1. Definition

- a. (iii). Physical Restraint –Direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly restricts a student’s movement. The term physical restraint does not include mechanical restraint or chemical restraint. Additionally, physical restraint does not include providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to promote student safety or prevent self-injurious behavior, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing guidance to a location, providing comfort, or providing limited physical contact as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person’s property.
- b. (iv). Physical Restraint that restricts the flow of air to the student’s lungs – Any method (face down, face-up, or on your side) of physical restraint in which physical pressure is applied to the student’s body that restricts the flow of air into the student’s lungs. Use of this type of restraint is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs.
- c. (v). Seclusion – a procedure that isolates and confines the student in a separate, locked area until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to himself/herself or others. The seclusion occurs in a specifically constructed or designated room or space that is physically isolated from common areas and from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include situations in which a staff member trained in the use of de-escalation techniques on restraint is physically present in the same unlocked room as the student, time-out as defined in paragraph (1.) (vi) of this rule, in – school detention, detention, or a student-requested break in a different location in the room or in a separate room. Use of seclusion is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs.

2. Requirements

- a. The use of seclusion is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs.
- b. The use of physical restraint is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs except in those situations in which the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques. Notwithstanding the foregoing, physical restraint is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs when used as a form of discipline or punishment.
- c. All physical restraint must be immediately terminated when the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others or if the student is observed to be in severe distress.

CODE of CONDUCT
CLASSIFICATIONS OF VIOLATIONS

Proper behavior is that which enhances the learning environment. Classroom teachers are responsible for maintaining classroom discipline and will deal with general classroom disruptions. Only when the action taken by the teacher is ineffective or the disruption is sufficiently severe should the student be referred to the principal or his/her designee.

Parents or guardians of students who consistently disrupt class and/or exhibit poor work habits should be notified by the teacher or other school official and/or referred to a guidance counselor.

When a student is brought to the office of the supervising employee, the principal/designee shall hear the student's explanation and consult further with other school personnel, if necessary, before determining the classification of violation or disciplinary measure.

CLASS I VIOLATIONS

101. EXCESSIVE TARDINESS - Three or more incidents of reporting late to school, class, or assigned area during a calendar month.

- i. 101.1 Tardies to School
- ii. 101.2 Tardies to Class

102. DISTRACTION OF OTHER STUDENTS OR THE SCHOOL PROGRAM IN GENERAL
– Any behavior which is disruptive to the educational process.

103. NON-CONFORMITY TO DRESS CODE

104. MINOR DISRUPTION ON A SCHOOL BUS

105. INAPPROPRIATE PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

106. LITTERING OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

107. FAILURE TO COME TO CLASS PREPARED WITH ALL NECESSARY MATERIALS

108. UNAUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL OR ANOTHER PERSON'S PERSONAL PROPERTY

109. POSSESSION OF NUISANCE ITEMS – Any item which disrupts the instructional day at school or is a distraction on a bus is not allowed. Such items will be confiscated and may be claimed by a parent or guardian. Examples include but are not limited to : iPods/MP3 players, radios, toys, trading cards, playing cards, or other hand-held video games. Students bring these items to school at their own risk. The local school is not responsible for attempting to recover these items should they be lost or stolen while at school.

110. FAILURE TO ATTEND ASSIGNED CONSEQUENCES

111. ANY OTHER OFFENSE WHICH THE PRINCIPAL MAY REASONABLY DEEM TO FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY

Class I Disciplinary Actions

First Violation:

Principal/teacher/student conference, parental contact, or in-school parental conference if warranted.

Placement in detention, in-school detention, loss of school privileges, or extra work assignments may be assigned.

Subsequent Violations

Disciplinary action may include detention, in-school detention, loss of school privileges, and/or referral to the Early Warning Program. Repeated or cumulative Class I Violations may result in suspension from school and/or bus.

CLASS II VIOLATIONS

201. DEFIANCE OR DISRESPECT OF SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEES AUTHORITY
 - i. 201.1 DEFIANCE
 - ii. 201.2 DISRESPECT

202. POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF PRESCRIPTION, NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION, INHALANTS, AEROSOL SPRAYS, OR OTHER OVER-THE-COUNTER PRODUCTS
 - i. Failure to comply with the Bessemer City Board of Education Medication Policy and Procedures. Required medications must be delivered to the school by the parent or other responsible adult accompanied by the completed Alabama State Department of Education designated medication authorization form and kept in accordance with the Bessemer City Board of Education medication policy and procedures.

203. INTENTIONALLY TOUCHING OR STRIKING ANOTHER PERSON AGAINST THE WILL OF THE OTHER

204. USE OF PROFANE OR OBSCENE LANGUAGE OR POSSESSION OF PORNOGRAPHIC, SUGGESTIVE, OR INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL

205. VANDALISM - Intentional and deliberate action resulting in injury or damages of less than \$200 to public property or the real or personal property of another. A police report will be filed and students will be expected to pay for damages.

206. "SKIPPING" CLASS OR SCHOOL – Unauthorized absence from class or school. Group skip days are included in this category and are not permitted by the Board of Education.

207. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY – A breach of academic integrity as outlined in the Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty section in this handbook. Typically, with instances of academic dishonesty, the student will receive either reduced credit or no credit on the particular assignment along with other appropriate disciplinary action.

208. GAMBLING – Any participation in games of chance for money and/or other items of value.

209. INTENTIONALLY PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION TO A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE

210. STEALING-LARCENY-PETTY THEFT – The intentional taking, and/or carrying away of property valued at less than \$100 belonging to or in the possession or custody of another

211. POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY - The possession of stolen property valued at or less than \$100 with the knowledge that it is stolen

212. THREATS TO DO EXTORTION – Verbal or written

213. TRESPASSING - Willfully entering or remaining in any school property after being warned by an authorized person

214. POSSESSION AND/OR IGNITING FIREWORKS OR FIRECRACKERS
215. INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR - VERBAL, WRITTEN, OR PHYSICAL
216. USE OF PHYSICAL OR GRAPHIC OBSCENE GESTURES
217. THE UNAUTHORIZED USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES
218. USE OF RACIAL OR ETHNIC INSULTS OR SLURS - Verbal or written affronts of a racial or ethnic nature
219. POSSESSION OF INAPPROPRIATE DEVICES – Including but not limited to ammunition, artificial weapons, facsimiles and/or replicas
220. DISRUPTION ON A SCHOOL BUS
221. UNAUTHORIZED ORGANIZATION – Any on campus participation in non-sanctioned fraternities, sororities, secret societies, or non-affiliated school clubs
222. MINOR VIOLATION OF STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY
223. ANY OTHER OFFENSE WHICH THE PRINCIPAL MAY REASONABLY DEEM TO FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY

Class II Disciplinary Action

Class II violations are serious enough that they may require an in-school parental conference plus the appropriate disciplinary action.

First and second violations require parental notification and/or one or more of the following disciplinary actions in-school detention, after-school detention, loss of school privileges, or suspension from school and/or bus. Law enforcement and/or juvenile court personnel may be contacted.

Subsequent violations may result in suspension up to ten (10) school days plus additional disciplinary action as warranted. Special circumstances may warrant contact with law enforcement, referral to the Early Warning Program, Alternative School, or the filing of a complaint or petition in Juvenile Court.

301. CHARGE OF A MISDEMEANOR CRIME
302. MISUSE OR ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION OR NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION, INHALANTS, AEROSOL, SPRAYS, OR OTHER OVER-THE-COUNTER PRODUCTS – Required medications must be delivered to the school by the parent or other responsible adult accompanied by the completed Alabama State Department of Education designated medication authorization form and kept in accordance with the Bessemer City Board of Education medication policy and procedures
303. STEALING-THEFT-POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY – Knowingly or intentionally taking, obtaining, receiving, or exerting unauthorized control over property valued at more than \$100 belonging to another person

304. BURGLARY OF SCHOOL PROPERTY - Entering or remaining in a structure or conveyance with the intent to commit an offense therein
305. CRIMINAL MISCHIEF/VANDALISM – Willful and malicious injury or damages at or in excess of \$200 to public property or to real or personal property belonging to another
306. POSSESSION OF A KNIFE
307. POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS DEVICES – including but not limited to mace, tear gas, “blank” guns, facsimiles, replicas, and/or artificial weapons or any item used inappropriately with intent to harm
308. INDIVIDUALS AND/OR GROUPS INCITING OR PARTICIPATING IN UNAUTHORIZED DEMONSTRATIONS AND/OR DISORDERLY ACTIVITIES which lead to disruption of the normal school program. This includes any gang related behavior and instigators
309. THREAT, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING OF STUDENTS - The threat by word or act to do harm to another student with an apparent ability to do so, or doing some act which creates a well-founded fear in the person that such violence is imminent. Harassment is inclusive of name-calling, as well as conduct, which directly affect another individual’s emotional state of mind. Racial slurs are a form of bullying included in this violation
310. FIGHTING - Any physical conflict involving two or more individuals
311. DIRECTING OBSCENE, PROFANE LANGUAGE OR GESTURES (VERBAL OR WRITTEN) TO A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE
312. SEXUAL HARASSMENT – Any unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcomed verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
313. MAJOR VIOLATION OF STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY – Examples of major violations could include: tampering with another student’s class work; the intentional use of school system or personal technology, while on school property , to break laws involving theft, identity theft, and distribution of stolen and/or illegal items; the intentional destruction of school-owned technology equipment; the intentional disruption of network services resulting in school or district level network outages; viewing or sending of obscene material.
314. INTENTIONALLY PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION TO A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE OR HINDERING THE INVESTIGATION IN REGARD TO A CLASS III OFFENSE
315. UNJUSTIFIED ACTIVATION OF A FIRE ALARM SYSTEM OR ITS COMPONENTS, EMERGENCY OR SECURITY SYSTEMS
316. ASSAULT
317. THE MISUSE AND/OR ABUSE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES - Sending inappropriate messages and/or images via electronic communication devices or any other form of technology whether owned or owned by the school district, at any time may result in serious school, personal, and /or civil or criminal legal consequences

- 318. SEXUAL OFFENSES – Acts of a sexual nature including, but not limited to lewd behavior, indecent exposure, sexual contact, sexual intercourse, sexting, viewing or sharing obscene material, or other conduct intended to result in sexual gratification
- 319. POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS, LIGHTERS, MATCHES, ELECTRONIC - CIGARETTES/VAPOR, SYNTHETIC NICOTINE PRODUCTS
 - a. 319.1 TOBACCO, POSSESSION
 - b. 319.2 TOBACCO, SALE
 - c. 319.3 TOBACCO, USE
 - d. 319.4 E-CIGARETTES/VAPOR
 - e. 319.5 SYNTHETIC NICOTINE
- 320. ANY OTHER OFFENSE WHICH THE PRINCIPAL MAY REASONABLY DEEM TO FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY

Class III Disciplinary Action

The disciplinary action for such violations committed on school premises or during school related functions may be in-school detention or out-of-school and/or bus suspension up to ten (10) days with possible recommendation for expulsion or referral to the Alternative School. Parental contact will be made as soon as possible. Law enforcement and/or juvenile court personnel will be contacted and a complaint or petition may be filed after consultation with juvenile authorities.

When a special education student commits a Class III offense, the principal/designee shall initiate procedures to have the student’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) Committee address the behavior problem. The IEP Committee will decide if the offense was related to the area of disability and will decide the appropriate action to be taken. The IEP Committee will also conduct a functional behavior assessment if one has not been previously conducted and will consult or construct a behavior intervention plan. All revisions to the student’s IEP must be documented within the current IEP.

If the disciplinary actions decided by the IEP Committee are still not effective, the principal/designee may refer the student to the Director of Special Education for further action. However, in no instance may a referral to the Director of Special Education result in the exclusion from school of a special education student for more than ten (10) cumulative days which are allowable by law or state regulations. Only the IEP Committee may change a special education student’s placement. Consideration must also be given to the protection and rights afforded to 504 students under both federal and state law.

CLASS IV VIOLATIONS

- 401. ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS - The unauthorized use, sale, transfer, possession, soliciting, trafficking, misuse, and/or abuse of drugs. These include alcoholic beverages, barbiturates, central nervous system stimulants, hallucinogens, synthetic replicas, drug paraphernalia, and all other drugs to which the narcotic and drug abuse laws of the United States, local municipalities, and the State of Alabama apply
 - a. 401.1 ALCOHOL, POSSESSION
 - b. 401.2 ALCOHOL, SALE
 - c. 401.3 ALCOHOL, USE
 - d. 401.4 DRUGS, POSSESSION
 - e. 401.5 DRUGS, SALE
 - f. 401.6 DRUGS, USE
- 402. ARSON – The willful and malicious burning of any part of School Board property

403. ASSAULT UPON SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEES – The intentional touching or striking of a school employee against his or her will or the intentional causing of bodily harm to a School Board employee
404. POSSESSION OR DISCHARGING OF DANGEROUS WEAPONS OR DEVICES – in the school building, on the school campus, in a vehicle, or at any school related function. The term “dangerous weapon” means a firearm or anything designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious physical injury and such term includes but not limited to a bazooka, hand grenade, missile, or explosive or “incendiary device,” a pistol, rifle, or shotgun, or a switch-blade knife, gravity knife, stiletto, sword or dagger, brass knuckles
- a. 404.1 KNIFE USE
405. EXPLOSIVES – Preparing, possessing, or igniting on School Board property explosives likely to cause serious bodily injury or property damage
406. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT - Acts of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, abuse, battery, electronic pornography, attempted rape, or rape
407. AGGRAVATED ASSAULT – Intentionally causing great bodily harm, disability, or permanent disfigurement; use of a deadly weapon
408. ROBBERY – The taking of money or other personal property from a person by force, violence, assault or putting the person in fear of same
409. THE CHARGE OF A CRIME – As defined under the laws of the city, State of Alabama, or United States while on school property or participating in a school activity (*§16-1-24.1, Code of Alabama, 1975*)
410. BOMB THREAT – Any such communication(s) which has the effect of interrupting the education environment
411. POSSESSION OF A HANDGUN RESULTS IN EXPULSION FROM THE BESSEMER CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN ONE YEAR
- a. 411.1 HANDGUN, POSSESSION
 - b. 411.2 HANDGUN, SALE
 - c. 411.3 HANDGUN, USE
 - d. 411.4 RIFLE/SHOTGUN, POSSESSION
 - e. 411.5 RIFLE/SHOTGUN, SALE
 - f. 411.6 RIFLE/SHOTGUN USE
412. INTENTIONALLY PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION TO A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE OR HINDERING THE INVESTIGATION IN REGARD TO A CLASS IV OFFENSE
413. MISUSE OR ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS – The unauthorized use, sale, transfer, possession, soliciting, trafficking, misuse of prescription drugs. These include any drug that requires a doctor’s prescription to legally possess
414. TERRORIST THREAT - Threatening by any means (verbal, written or otherwise) to commit a crime of violence or to damage any property in a manner that intentionally or recklessly terrorizes another person or causes disruption of school activities

415. THE INTENTIONAL THREAT, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, STRIKING OR BULLYING OF A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE – The threat by word or act to do harm to an employee, with an apparent ability to do so, and doing some act which creates a well-founded fear in the person that such violence is imminent. Harassment is inclusive of name-calling, as well as conduct, which directly affect another individual’s emotional state of mind
416. ANY SECOND MAJOR OFFENSE FROM THE CLASS III CATEGORY
417. ANY OTHER OFFENSE WHICH THE PRINCIPAL MAY REASONABLY DEEM TO FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY

Class IV Disciplinary Action

The disciplinary action for such violation committed on school premises or during school related functions shall be suspended up to ten (10) days with possible recommendation for expulsion. Parental contact will be made as soon as possible. Law enforcement and/or juvenile court personnel shall be contacted and a complaint or petition may be filed after consultation with juvenile authorities.

Additional disciplinary actions as a result of Class IV Violation may result in one of the following:

- Additional suspension days from school and/or bus or other disciplinary action as determined by the principal after consultation with the Superintendent or his/her designee
- Long-term assignments to the Alternative School
- Expulsion from the Bessemer City School System

The Bessemer City Board of Education finds that there is a compelling public interest in ensuring that all schools are safe and drug free. The Bessemer City Board of Education, consistent with *Ala. Code §16-1-24.1*, adopted disciplinary actions which will be enacted in addition to any other disciplinary outlined in the *Parent-Student Handbook*.

Bessemer City Schools Parent and Family Engagement Plan

Our **Purpose** in **Bessemer City Schools System (BCSS)** is to educate and empower our students to successfully compete in a global society.

Our **Mission** in BCSS is to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment that meets the needs of the whole child through quality instruction, programs, and resources.

Our **Vision** in BCSS is to serve as a model of excellence by preparing all students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to be successful in their unique endeavors.

The BCSS purpose, mission and vision in cooperation with parents and community, by providing a dedicated staff, a diverse and challenging curriculum. We help strengthening our partnership with families by providing relevant parent and family engagement activities. We use the following approaches:

Communication. Bessemer City School System will promote regular, two-way, meaningful communication between home and school in the parent's primary language, if possible. Every effort will be made to communicate with parents and families in their primary language. Additionally, parents and community members who share the family's primary language may be utilized to better communicate and respond. Translation services in written, oral, and technology formats will be utilized for our students and their families.

Build Capacity

Strategies. The strategies we will use to support successful school and family engagement.

- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Parent Workshops/Meetings
- Parent Assessments/ Evaluation
- Parent Engagement Work Session
- PTA/PTO meetings
- Parent Conferences
- Provide copies of Parents' Right-to-know and the Title I District Parent and Family Engagement Policy
- Home-School Compact (electronic- apart of enrollment)
- As part of each school's Continuous Improvement Plan, we share the results of parent assessments that have been documented and analyzed.
- Provide translated letters, documents, and resource materials.
- Parent nights/Literacy nights.
- Parent Resource Center (BCSS-Quitman Mitchell Parent Resource Center) is located off-campus.
- School-based Parent Engagement Program

- Resources. LEA may provide necessary training.
- Coordinating necessary literacy training to help parents to work with their children in order to improve academic achievement.
- Providing parent resource centers to make parenting, technology, and literature available to parents.
- Educating parents about community-based agencies and organizations where additional assistance may be found.

- Supplying materials and training to help parents interact with their children at home.
- Will provide parents various opportunities to learn about child development and child-rearing through the provision of in-service programs and the distribution of various materials. These programs will assist parents in understanding the physical, intellectual, and emotional needs of their child, beginning at birth.
- Various resources in the community will be utilized to assist the child's success in school.
- Promote family literacy and parenting skills through parent resources provided at individual schools.
- Promote family literacy through the coordination of community businesses and schools.
- Parent Engagement Coordinator provides parent training on technology and the harms of copyright piracy, staying safe on social media, and online bullying to foster parental engagement.
- Local schools have a parent involvement committee responsible for planning additional activities at their schools.
- Coordinating necessary literacy training and using technology from other sources to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement.
- Parent Literacy Nights (Reading, Math, Science, STEM)
- Chromebook Parent Meetings (digital citizenship with social media, privacy, copyright policy,).
- Informational Pamphlets
- Increasing student and parent links

Community Partners. Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent engagement activities. We will include others by providing information about opportunities for organizations and businesses to work with parents and schools, and encouraging the formation of partnerships between elementary, middle, and high schools and local businesses that include a role for parents. Bessemer City School works as partners with The Clay House, the Bessemer Housing Authority, the Bessemer Public Library, and the Bessemer Police Department to speak with parents about services offered and partnering to bring in a variety of opportunities (i.e.: Parent and Teen Summit, Math in the City and Literacy Nights). We also collaborate with the Bessemer Public Library to provide cards, information, and training to parents and their families.

Bessemer City Schools will continue to work to provide a full stock Parent Resource Center.



BESSEMER CITY
SCHOOLS

Teaching Effectively, Leading Successfully

Parents' Right-to-Know

August 2024

Dear Parents and Families:

We are pleased to notify you that in accordance with the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015*, you have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teacher. Specifically, you may request the following:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria has been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

You may contact your child's school to request a Parent's Right-to-Know form. Completed forms must be submitted to your child's principal or to the Office of Human Resources, 1621 5th Avenue North, Bessemer, Alabama 35021. The Board will then provide you the requested information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher(s).

Sincerely,

Dana Arreola
Superintendent
Bessemer City Schools

This is an agreement between the school district, parent and child.
Compacts are a part of the online registration.



Bessemer City Schools

SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT



The Bessemer City Schools and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Every Student Succeeds Act, agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which we will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State's high standards.

This school-parent compact is in effect during the current school year.

School Responsibilities

The School will:

1. **Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the State's student academic achievement standards as follows:** The school will provide a challenging research based curriculum and facilitate achievement for all students by using Best Practices across the curriculum. All teachers are highly qualified and incorporate data driven instruction to assure student success. ALSDE courses of study and system wide curriculum alignment across grade levels determine the instructional objectives. Remediation is provided as needed. After school tutoring and summer enrichment are also provided. At all times, instructional time is protected to ensure optimal learning.
2. **Hold Parent-Teacher conferences, (at least annually), during which time this compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement.** Specifically, those conferences will be held at an open house during the first month of school, and again at the end of the first grading period when report cards are picked up further individual conferences will be scheduled as needed.
3. **Provide parents with frequent reports on their child's progress.** Phone calls/notes as needed, progress reports sent home twice during grading period, report cards issued at the end of the grading period. More frequent contact is made if the student is not progressing as expected.
4. **Provide parents reasonable access to staff. Specifically, staff will be available for consultation with parents as follows:** Staff is available to parents daily and open-door policies exist at school where parents may visit or schedule conferences at planned periods, before or after school. Phone calls and emails are also used.
5. **Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in the child's class, and to observe classroom activities, as follows:** There is an open-door policy at all times. Parents are encouraged to volunteer for class and school activities as well as field trips. However, precautions should be followed during the pandemic.
6. **Ensure regular two-way, meaningful communication** between family members and school staff, and to the extent practicable, in a language that family can understand.

Parent / Guardian Responsibilities

We, as parents, will support our children's learning in the following ways:

1. Reading and discussing progress reports.
2. Observing in the classroom.
3. Seeing that my child is on time and attends school regularly (Monitoring attendance).
4. Verifying that homework is completed. positive ways
5. Establishing a place for study. homework.
6. Support the school in its efforts to maintain differences proper discipline.
7. Assist my child in learning to resolve conflicts.
8. Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my children's education.
9. Promoting positive use of my child's extracurricular time.
10. Staying informed about my child's education and communicating with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school or the school district either received by my child or by mail and responding, as appropriate.
11. Serving, to the extent possible, on advisory groups, such as Title I advisory committees and parental involvement committees.
12. Volunteering in my child's class.
13. Monitoring television time.
14. See that my child has a healthy breakfast.
15. Respect all school staff in
16. Establishing a time for
17. Respect the cultural of others.

Student Responsibilities

I, as a student, will share the responsibilities to improve my academic achievement and achieve the State's high standards. Specifically, I will:

1. Attend school regularly.
2. Ask questions.
3. Behave well.
4. Do my homework every day and ask for help when I need to.
5. Establish a time for homework.
6. Participate in class.
7. Prepare for class. Study my assignments
8. Go to bed at an appropriate time.
9. Support and abide by all school rules.
10. Be Responsible, Respectful, and Resourceful.
11. Respect and cooperate with other students and adults.
12. Read at least 10 minutes for every grade level (i.e.: 3rd Grade = 30 minutes) obtained every day outside of school time.
13. Give to my parents or an adult that is responsible for my welfare all notices and information received by me from my school every day.
14. Come to class with all the necessary tools for learning.
15. Support and abide by all school rules.
16. Be Responsible, Respectful, and Resourceful.

Bessemer City Schools School-Parent Compact

I have read the attached School-Parent Compact information and I will adhere to all compact guidelines.

Teacher

Student

Parent(s)

Date

Date

Date

Bessemer City Schools Board of Education



**BESSEMER CITY
SCHOOLS**

Teaching Effectively, Leading Successfully

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

The Bessemer City Schools provides an electronic network and Internet access to enhance your educational experiences. Access to electronic and web-based resources is available through classrooms, media centers, computer labs, district issued devices, and home computers. Through active learning experiences, you are expected to develop your appropriate information literacy skills to ensure the effective use of the wide variety of tools available through the network.

STUDENT AGREEMENT

In order to have full advantage of these resources, I will:

- Read and abide by all sections of the Bessemer City Schools Acceptable use of Technology Policy.
- Use the system for educational purposes only including classroom activities, career development, college applications, and other activities as determined by the district.
- Protect myself by never posting personal contact information or account information (passwords/logins) about others or myself.
- Respect the district network and not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the network, website, Internet or online resources.
- Refrain from the destruction and vandalism of the network system and its hardware.
- Notify teachers or administrators of any inappropriate email messages or possible system security problems.
- Refrain from inappropriate, obscene, profane, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or gang-related language or symbols.
- Use district owned and identified resources and do not download or install unauthorized or executable files, including but not limited to proxy server software with the intent of circumventing the district filter.
- Use the network and email access responsibly, understanding that it is a privilege and all violations will result in disciplinary measures as outlined in the Discipline Code of Conduct.
- Refrain from sharing account information including user names and passwords.

PENALTIES FOR IMPROPER USE

Students who violate the terms of the Acceptable Use Technology Policy or otherwise misuse the technology resources provided will be subjected to disciplinary action according to the Bessemer City Schools Code of Conduct.

Date _____

Signature

Parent

Student

1:1 Student Technology Device Agreement

Access and Support: This Agreement is entered into between Bessemer City School District, the Student and the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of the Student.

1. Introduction

Bessemer City School District, will provide each student a device (i.e., laptop, Chrome Book, or iPad), which the student is to use as a positive learning tool in coordination with the District's curriculum. Although this Agreement authorizes the student's use of the device for the year, the device is the property of the District and must be returned upon the District's request 10 days of the student's attendance for the school year.

2. Prerequisites to Receive:

To receive a device to use, the student and his or her parent/guardian must sign and submit to this 1:1 Student Technology Device Agreement.

3. Applicable Policies: In using the device, the student is subject to and must comply with District's Board of Education Policies, Authorization for Internet Access Student Policy and Student Handbook Policies addressing student discipline, harassment/bullying, and acceptable use of electronic network/technology and their associated administrative procedures and regulations. A violation of any of these policies could result in loss of network privileges, loss of right to use the device, or appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Expectations

1. Students may not:
 - a. Disrupt the educational process of the school district through non-educational use of the device;
 - b. Endanger the health or safety of themselves or anyone else through the use of the device;
 - c. Invade the rights and privacy of others at school through the use of the device;

- d. Engage in illegal or prohibited conduct of any kind through the use of the device; or
 - e. Violate the conditions and rules of acceptable use of electronic network/technology.
2. Maintenance of device. Student must keep the device in good and working condition. In addition to following the manufacturer’s maintenance requirements, students should:
- a. Use only a clean, soft cloth to clean the device’s screen. No cleansers of any type should be used;
 - b. Insert and remove cords and cables carefully to prevent damage to connectors;
 - c. Not write or draw on the device or apply any stickers or labels that are not property of the District;
 - d. Handle the device carefully and ensure others do the same;
 - e. Not leave the device in places of extreme temperature, humidity, or limited ventilation (e.g., in a car) for an extended period of time;
 - f. Secure the device when it is out of their sight. The device should not be left in an unlocked locker, a desk, or other location where someone else might take it;
 - g. Use a protective carrying case with the device.
3. Daily Use of device. Unless otherwise instructed, the device is intended for use at school every day. If students are permitted to use the device at home, they are responsible for bringing it to school every day, fully charged.
4. No Unauthorized Software or Data. Only legally licensed software, apps, media, or other data is permitted on the 1:1 device. Students will not download software, apps, media or other data (including songs, photos, or videos) without a District employee’s prior approval. Students will not replace the manufacturer’s operating system with custom software (i.e., “jailbreak” the device), or remove or modify the District-installed device configuration.
5. No Right to Privacy. The devices are District property; therefore, the District may examine the devices and search their contents at any time for any reason.

Neither students nor parents/guardians have any right to privacy of any data saved on the device or in a cloud-based account to which the device connects. The school administration may involve law enforcement, if it is possible the device may have been used for an illegal purpose.

Additional Terms

1. Damage to or Loss of device. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for their child's use of the device, including any damage to or loss of the device.

Loss: In the event that the device is lost, the parents are responsible to cover the entire replacement cost.

The decision to assess a charge, as well as the amount of any charge, is at the sole discretion of the District, but will not be greater than the full replacement value of the device.

Estimated Repair Costs:

Broken Screen: \$77.35

Broken Keyboard and Shell: \$50.05

Broken AC Adapter: \$35.75

Broken Protective Logo Case: \$21.50

New Device: \$288.50 or current replacement cost

2. Hardware or Functionality Problems. If a problem arises with the functionality of a student's device, the student must notify his or her classroom teacher of the problem within 24 hours or on the next school day. Under no circumstances may the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) attempt to fix or allow anyone but District staff the attempt to fix suspected hardware faults or the device's operating system. ***Do not take the device to any repair shop***; the student should report the issue to his/her classroom teacher, who will report it to the District's Technology Department.

3. Failure to Return the Device. If a student fails to return the device and any assigned accessories as directed, the District may, in addition to seeking

reimbursement from the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), file a theft report with local law enforcement authorities.

4. Internet Filter Outside of School. Although the District employs Internet filters and monitors students' Internet activity at school, it may not filter or monitor students' Internet access at home or off school grounds. By signing this Agreement,

Parent/guardian(s) understand and acknowledge this and agree that their child's use of the Internet on the device at home or off of school grounds is at the discretion of, and should be monitored by, the parent(s)/guardian(s). Some sites accessible via the Internet may contain material that is illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive to some people.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) assume complete responsibility for the Internet access beyond the network provided by the District. When using the device outside the District, students are bound by the same policies, procedures, and guidelines as in school.

5. Data as Records. Data saved to the device is not maintained by the District as public records or as student records. In the event this data needs to be maintained by the District for any reason, the District will take affirmative steps to preserve it.

6. Waiver of Device-Related Claims. By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree to follow all responsibilities outlined in this Agreement and agree to be bound by this Agreement. You also agree that the device was delivered in good working order and acknowledge that it must be returned to the District in good working order. By signing this Agreement, you waive any and all claims you (and your heirs, successors, and assigns) may have against the Bessemer City School District or current replacement cost, its Board of Education and its individual Board members, employees, and agents, from any and all claims, damages, losses, causes of action, and the like relating to, connected with, or arising from the use of the device or from this Agreement.

7. Indemnification for device-Related Claims. To the fullest extent allowed by law, you agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Bessemer City School District, its Board of Education, and its individual Board members, employees and agents,

from any and all claims, damages, losses, causes of action, and the like relating to, connected with, or arising from the use of the device or from this Agreement.

Agreement and Signatures

Use of devices on the Bessemer City School District, network is a privilege that supports school appropriate learning. The consistent operation and maintenance of the computer network and equipment relies on users adhering to established guidelines. Therefore, by signing this agreement, users acknowledge that they have read the 1:1 Student Technology Device Agreement and understand the District's expectations and the student's responsibilities.

By signing this agreement, students and parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to abide by the restrictions outlined in the 1:1 Student Technology Device Agreement. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for monitoring their child's Internet access on the device beyond the Bessemer City School District network.

I hereby give my permission to my child to utilize the Bessemer City School District, 1:1 provided device. I certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

I, along with my child, have read, understand and agree to the District's 1:1 Device

Technology Agreement (Checking of this box is the equivalent of a signature acceptance and agreement on behalf of yourself and your child to the terms of this agreement.)

Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian

Date: _____

COLLEGE SUCCESS TIPS

15 Prestigious Careers (and their possible majors)

If you have your eye on a specific career or future line of work, you should choose an appropriate major to get your career off to the best possible start. Here are some popular career choices and the majors that are most often chosen by students looking to work in these fields:

Profession: Possible Majors:

Scientist	Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Astronomy, Geology
Doctor	Chemistry, Biology, Psychology, Biochemistry
Teacher	Education, Psychology, any specific subject area you wish to teach
Nurse	Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, Psychology
Member of Congress	Political Science, History, English, Philosophy, Psychology
Engineer	Any undergraduate engineering program
Architect	Architecture, Studio Art, Math, Art History, Engineering
Business Executive	Economics, Business, Political Science, Psychology
Lawyer	History, Philosophy, English, Political Science, Psychology
Journalist	Journalism, English, History, Philosophy, Psychology
Accountant	Accounting, Mathematics, Economics
Banker	Mathematics, Economics, Managerial Economics
Actor	Theater Arts, English, Classics, Sociology, Psychology
Stockbroker	Business, Economics, History, Psychology
Real Estate Broker	Sociology, Psychology, Political Science, Economics

High-paying majors to consider

- Electrical Engineering
- Computer Science
- Petroleum Engineering
- Aeronautics
- Computer Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Operations Research
- Industrial Engineering
- Physician Assistants
- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Business Administration
- Economics and Finance

Goal Planning

A **goal** is something you want to achieve.

A **short-term goal** is something you want to achieve soon.

Examples of short-term goals are finishing your homework and doing well on tomorrow's exam.

A **long-term goal** is something you want to achieve at some later date.

Examples of long-term goals are writing a paper and passing a class.

To set appropriate goals, you must know what is important for you to accomplish. Then you must set specific and clearly stated goals. If you do not have clearly stated goals, your effort will lack direction and focus. It is important to write down both your short-term and long-term goals to have a record of them.

To help in this goal setting process, make sure each goal states the following:

- **What** you will do.
- **When** you will accomplish it.
- Always begin each goal with "I will..."
- For example: I will finish gathering information for my research paper (**what**) by November 20th (**when**).

Your goals should be:

- **Within your skills and abilities.** Knowing your strengths and weaknesses will help you set goals you can accomplish.
- **Realistic.** Don't try to do too much or too little.
- **Flexible.** Sometimes things will not go the way you anticipate and you may need to change your goal.
- **Measurable.** It's important to be able to measure your progress toward a goal. It is especially important to recognize when you have accomplished your goal and don't need to go any further.
- **Within your control.** Other than working as part of a group, accomplishment of your goal should not depend on other students. You can control what you do, but you have little or no control over what others do.

Professors, mentors, and advisors may be helpful resources to help you accomplish these goals.

Study Skills

Start off the school year with a study routine that you can use throughout the year.

EXAMPLES:

- Choose a study place with no distractions. Close the door and hang a “DO NOT DISTURB” sign if needed. A quiet, well-lit environment is best.
- Be sure to have all the materials needed in your study place before you get started. Have a supply of pens, pencils, erasers, calculators, paper, etc. available.
- Ask questions. If you do not understand an assignment, be sure to know who you can go to if you have questions. Some teachers are available via e-mail or phone.
- Apply new study strategies, including the use of note cards, flashcards, color-coding, and study guides.
- Organize ideas in an outline to help you prepare for tests.
- Use an encyclopedia and the internet to research new topics. Create a bibliography to keep track of the sources of your information.
- Use all resources available in your textbook to complete homework assignments, such as the Table of Contents, Index, and Glossary of Terms.
- Use a study guide if your teacher provides one for you, or make your own.
- Start preparing early. Do not wait until the last minute!
- Review what you have done in class each day.

So you’ve made the right choices so far and attended all of your classes. For each class, you have a shiny new notebook and a color-coordinated folder that has your syllabus and all of the important documents that you were given on the first day of class.

Now, you want to know how to get a good grade in your class. The answer, quite simply, is to mindfully and diligently take notes by hand. Forget your laptop, especially if you are in a large lecture hall. It will only serve as a distraction as you maneuver it around your lap in your tiny fold-up chair, only to force you to search for a place to power it up when the battery gets low. And if your school’s lecture halls have wi-fi, avoid using your laptop in class like the plague. It will only tempt you to plug in and tune out.

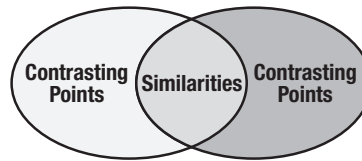
Good Note-Taking Habits Include:

- Actively listening to your teacher’s lecture and jotting down the main ideas in an orderly, easy-to-read outline.
- Writing down in the margins of your notebook any subject-relevant questions, areas of confusion, or interesting connections that pop into your head.

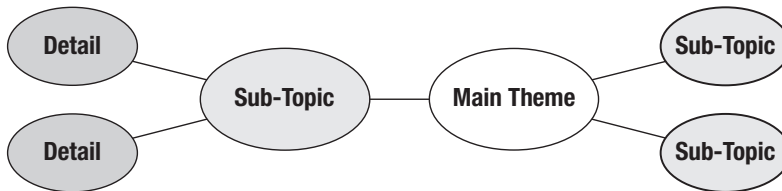
Draw diagrams of ideas as a way to visualize them.

Some helpful ideas for diagramming include:

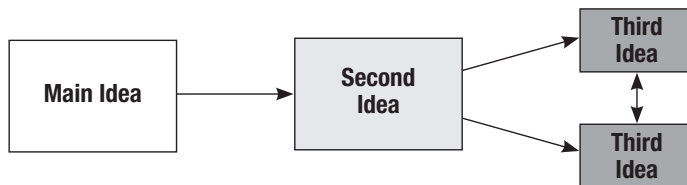
- **Venn Diagrams:** Draw two overlapping circles. Use the overlapping portion to write down the similarities between two ideas, and use the peripheral areas to show the contrasting points.



- **Clustering:** Write a term or idea in a circle and draw a line from that circle to a different circle that houses a related idea. Repeat this process in as many directions as you like. This is another great way to visualize the relationships between abstract ideas and concepts.



- **Boxes and Arrows:** Whenever you need to learn the way a process works (such as the Krebs Cycle, the water cycle, or the emergence of Existentialism from earlier schools of philosophy), try drawing the progression from A to Z by drawing a box with one idea in it and connecting it with an arrow to a box containing a different idea. Use this method as a way to visualize cause-and-effect relationships and historical progressions.



- **Retype your notes** from class on a computer at some point after the class has finished. This is a good idea for a few reasons:

- Copying your notes will help you to review the concepts you have just learned, and to reflect on the material. Think of it as instant studying.
- Writing your notes by hand forges pathways in your brain that typing does not. Pressing a key to type a letter only uses one motion, but when you write letters on a paper, your muscle memory works in tandem with your brain and helps you to retain more of the information for longer.
- Retyping your notes allows you to reorganize, reorder, and add to the information in your notes, causing your brain to make new connections between ideas that will allow you to retain more of the information.

COLLEGE SUCCESS TIPS

Manage Your Most Valuable Asset: Time

Independence can be a double-edged sword. In high school, your in-school time was most likely managed for you; every school day was broken up into the same block periods, and started and finished at the same time every day.

After-school activities took place from approximately 2:30 to just before dinner time, and you juggled the occasional sporting event or evening play practice that took place after dinner. You had to get to bed at a reasonable time every night, or you would not be alert in the morning when your alarm rang at 6am or earlier.

Time for studying might have seemed scarce, especially if you juggled multiple after-school activities, sports, and social events, like many high school students nowadays. However, you always found small pockets of time – an hour or two after dinner, a morning study hall, the half-hour before homeroom in the morning – to get your work done. This was key.

In college, there is a lot more unstructured time at your disposal than in high school. Here are some keys for making the most of this time:

1. Keep A Schedule.

This will help you to keep track of appointments, long-term deadlines, and your priorities. Use this planner to keep all of this essential information in one place, so that you know where to find it when you need to recall an appointment, birthday, or important lecture that you don't want to miss.

2. Make A List.

Start by making a list of everything that you need to do, including the date that each task must be completed.

- **Assess Each Task.** Make a quick estimation as to how long each task will take you. If you have a task on your list that will take multiple hours to complete, you might want to split it up into smaller chunks. This will help you to focus on the details without getting bogged down by trying to imagine the big picture all at once.
- **Prioritize Your List.** Number the tasks on your list in an order based on when each needs to be completed and how long each will take.
- **Pat Yourself On The Back.** Cross each task off of your list as you complete it. Revel in the feeling of accomplishment as your list dwindles down to nothing.

3. Don't Procrastinate.

Now that you have a filled-in agenda book and a prioritized list of tasks that need completion, there's only one thing left to do: get started!

Work first, play later.

If you get your work completed, you will feel much less stressed when it is "down time."

Eight Parts of Speech

Nouns

A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea. Nouns can be further divided into subcategories:

Concrete Nouns name objects that can be perceived by the senses.

EXAMPLES: desk, car, tree, house, pencil, computer, textbook, lamp, bed, envelope

Abstract Nouns name ideas, emotions, and other things that cannot be perceived by the senses. Some common suffixes for Abstract Nouns include **-ism, -ition, -ship, -ness, -ment, -ability.**

EXAMPLES: patriotism, communism, nation, exaggeration, friendship, relationship, happiness, stillness, temperament, experiment, likability, fallibility, fear, love

Proper Nouns name specific people, places, objects, and ideas. Proper Nouns can be concrete or abstract and are always capitalized.

EXAMPLES: United States, President Obama, Boston, France, Madison Square Garden, Hinduism, Indian Ocean, Red Sox, Boeing

Common Nouns name general, non-specific people, places, objects, and ideas. Common Nouns can be concrete or abstract and are not capitalized.

EXAMPLES: paper clip, stapler, computer, fear, hope, love, flavor, humanity, space, envelope, pancake

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that replace nouns in a sentence. Pronouns can be further divided into subcategories:

Objective Pronouns replace nouns that are the object of the sentence, receiving a verb's action or following a preposition.

EXAMPLES: me, you, us, him, her, them

Usage:

*"There is a distance between **you** and **me**."*

*"Let **them** eat cake!"*

Nominative Pronouns replace nouns that are the subjects of a sentence or a clause.

EXAMPLES: I, you, we, he, she, they

Usage:

*"I owe **him** an explanation."*

*"**They** drank soda to their hearts' content."*

Possessive Pronouns show ownership. Unlike possessive nouns, possessive pronouns never contain apostrophes.

EXAMPLES: his, hers, theirs, your, yours, ours, whose

Usage:

*"**Whose** woods these are, I do not know."*

*"Is that **your** Ferrari or **hers**?"*

Verbs

A verb is a word that expresses action or a state of being.

A verb can take on different forms depending upon its tense, number, person, and voice.

Tense: This indicates when the action takes place. The most common tenses are past, present, and future.

EXAMPLES:

*“Edward **eats** the sandwich.”*

(Simple Present)

*“Edward **has eaten** the sandwich.”*

(Present Perfect)

*“Edward **ate** the sandwich.” **(Simple Past)***

*“Edward **had eaten** the sandwich.”*

(Past Perfect)

*“Edward **will eat** the sandwich.” **(Future)***

*“Edward **will have eaten** the sandwich.”*

(Future Perfect)

Number: This indicates whether a verb is singular or plural. Singular subjects must pair with singular verbs, and plural subjects must pair with plural verbs.

EXAMPLES:

Singular: *“One person **is** running a race.”*

Plural: *“Five people **are** running a race.”*

Adverbs

An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb.

Adverbs describe the manner in which things are done. Adverbs answer several questions:

How?

*“Teresa **ran** quickly.”*

(Quickly modifies the verb **ran**)

*“The sky was **bright** blue.”*

(Bright modifies the adjective **blue**)

*“Chuck ate very **slowly**.”*

(Very modifies the adverb **slowly**)

When?

*“David worked out **yesterday**.”*

(Yesterday modifies the verb **worked out**)

*“She **often** goes to the store.”*

(Often modifies the verb **goes**)

Where?

*“Kenneth lives **downstairs**.”*

(Downstairs modifies the verb **lives**)

*“Elizabeth works **downtown**.”*

(Downtown modifies the verb **works**)

Adjectives

An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or a pronoun.
Adjectives attach descriptive qualities to items. Adjectives answer several questions:

What kind?

*“The jockey rode a **blue** horse.”*
(**Blue** explains what kind of horse)

What type?

*“Robert DeNiro is a **method** actor.”*
(**Method** explains what type of actor)

How much?

*“The turkey costs **eighteen** dollars.”*
(**Eighteen** explains how much money)

How many?

*“I would like **five** pounds of roast beef.”*
(**Five** explains how many pounds)

Preposition

A preposition expresses the spatial, chronological, or logical relationship between a noun or pronoun and the other words in a sentence.

Examples of Prepositions showing **spatial relationship**:

*“The cow jumped **over** the moon.”*

*“The mouse crawled **inside** the refrigerator.”*

Example of Prepositions showing **chronological relationship**:

*“The Smiths arrived **prior** to the meal.”*

*“Chickens must lay eggs **before** the chicks can hatch.”*

Example of Prepositions showing **logical relationship**:

*“I received cash **in addition** to a medal.”*

*“We know the Joneses **through** Mrs. McDonald.”*

Here is a list of the most common prepositions:

About, above, across, after, along, amid, among, around, at, before, below, beside, between, beyond, by, despite, down, during, except, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, outside, over, past, since, through, throughout, to, toward, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within, and without.

Conjunctions

A conjunction connects words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence. There are two types of conjunctions:

Coordinating Conjunctions are used to join single words, phrases, or independent clauses. They are easy to remember using the acronym **FANBOYS**:

For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So.

Examples of Coordinating Conjunctions connecting two independent clauses:

*“Fred likes vanilla **but** Rebecca likes chocolate.”*

*“Tom found enjoyment **and** Andrea found excitement.”*

Subordinating Conjunctions introduce dependent clauses and describe the relationship between dependent clauses and independent clauses. They are easy to remember using the acronym **ISABUBUAWA**:

If, Since, After, Because, Until, Before, Unless, While, Although, Where, As.

Examples of Subordinating Conjunctions connecting an independent clauses with dependent clauses:

*“Alfred made a pie **because** he needed to bring a dessert to the party.”*

*“Sharon picked up the dry cleaning **although** she would rather have had it delivered to the house.”*

Interjections

An interjection is used to communicate strong emotion. Interjections are followed by an exclamation point and are not grammatically related to the rest of the sentence.

EXAMPLES: Hey! No! Ouch! Ahh! Woohoo! Yes!

Common Contractions

I will	I'll	we will	we'll	has not	hasn't
I am	I'm	we are	we're	had not	hadn't
I would	I'd	we would	we'd	will not	won't
I have	I've	we have	we've	would not	wouldn't
I had	I'd	we had	we'd	do not	don't
you will	you'll	is not	isn't	does not	doesn't
you are	you're	are not	aren't	did not	didn't
you would	you'd	was not	wasn't	can not	can't
you have	you've	were not	weren't	could not	couldn't
you had	you'd	have not	haven't	should not	shouldn't

Punctuation

Period

Usage: A period is placed at the end of a sentence to indicate a complete thought.

EXAMPLE: *I saw Wesley at the store and he told me to say hello.*

Comma

There are several rules governing the usage of commas:

In a series of three or more items containing a single conjunction, use a comma after every item.

EXAMPLE: *I have a cat, a dog, and a hamster.*

In a sentence, offset non-essential information by enclosing the information in commas.

EXAMPLE: *Judith had a root canal, an operation that removes the tooth's nerve, yesterday morning.*

Use commas in between items found in dates and addresses.

EXAMPLES: *Saturday, October 5, 1987. Ed McMurphy, 25 Jasper Way, Ashland, MA 01721.*

When a dependent clause precedes an independent clause, use a comma to separate the two clauses.

EXAMPLE: *Even though he was afraid of the dark, he went into the unlit closet.*

When an independent clause precedes a dependent clause, a comma between the two clauses is unnecessary.

EXAMPLE: *He went into the unlit closet even though he was afraid of the dark.*

A comma should be used when combining independent clauses using a coordinating conjunction unless the independent clauses are short and closely related.

EXAMPLE: *My grandmother refuses to go to bed early, and I'm afraid she's going to catch a bad cold.*

Question Mark

Usage: Always place a question mark at the end of an interrogative sentence (asking a direct question).

EXAMPLE: *Did you like that?*

Apostrophe

Usage: An apostrophe can be used in the following ways:

In a contraction, where two words combine to form a single word and letters from the original words are omitted.

EXAMPLES: *can't, shouldn't, she'll, we'll, they're*

In a singular possessive noun, placed before the **-s** that typically comes at the end of a possessive noun.

EXAMPLE: *Josh's automobile*

In a plural possessive noun, placed after the **-s** that typically comes at the end of a possessive noun.

EXAMPLE: *The rain on all of the cars' tires.*

Colon

Usage: A colon is used after an independent clause to introduce a list, an appositive, or a quotation.

EXAMPLES:

A violinist in training requires three items: a violin, a bow, and a sheet of music.

In the classroom, the student was a taskmaster: he took copious notes and asked many intelligent questions.

The principal had many nice things to say at the graduation, including this pearl of wisdom: "Always walk with your head held high and your spirit intact."

Semicolon

Usage: Use a semicolon, not a comma, to join two independent clauses when there is no coordinating conjunction in use:

EXAMPLE: Jon wrestled the lion; Sam fought the tiger.

Quotation Marks

Usage: Use quotation marks only to denote a direct quotation from source other than the writer.

EXAMPLE: Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant."

When expressing a direct quotation in a sentence, place the end punctuation inside the closing quotation marks.

EXAMPLE: Jed claimed he had "fallen asleep after consuming too much milk."

When using parenthetical citations to cite the source of a quotation, place the closing quotation marks before the parentheses and place the end punctuation after the parentheses.

EXAMPLE: According to the reading, "Ancient Greek women were the backbone of the family life" (Starr 24).

Single Quotation Mark

Usage: Use single quotation marks to punctuate a quotation inside a quotation.

EXAMPLE: "I told the guy, 'mind your own business,' but he kept on listening to my conversation."

Exclamation Mark

Usage: Use an exclamation point to indicate strong emotional expression.

EXAMPLE: Yes! I am so excited to be going to the Super Bowl!

Rules of Capitalization

Here is a list of words that are typically capitalized in English:

<p>Names of specific people, places, and entities: Chevrolet, George W. Bush, China, Odysseus, Google, God</p>	<p>Street names and points of interest: Main Street, Avenue de Champs-Élysées, the Empire State Building</p>
<p>Proper adjectives: Starbucks coffee, McDonalds breakfast, Wendy's chili</p>	<p>The singular first person pronoun I: "I like to dance."</p>
<p>The first word of a new sentence: "Our computer was on the fritz."</p>	<p>Planets and other specific celestial objects: Earth, Jupiter, Olympus Mons, Andromeda</p>
<p>Days of the week: Monday, Saturday, Friday</p>	<p>Names of people: Sean, Bobby, Samantha, Elizabeth, Olivia</p>
<p>Months of the year: January, March, September</p>	<p>Specific geographic regions: Southeast Asia, Equatorial Africa, the Khyber Pass</p>
<p>Names of companies and sports teams: Reebok, Red Sox, Microsoft, Adobe</p>	

Rules of Pluralization

Here is a brief summary of pluralization rules in English:

<p>Add -s to the singular of most nouns to create a plural: EXAMPLE: "bank" = "banks"</p>	<p>Add -s to words ending in -eo or -io: EXAMPLES: "video" = "videos," "radio" = "radios"</p>
<p>Add -es to the singular of nouns ending in -s, -z, -x, -sh, and -ch: EXAMPLES: "boss" = "bosses," "quiz" = "quizzes," "mix" = "mixes," "brush" = "brushes," "catch" = "catches"</p>	<p>Some words that are borrowed from foreign languages require irregular spellings in order to make them plural: EXAMPLES: "bacterium" = "bacteria," "chateau" = "chateaux," "alumnus" = "alumni"</p>
<p>Change endings for words that end in -y by replacing the y with an i and adding -es: EXAMPLES: "ferry" = "ferries," "carry" = "carries"</p>	<p>Some words ending in -f require replacing the -f with -ves in order to make them plural: EXAMPLES: "wife" = "wives," "calf" = "calves," "elf" = "elves"</p>
<p>Add an -s to words that end in -ey or -ay: EXAMPLES: "key" = "keys,"</p>	

Tips For Spelling

Below are a few examples of rules that can be used to help decode the spelling of an unfamiliar word.

- **i** before **e**, except after **c**, unless it says **a** as in neighbor and weigh. Not in **perceive**, **receipt**, **ceiling**.
- The letter **q** is always followed by **u**. In this case, the **u** is not considered to be a vowel.
- The letter **s** never follows **x**.
- The letter **y**, not **i**, is used at the end of English words. Examples include; **my**, **shy**, **by**, **why**.
- To spell a short vowel sound, only one letter is needed. Examples include; **at**, **red**, **it**, **hot**, **up**.
- Drop the **e** when a word ends with a silent final **e**. It should be written without the **e** when adding an ending that begins with a vowel. In this way, **come** becomes **coming** and **hope** becomes **hoping**.
- When adding an ending to a word that ends with **y**, change the **y** to **i** if it is preceded by a consonant. In this way, **supply** becomes **supplies** and **worry** becomes **worried**.
- **All**, written alone, has two **l**s. When used as a prefix, however, only one **l** is written. Examples of this include **also** and **almost**.
- Generally, adding a prefix to a word does not change the correct spelling.
- Words ending in a vowel and **y** can add the suffix **-ed** or **-ing** without making any other change.



Commonly Misspelled Words

AFFECT – (v.) To influence. **ex:** Do not let the pressure affect your judgment.

EFFECT – (n.) An outcome, as in cause and effect; (v.) To bring about. **ex:** The film had many special effects that were the result of powerful computer-generated images. **ex:** The only way to effect true change is to enlist the help of many like-minded people.

ACCEPT – (v.) To take or receive. **ex:** Never accept packages in the mail from unknown sources.

EXCEPT – (prep.) With the exclusion of. **ex:** You may take anything you would like except my red striped teddy bear.

ALLUSION – (n.) In literature, a direct reference to another work of literature or art.

ex: The teacher made an allusion to Homer’s *The Odyssey* in his lecture.

ILLUSION – (n.) A false representation of something real. **ex:** When the clouds cleared away, the sun’s rays created the illusion of many colors in the sky, known as a rainbow.

A LOT (*two words*) – (n.) Numerous in quantity. **ex.** I have a lot of nice books to read at home.

ALOT (*one word*) – Incorrect spelling; must be two words.

CITE – (v.) To quote directly from a source. **ex:** My research paper cited over ten sources of information.

SIGHT – (n.) Of or pertaining to vision. **ex:** The man’s sight had failed many years ago, and he was now completely blind.

SITE – (n.) The position or location. **ex:** The new building was erected on the site of the old city hall.

COMPLEMENT – (n.) Something that completes; (v.) To complete. **ex:** The shirt and tie were a nice complement to the business casual look he was going for.

COMPLIMENT – (n.) Praise; (v.) To praise. **ex:** Amanda’s friends complimented her on her willingness to be flexible.

ITS – (possessive pronoun) Of or belonging to it. **ex:** The house was badly damaged in the blizzard when its roof caved in under the heavy snow.

IT’S – (contraction) Shortened form of “it is.” **ex:** It’s hard to tell you how I feel without hurting you.

LOSE – (v.) To misplace; also, to be defeated. **ex:** We were all hoping that the Eagles would lose their grip on first place.

LOOSE – (adj.) Not tight; also, free from imprisonment. **ex:** The child’s tooth was loose enough that we were able to wiggle it out easily. **ex:** The man accused of murder was set loose from jail after he agreed to testify against another criminal.

PRINCIPAL – (adj.) Of great importance; (n.) An authority figure, such as the leader of a school. **ex:** The principal idea of the first amendment is that all people are able to speak freely. **ex:** The school's principal addresses the student body each morning over the intercom.

PRINCIPLE – (n.) A fundamental idea or fact. **ex:** She refused to listen to his proposal on principle; it was against her moral constitution to accept bribes.

THAN – (conjunction) Used when comparing two or more things. **ex:** Mary has a great deal more money than Emily, but she spends it much more wisely.

THEN – (adv.) At that time. **ex:** I worked hard into the night and I then went right to sleep.

THEIR – (possessive pronoun) Possessive form of they. **ex:** Their parents had a great deal of talking to do.

THERE – (adv.) In or at that place. **ex:** I was there when the man fell into the pit of fire.

THEY'RE – (contraction) Shortened form of "they are." **ex:** I think they're really on to something great!

THROUGH – (preposition) In one end and out the other; by way of; by means of. **ex:** Her large truck plowed through the mounds of snow that blocked the road.

THREW – (v.) Past tense of throw. **ex:** The pitcher threw the ball toward home plate as the runner advanced.

THOROUGH – (adj.) Completed without omitting anything. **ex:** The investigator was thorough in his assessment of the crime scene; no stones were left unturned.

THOUGH – (conjunction) However; in spite of the fact that. **ex:** Though they did not end up choosing our idea, they still praised us on our proposal.

TO – (preposition) Moving toward. **ex:** She headed to the grocery store.

TOO – (adv.) In addition to, or excessively. **ex:** Jim drank too much. We needed him to be awake, too.

TWO – (n.) Cardinal number 1 plus 1. **ex:** The two girls looked so much alike we could have sworn they were twins.

WHOSE – Possessive Pronoun – possessive form of who. **ex:** I do not know whose books these are, so I will ask around.

WHO'S – Contraction – shortened form of "who is." **ex:** I have no idea who's in the other room.

The Art of Writing an Essay

Three Time-Tested Tips for Writing an Effective Essay:

1. Prepare your argument ahead of time. Gather information on note cards and add more ideas as they come to you. A little extra time and care at the beginning of the writing process will potentially save you hours of frustration later on!
2. Create an outline. Before you start hammering away at your keyboard, try to visualize the flow of your essay by creating an outline. It doesn't have to be detailed – think of it as your road map that you pack in the glove box before you embark on a long drive. When you are looking for direction later on, you'll be glad you have it to refer back to!
3. Make sure all of the important pieces of the essay are in place. Every essay should include:
 - **An Introduction**, with a “hook” to lure the reader in, a strong thesis statement, and a brief preview of what you will cover in your essay.
 - **Body Paragraphs**: Think of each body paragraph as a brick with which you will build your essay. In order to be strong, a body paragraph must begin with a clear topic sentence connecting the information in each paragraph to your thesis statement, important facts to support the topic sentence, and a smooth transition sentence leading the reader seamlessly to the next topic.
 - **A Conclusion**: Here is your chance to drive home your argument with gusto. Make sure you restate your thesis statement in the conclusion (in different wording, of course!) to remind the reader what you have just proven.

Remember, the keys to writing a good essay are clarity and support.

- Know what you are trying to say.
- Know why you are trying to say it.
- Say it clearly and simply.
- Support every idea you use with facts.

What's a thesis statement?

Think of the thesis statement of your essay as the argument that you are trying to prove in your essay. An essay is very much like a criminal court proceeding: it requires evidence to make the case, and specific details to support the evidence. Your thesis statement is the main idea that holds your case together.

Your thesis statement should be simple and specific enough to keep your essay from drifting out of focus, but complex enough so as to require at least three key pieces of evidence for support. Each one of your body paragraphs will present and expand upon information that supports your thesis: the specific details to support your evidence.

Ten Tips for Writing an Excellent Essay

1. Answer all parts of the question.

Leaving out key components of your writing topic will definitely hurt your grade!

2. Be comfortable with the topic.

If writing about a book, pick one that you have read in school, are comfortable with, and that is relevant to the assignment.

Make sure to mention the **TAG** (title, author, and genre) in the introductory paragraph.

3. Remember: Neatness counts!

Be neat! If you must handwrite your essay, write slowly. Use a pencil/eraser; we all make mistakes! Make sure the message is legible and clear!

4. Use the appropriate length.

Most fully developed essays are at least five paragraphs in length, with 4–5 sentences in each paragraph.

5. Make sure your thesis statement is clear and appears in the right places!

Your thesis should appear at the end of your intro paragraph and should be restated at the beginning of your conclusion paragraph.

A good thesis statement often rephrases the writing prompt you have been assigned.

6. Each paragraph is anchored with a clear topic sentence.

The first sentence of each paragraph should constitute a clear topic sentence that supports your thesis and tells the reader what the paragraph will be about.

7. Only select examples that are relevant to the thesis statement and are interesting!

When choosing examples to write about, make sure you are only using ones that support your thesis statement! Also, be as specific as possible.

8. Make sure you include proper analysis for each example you use.

Proper analysis will tell the reader how and why this example proves your thesis.

When writing about a book, assume the reader already knows the plot. Only use plot summary to explain how your example supports your thesis statement.

9. Write in a formal, elevated manner. You are not texting your best friend!

Avoid contractions wherever possible. For example, write “**she will**” instead of “**she’ll**.”

Write out numbers **under 100** in word form (“**five**” instead of “**5**”), but write dates in numeral form (**June 5, 2011**).

Avoid text-speak words such as “**ok**,” “**u**,” or “**idk**.”

Always write in present tense when writing about literature; write in past tense when writing about true events.

10. Keep in mind the key points of formal language and vocabulary.

Avoid 1st and 2nd person (**I, my, me, us, we or you, your**). Instead use 3rd person (**he, she, they, them, him, her, or one**).

Exception: sometimes an essay prompt will ask for your opinion, such as: “What do **YOU** think about...?” You may use 1st person for those types of questions only. Otherwise, stick to the third unless the question is asked in that way.

Use transition words (such as **however, furthermore, finally, and therefore**) to improve the flow of your writing.

- Avoid overuse of “**to be**” verbs such as **is** and **are**. Sometimes you can’t avoid them, but using stronger verbs will make your writing much more compelling.
- The following words are usually unnecessary in strong writing: **many, very, good, bad, really, pretty, things, and stuff**.

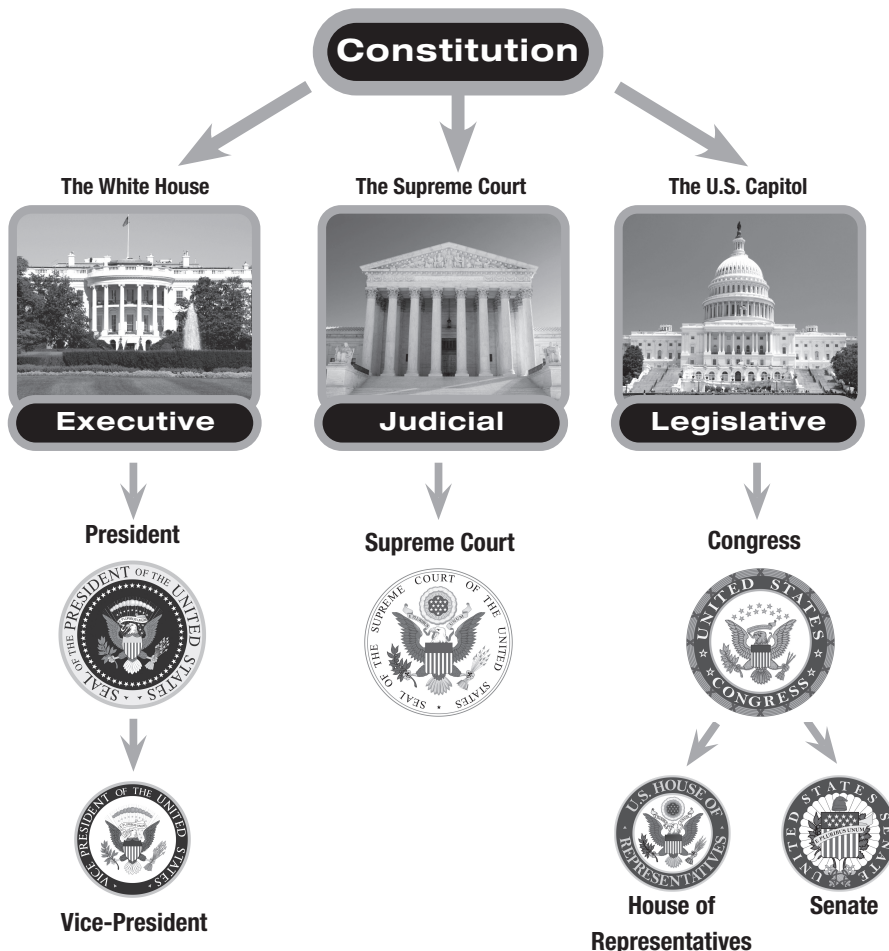
Remember, organization, form, and clarity are much more important than flowery wording and colorful descriptions. Logic trumps style when writing essays.

Branches of Government

At the time that the U.S. Constitution was written in 1787, there were only thirteen states. The U.S. was a brand new country, and the Founding Fathers, the framers of the Constitution, wanted to form a government that did not allow one person to have too much control over the country. While under the rule of the British king, George III, they learned that this could be a bad system. Yet government, under the Articles of Confederation, taught them that there was a need for a strong centralized government.

With this in mind, the framers wrote the Constitution to provide for a separation of powers: three separate branches of government. Each has its own responsibilities. At the same time, they work together to make the country run smoothly and assure that the rights of citizens are not ignored or disallowed. This is done through checks and balances. A branch may use its powers to check the powers of the other two in order to maintain a balance of power among the three branches of government.

The three branches of the U.S. Government are the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative.



SOCIAL STUDIES

Executive Branch



The Executive Branch of government makes sure that the laws of the United States are obeyed. The President of the United States is the head of the Executive Branch of government. This branch is very large so the president gets help from the vice president, department heads (Cabinet members), and heads of independent agencies.

- **President:** Leader of the country and commander of the military.
- **Vice President:** President of the Senate.
Becomes president if the president can no longer do the job.
- **Departments:** Department heads advise the president on issues and help carry out policies.
- **Independent Agencies:** Help carry out policy or provide special services.

Judicial Branch



The Judicial Branch of government is made up of the court system. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land. Article III of the Constitution established this Court and all other Federal courts were created by Congress. Courts decide arguments about the meaning of laws, how they are applied, and whether they break the rules of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. The Supreme Court hears cases that have made their way through the court system, but of the more than 7,500 cases that are sent to the Supreme Court each year, only about 80 to 100 cases are actually accepted. Once the Supreme Court makes a decision, it can only be changed by another Supreme Court decision or by amending (changing) the Constitution. This is a very important power that can affect the lives of a lot of people. Also, since the main power of the Supreme Court is to decide cases that challenge the Constitution, the Court must decide if the case they receive really challenges the Constitution.

The Supreme Court is made up of nine Justices, one of whom is the Chief Justice. They are appointed by the president and must be approved by the Senate. Justices have their jobs for life, unless they resign, retire, or are impeached by the House and convicted by the Senate (the removal process as described by the Constitution).

There are no requirements in order to be appointed a Justice, but all have been trained in the law. Many Justices served as members of Congress, governors, or members of the President's Cabinet. One president, William Howard Taft, was later appointed Chief Justice.



Legislative Branch

The Legislative Branch of government is made up of the Congress and government agencies, such as the Government Printing Office and Library of Congress, that provide assistance to and support services for the Congress. Article I of the Constitution established this branch and gave Congress the power to make laws.

The U.S. Congress

The U.S. Congress is made up of two parts, the House of Representatives and the Senate. Congress meets at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Its primary duty is to write, debate, and pass bills, which are then passed on to the president for approval.

Other Powers of Congress

- Makes laws controlling trade between states and between the United States and other countries
- Makes laws about taxes and borrowing money
- Approves the making of money
- Can declare war on other countries

Congress works in two-year sessions. A new session begins in January following an election. We are currently in the 118th Congress which meets from January 2023 to January 2025.

The way that states are represented in the House and the Senate is different. Why is this? Well, when the Founding Fathers were drafting the Constitution, there were debates over how states would be represented. States with larger populations wanted more representation than states with smaller populations. Meanwhile, states with smaller populations favored equal representation. So, a compromise was made – representation in the Senate would be equal, while representation in the House would be based on population.

The House of Representatives

In the House, representation is based on the number of people living in each state. There are a total of 435 representatives in the House. Each member represents an area of the state, known as a congressional district. The number of representatives is based on the number of districts in a state. Therefore, states with larger populations have more representation than states with smaller populations. Each state has at least one congressional district and therefore one representative in the House.

Each representative serves a term of 2 years. When the term is over, people from that state may choose to elect a new representative or keep the same one. There is no limit on the number of terms a representative can serve.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Representatives must:

- Be at least 25 years old
- Be U.S. citizens for the past 7 years
- Live in the state they represent

The House has special jobs that only it can do. It can:

- Start laws that make people pay taxes
- Decide if a government official should be put on trial before the Senate if s/he commits a crime against the country

The Senate

Each of the 50 states sends 2 people to the Senate, so there are a total of 100 senators. This means that each state has equal representation in the Senate. Each senator serves a term of 6 years. When their 6 year term is over, the people from that state may choose to elect a new senator or keep the same one. There is no limit on the number of terms a senator can serve.

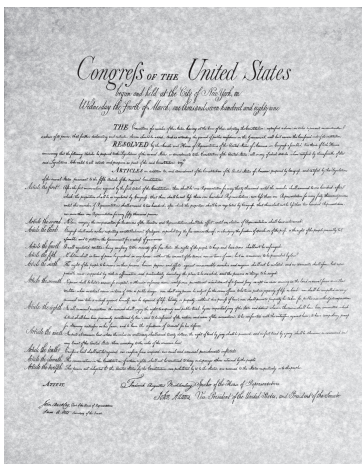
Senators must:

- Be at least 30 years old
- Be U.S. citizens for the past 9 years
- Live in the state they represent

The Senate has special jobs that only it can do. It can:

- Say yes or no to any treaties the president makes
- Say yes or no to any people the president recommends for jobs, such as cabinet officers, Supreme Court justices, and ambassadors
- Can hold a trial for a government official who does something very wrong

The Bill of Rights



When the Constitution was ratified in 1787, many people were concerned that it did not protect certain freedoms. They thought that the Constitution should be changed or amended to protect these freedoms. On December 15, 1791, ten amendments were added to the Constitution. The first eight amendments set out or enumerate the substantive and procedural individual rights associated with that description. The 9th and 10th amendments are general rules of interpretation of the relationship among the people, the State governments, and the Federal Government. These amendments guarantee certain freedoms and rights, so they are known as the **Bill of Rights**.

**Amendment I:
Free Exercise Clause; Freedom of
Speech, of the Press, of Assembly,
and of the Right to Petition**

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

**Amendment II:
Right to keep and bear arms**

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

**Amendment III:
Protection from quartering of troops**

“No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.”

**Amendment IV:
Protection from unreasonable
search and seizure**

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

**Amendment V:
Due Process, double jeopardy,
self-incrimination, eminent domain**

“No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case

to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.”

**Amendment VI:
Trial by jury and rights of the accused**

“In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.”

**Amendment VII:
Civil trial by jury**

“In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.”

**Amendment VIII:
Prohibition of excessive bail
and cruel and unusual punishment**

“Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.”

**Amendment IX:
Protection of rights not specifically
enumerated in the constitution**

“The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.”

**Amendment X:
Powers of States and People**

“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

