

Hamblen County Department of Education



Employee Handbook

Mr. Arnold W. Bunch, Jr.
Superintendent

GENERAL INFORMATION

HAMBLEN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Jerrold Weems

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Joe Gibson, Jr

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James Grigsby

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BENEFITS AND PAYROLL

CONTRACTUAL AND BENEFIT INFORMATION

CERTIFICATION AND PAYROLL

1. **It is the responsibility of teachers to seek and secure certification from the Tennessee Department of Education.** All teachers must have their licenses up-to-date on the Tennessee Department of Education website. Secretaries, bookkeepers, teacher assistants, maintenance workers, and mechanics must have proof of high school graduation on file in the personnel office. All other employees will provide educational documentation as required by the appropriate department.
2. **Required physicals must be on file prior to receiving the first paycheck or within 30 days of initial employment.**
3. **Payroll is the twentieth of each month.** Payments are in 12 installments; however, certified employees may choose to have 10 installments if the appropriate form is filed in the business office prior to August 10.
4. Teaching experience (forms in the personnel office or on the website) must be turned in to the personnel office by October 1).
5. Employees working less than a full contract year will have their salaries adjusted to the number of days/months remaining in the contract year.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Hamblen County Schools is a member of the State of Tennessee Teacher Group Insurance Program. Employees have a choice each year to be covered under Standard, Premier, Limited PPO, or Healthsaving CDHP Benefit Options through the BlueCross Blue Shield Network S, Cigna Local Plus, or Cigna Open Access Plus carriers. An employee decision guide and list of approved physicians and hospitals are available. An employee identification card will be mailed to the employee as soon as the state processes the employee's enrollment.

In 2022-23, the school system will pay 100% of the premium for individual coverage for all full-time employees. Additionally, for employees with family coverage, the school system will pay \$10,486 toward the cost of family coverage for all full-time employees.

LIFE INSURANCE

Hamblen County Schools provides an individual life/accidental death insurance policy of \$40,000 for all full-time employees at no charge. The policy amount reduces 33% at the age of 70 and reduces 50% at the age of 75. A family policy is available at a minimal charge as well as additional units for the employee's individual plan. The policy amount reduces 50% at the age of 75 for spouse coverage. Additional information is available in the personnel office.

DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE

Hamblen County Schools also offers additional dental and vision programs for which employees are responsible for the total cost. More information is available in the personnel office.

RETIREMENT

All full-time employees enroll with the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System. The school system and the employee contribute to the employee's retirement account. Employees are annually provided a detailed summary of their retirement contributions through their own TCRS account. Full-time employees are vested at the completion of five years of service with the system.

SICK LEAVE

All full-time employees earn one sick day for each month worked, cumulative for all earned days not used. Sick leave shall be defined as: illness of a teacher from natural causes or accident, quarantine, or illness or death of a member of the immediate family of an employee.

Employees wishing to transfer sick leave from a previous employer shall check with the personnel office to see if such leave is acceptable. It is the employee's responsibility to have the previous employer send a notarized letter with the number of accumulated days to the personnel office.

A voluntary sick leave bank is available for all certified staff members, and guidelines can be obtained from the director of school's office. Open Enrollment for membership in the sick leave bank is open during August, September, and October.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Full-time certified employees receive two personal leave days, one for each 100 days worked. All 12-month non certified employees receive two personal leave days. Days not used will automatically be transferred to the employee's sick leave balance. All nine-month non certified employees are entitled to use two of their sick leave days as personal leave days.

VACATION

Full-time 12-month employees earn one day of vacation for each month worked during the fiscal year. Vacation days are non-cumulative.

EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Any person holding a position which requires a teacher's certificate will be granted leave for maternity, adoption, recuperation of health, educational improvement, military, or legislative service. Requests for extended leave of absence without pay should be submitted to the director of schools 30 days in advance. Forms are available online or from the Human Resources Office. Employees will be notified in writing of the director's decision regarding beginning and ending dates of leave (in accordance with board policy 5.304).

Non Certified staff members will be granted unpaid leave, FMLA leave, military leave, maternity leave, and other leaves of absence as outlined by school board policies.

Employees who qualify for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) benefits must file the required documents for approval by the director of schools. If non-paid leave is three consecutive days or more, the director of schools must be consulted and leave of absence and/or FMLA papers need to be completed. Guidelines and forms are available from the personnel office.

ADDITIONAL INSURANCE AND ANNUITY PROGRAMS

A listing of programs can be obtained from the personnel office.

PROFESSIONAL COURTESY CARD - IDENTIFICATION BADGE

All employees are required to wear identification badges daily. These are provided by the system and may be used to provide the employee free admission to all Hamblen County Schools activities (regional athletic competition excluded).

**TEACHER
LICENSURE
AND
PAYSCALE
MOVES**

SECURING A LICENSE OR CERTIFICATE

The educator is responsible for securing a license or certificate, verifying its accuracy, maintaining its validity, presenting it to the employing board of education, and meeting the requirements of T.C.A. 49-5-101. Employment is invalid if a license is allowed to lapse. A license is required for employment. There are three levels of beginning licensure:

Practitioner License (includes Out-of-State License)

A Practitioner License is a teacher license that is issued to applicants who hold a bachelor's degree, are enrolled in or have completed a preparation program approved by the State Board of Education, and have verified content knowledge. The Practitioner License is valid for three years and may be renewed once. (**Note:** In limited circumstances, specific endorsements have additional requirements. Both the Library Media Specialist and Reading Specialist endorsements require a master's degree in the area of endorsement.)

Practitioner Occupational Education License

A Practitioner Occupational Education License may be issued to individuals who have met requirements pursuant to State Board of Education policy, had content verification provided by the Tennessee Department of Education's Career and Technical Education Division, and hold the required current/valid industry certification prior to entering Tennessee public schools. The Practitioner Occupational Education License is valid for only three years of teaching in a Tennessee public or state-accredited private school.

JROTC License

Instructors in the JROTC program may hold a state-issued JROTC License. The JROTC License is a five-year license issued to active or retired military personnel who seek to serve as junior reserve officers' training corps (JROTC) teachers.

ADVANCING A LICENSE

Practitioner License to Professional License

The Practitioner License may be advanced to the Professional License if **both** the following advancement criteria are met:

1. Three years of experience
2. Recommendation of the director of schools **-OR-** documentation of 30 Professional Development Points (PDPs)

Practitioner Occupational License to Professional Occupational License

The Practitioner Occupational License may be advanced to the Professional Occupational License if **all** of the following advancement criteria are met:

1. Three years of experience
2. Recommendation of the director of schools **-OR-** documentation of 30 Professional Development Points (PDPs)
3. During the first year of teaching, attendance at a total of five days of new teacher training sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Education's Career & Technical Education Division
4. Four days of release time to observe three experienced teachers within the practitioner's endorsed teaching area and one experienced teacher outside the practitioner's teaching area
5. Assignment to a teacher mentor during the first three years of teaching
6. Current/valid Industry Certification where required by teacher endorsement area

Instructional Leadership License (Beginning) to Instructional Leadership License (Professional) Professional Administrator License to Instructional Leadership License (Professional)

Educators employed as administrators in Tennessee public and accredited non-public schools can advance from the Beginning Instructional Leadership License (ILL-B) or from the Professional Administrator License (PAL) to the Professional Instructional Leadership License (ILL-P). Administrators employed in Tennessee public schools must also keep up-to-date with state-mandated Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL) requirements.

LICENSURE NAME AND ADDRESS CHANGES

It is the responsibility of the educator to report any name or address changes to the Tennessee Department of Education's Office of Teacher Licensing online through TNCompass.

NEW LICENSES

Keeping a teaching license valid and accurate is the responsibility of the educator. When a new license is issued, it should be examined carefully. If there are inaccuracies, the educator should immediately contact the Tennessee Department of Education's Office of Teacher Licensing.

ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK (semester hours)

The teacher pay scale reflects the following educational levels:

Bachelor
Bachelor + 15
Bachelor + 30
Master
Master + 15
Master + 30
Master + 45
Ed. Specialist
Ed. Doctorate

STATE NOTIFICATION

Any principal-teacher, teacher, director of schools, or other school personnel employed on a system wide basis who completes additional academic training recognized by the state (see chart above) must have the appropriate paperwork turned in to the Tennessee Department of Education's Office of Teacher Licensing by December 1. Applications for degree advancement must be accompanied by official transcripts.

LOCAL NOTIFICATION FOR PAYSACLE MOVES

For administrators and certified teachers, degree-level moves on the payscale take place the school year in which documentation is provided in accordance with state guidelines, but **only** if notice has been indicated on the previous year's HCBOE employment intent form.

For maintenance department workers, technology department technicians, and support staff in degreed positions, degree-level or performance-level moves on the payscale take place the school year in which documentation is provided, but **only** if notice has been indicated on the previous year's HCBOE employment intent form.

HCBOE guidelines for pay scale moves are as follows:

- For local degree-level moves:
 - To become effective retroactive to the beginning of the school year, coursework must be completed by September 1, and official transcripts must be provided to the personnel office by November 1.
 - To become effective retroactive to January 1, coursework must be completed between September 1 and January 1, and official transcripts must be provided to the personnel office by February 1.

- For coursework completed after January 1 or for official transcripts provided to the personnel office after February 1, local degree-level moves will become effective the following year, but **only** if notice is so indicated on the employment intent form for the upcoming year.
- For performance-level moves:
 - A higher salary rating becomes effective on the employee hire date anniversary in accordance with documented criteria outlined in the current job description for each respective position, but **only** if notice is so indicated on the employment intent form for the upcoming year.

ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK DUE DATES	WHEN	WHO
Coursework completion eligible for current year advancement	September 1, 2022	Student/University
Transcripts required for completed coursework for payments this year	November 1, 2022	Submit to HCBOE Personnel
Application and transcripts due for current year to add to teacher license	December 20, 2022	TN Department of Education
Transcripts for completed coursework for payments this year completed by December 20, 2022	February 1, 2023	Submit to HCBOE Personnel
Written notification of intent to complete additional coursework for next school year (for inclusion in budget)	March 2023	Principal/Director

**JOB
QUALIFICATIONS
AND
DUTIES**

QUALIFICATIONS

All professional personnel shall be licensed in accordance with state law and regulations of the Tennessee Department of Education. Such license shall be on file in the office of the director prior to beginning employment.

It is the responsibility of the employee to secure a license, maintain its validity, and present it to the board of education. Employment may be terminated if a certificate is allowed to lapse or is revoked.

DUTIES

In addition to duties specified in other policies and applicable law, a teacher will be responsible for the following duties:

1. To give full, willing, and helpful cooperation to the principal in carrying out all reasonable instructions or extra assignments applicable to before, after and during school day as directed by the principal.
2. To give instruction to pupils in the areas assigned by the board, director, and principal.
3. To record accurately the number of pupils present and absent each day in the manner prescribed by the board, director, and principal.
4. To follow state and local board policies, school rules, and policies established by the principal.
5. To strive at all times to maintain cordial relationships with home, parent(s), and community.
6. To keep parent(s) duly informed of the child's progress and hold conferences with the parent(s) when necessary.
7. To perform such other duties as may be assigned by the principal.

BOARD POLICIES

Note: A complete copy of board policies can be accessed at <http://boardpolicy.net/documents/default.asp?iBoard=93>. It is highly recommended that all new personnel review these policies.

EMPLOYMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (5.100)

Through its personnel policies, the board shall establish a school environment that shall attract and maintain the best qualified person, whose mission shall be to provide the best possible learning opportunities for the students. The board's goals are:

1. To ensure that the best qualified personnel are recruited and employed to staff the school system;
2. To provide staff compensation, benefits, and working environment sufficient to attract and retain qualified employees;
3. To provide an in-service training program for all employees to improve their performance;
4. To conduct an evaluation program that shall contribute to the continuous improvement of staff performance; and
5. To ensure that personnel are assigned so that they are utilized as effectively as possible.

STAFF DRESS CODE (5.6001)

Employees are expected to use good taste in the selection of dress for work and to maintain neatness and cleanliness. No apparel, dress, or grooming that is or may become potentially disruptive of the classroom atmosphere or educational process shall be permitted.

The following policies shall be observed by all employees:

1. Staff members are not allowed to wear shorts, with the exception of P.E. teachers.
2. Staff members are not allowed to wear jeans, except as permitted by principals.
3. Skirts are to be worn at knee length. Split skirts are to be split to the knee only.
4. Staff members are not allowed to wear sweat suits.

Principals shall counsel teachers assigned to their building regarding appearance and conduct.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE (1.804)

No employee shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use on or in the workplace alcohol or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or any other controlled substance, as defined in federal law. ¹ “Workplace” shall include any school building or any school premise; any school-owned or any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities; and off-school property during any school-sponsored or school approved activity, event, or function.

Any employee who violates the terms of this policy shall be suspended and shall be subject to dismissal and referral for prosecution. ²

The director of schools shall be responsible for providing a copy of this policy to all school system employees. ²

Legal Reference:

1. Subtitle D Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988
5.403
2. 34 CFR § 86.201
6.307

Cross Reference:

Drug and Alcohol Testing, Employees

Drug-Free Schools

**HAMBLEN COUNTY SCHOOLS
DRUG FREE WORKPLACE
POLICY CONSENT/RELEASE FORM**

FOR BUS DRIVERS ONLY:

I agree to submit to drug and alcohol tests at any time as a condition for my initial or continued employment. I authorize any laboratory or medical provider to release test results to the Hamblen County Board of Education and its medical review officer (MRO).

I expressly authorize the school board or its MRO to release any test-related information, including positive results, to the Unemployment Compensation Commission or other government agency investigating my employment or the termination thereof.

I understand that this agreement in no way limits my right to terminate my own employment or to be terminated in accordance with federal and state law.

I authorize any previous employer to release to the school board or its designee any information maintained pursuant to the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 and rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to such act.

Bus Driver's Signature

Date

Witness

Date

FOR ALL OTHER EMPLOYEES:

I have read the preceding statement of policy and agree to abide by the school board's drug and alcohol rules.

Employee's Signature

Date

Witness

Date

SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS' OFFICE
TO BE RETAINED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERMANENT PERSONNEL FILE.

DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES
(Sexual, Racial, Ethnic, Religious)
(5.500)

Employees shall be provided a work environment free from sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination/harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee or any student to discriminate against or harass an employee through disparaging conduct or communication that is sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious in nature. The following guidelines are set forth to protect employees from discrimination/harassment.

Employee discrimination/harassment shall not be tolerated. Discrimination/harassment is defined as conduct, advances, gestures, or words either written or spoken of a sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious nature that:

1. Unreasonably interfere with the individual's work or performance;
2. Create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment;
3. Imply that submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term of employment; or
4. Imply that submission to or rejection of such conduct shall be used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee.

Alleged victims of sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination/harassment shall report these incidents immediately. This report should be made to the immediate supervisor except when the immediate supervisor is the offending party. If the immediate supervisor is the offending party, the report may be made to the Federal Rights Coordinator. Allegations of discrimination/harassment shall be fully investigated (as set forth in *Complaints and Grievances 5.501*). An oral complaint may be submitted; however, such complaint must be reduced to writing to ensure a more complete investigation. The complaint should include the following information:

1. Identity of the alleged victim and person accused;
2. Location, date, time, and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident;
3. Description of what happened;
4. Identity of witnesses; and
5. Any other evidence available.

The privacy and anonymity of all parties and witnesses to complaints shall be respected. However, because an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with obligations to cooperate with police investigations or legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation, or to take necessary action to resolve a complaint, the identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in

appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

There shall be no retaliation against any person who reports discrimination/harassment or participates in an investigation. However, any employee who refuses to cooperate or gives false information during the course of any investigation may be subject to disciplinary action. The willful filing of a false report shall itself be considered harassment and shall be treated as such.

An employee disciplined for violation of this policy may appeal the decision by contacting the Federal Rights Coordinator.

**HAMBLÉN COUNTY SCHOOLS
HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, OR DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM**

NAME OF COMPLAINANT _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

SCHOOL _____ HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

PERSON TO WHOM INITIAL COMPLAINT REPORTED _____

STEP ONE

DESCRIBE THE COMPLAINT (provide a very detailed account of the harassing or discriminatory activity; include dates, an exact recitation of words used, details regarding offensive touching, and the nature of other discriminatory activity; include names of witnesses; attach additional sheets if necessary).

LIST NAMES OF OTHER PERSONS OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WHO MAY HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FACTS ALLEGED.

COMPLAINANT'S SIGNATURE _____

DATE COMPLAINT FILED _____

**HAMBLEN COUNTY SCHOOLS
HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, OR DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM**

STEP TWO

DATE RECEIVED BY COMPLAINT COORDINATOR _____

NAME OF COMPLAINANT _____

FINDINGS OF INVESTIGATION _____

NAMES OF PERSONS ASSISTING WITH INVESTIGATION (if applicable)

COMPLAINT COORDINATOR'S DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATION TO DIRECTOR _____

COORDINATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

STEP THREE

DATE RECEIVED BY DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS _____

DISPOSITION _____

DATE OF RESOLUTION _____ DATE COMPLAINANT NOTIFIED _____

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES 5.501

EMPLOYMENT-RELATED COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The board believes that differences of opinions arising in the course of employment should be resolved as quickly as possible and at the lowest supervisory level. In instances of questions by an individual staff member concerning the interpretation of policies and procedures to that staff member, administrative practices within his particular school, and relationships with other employees, the staff member concerned must consult the administrative or supervisory personnel to whom he is responsible. If a satisfactory resolution of the problem cannot be reached after ample opportunity for consideration of the matter, the staff member concerned may discuss the matter with the next level of supervision, up to and including the director of schools.

In instances where an individual staff member feels that for personal reasons he/she cannot discuss a problem with his immediate superior, he may take the problem directly to the director of schools. After review of the case, the director of schools shall take action as deemed appropriate and, within a prompt, reasonable time, shall notify all parties concerned of the decision.

HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION GRIEVANCES

Employees should notify any district complaint manager if they believe the board, its employees, or agents have violated their rights guaranteed by the state or federal constitution, state or federal statute, or board policy including: ^{1,3,4}

1. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act ²
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ⁷
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ⁵
4. Claims of sexual harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ^{6,7}

The complaint manager shall endeavor to respond and resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure and, if a complaint is filed, to address the complaint promptly and equitably. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this grievance procedure is not prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies, and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies.

1. *Filing a Complaint.* An employee who wishes to avail himself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any district complaint manager. The employee may request a complaint manager of the same sex. The complaint manager may assist the employee in filing a grievance.
2. *Investigation.* The complaint manager shall investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his behalf. The complaint and identify of the complainant shall not be disclosed except as required by law or this policy, as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or as authorized by the complainant. The complaint manager shall file a written report, within 10 days of the filing of the grievance, of his or her findings with the director of schools. If a complaint of sexual harassment contains allegations involving the director of schools, the written report shall be filed with the board. The director of schools shall keep the board informed of all complaints.
3. *Decision and Appeal.* The director of schools shall render a written decision within five days of receipt of the complaint manager's report, which shall be provided to the employee. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision, the employee may appeal the decision to the board by making a written request to the complaint manager. The complaint manager shall be responsible for promptly forwarding to the board all materials relative to the complaint and appeal. The board shall, within 30 days from the date the appeal was received, review the report and affirm, overrule, or modify the decision and render a written finding, which shall be provided to the complainant. This grievance procedure shall not be construed to create an independent right to a board hearing.

APPOINTED COMPLAINT MANAGERS

The director of schools shall appoint at least two complaint managers, one of each gender. The Federal Rights Coordinator may be appointed as a complaint manager. Current complaint managers are as follows:

Assistant Director for Administration
210 East Morris Boulevard
Morristown, TN 37813
(423) 586-7700

Supervisor of Federal Programs
210 East Morris Boulevard
Morristown, TN 37813
(423) 586-7700

Legal References:

1. Age Discrimination Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. § 621 et seq. 1.404
2. Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.
3. Equal Pay Act, 29 U.S.C. § 206(d)
4. Immigration Reform and Control Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1324a et seq. 5.500
5. Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 791 et seq.
6. Title VII of Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.
7. Title IX of the Education Amendments, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.

Cross References:

Appeals To and Appearances Before the Board
Section 504 & ADA Grievance Procedures 1.802
Equal Opportunity Employment 5.104
Discrimination/Harassment of Employees