



Fannin County School System Personnel Handbook 2024-2025

July 30, 2024

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A MESSAGE FROM THE
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

July 2024

Welcome to the Fannin County School System and the 2024-2025 school year. This handbook contains general guidelines for the day-to-day operations of our school district. All personnel should review this information, as it has been revised for the current school year.

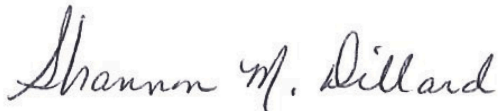
You are part of a professional family dedicated to helping students succeed. You and the job you do are essential for student success. The beauty of our work is that it is not completed in isolation but in partnership with our colleagues and other community members.

Please keep these guidelines available for your reference, and don't hesitate to reach out to your administrative team if you need any clarification.

With all of us working together, we will ensure that our students achieve great things.

If I may be of service to you in any way, please contact me.

We Are Fannin,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon M. Dillard". The signature is written in black ink and is contained within a white rectangular box.

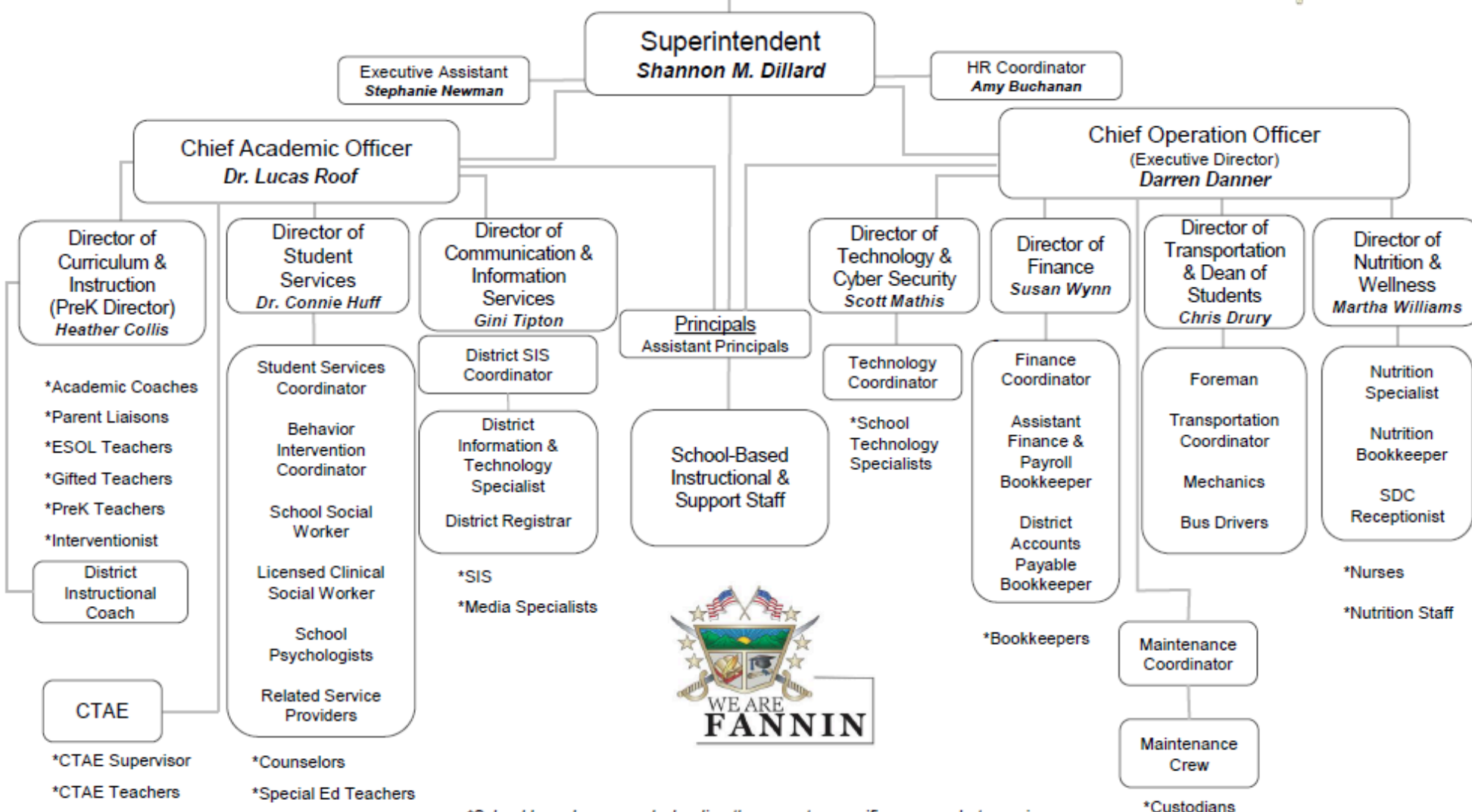
Shannon M. Dillard
Superintendent

2024-2025 Organizational Chart

Updated: July 1, 2024



The Citizens of Fannin County, Georgia
 Represented by:
Fannin County Board of Education
 Mike Cole, Chair | Bobby Bearden, Vice Chair
 Terry Bramlett | Lewis DeWeese | Chad Galloway



*School based personnel who directly support a specific program but remain under the direct supervision of the principal.



Fannin County School System
District Leadership Team Duties and Responsibilities
2024-2025 School Year



Superintendent
Shannon M. Dillard

Senior Chief Operations Officer
Darren Danner

- Director of Personnel/Title IX
- Personnel Induction/Remediation Coordinator
- Professional Standards/Ethics Coordinator
- Director of Public Safety/Emergency Management
- School Resource Officer (SRO) Coordinator
- SPLOST Fund Coordinator
- Workplace Safety Coordinator
- Project Design and Planning Coordinator
- Bids, Negotiations, and Contracts Facilitator
- Facilities and Construction Coordinator
- Chamber of Commerce Representative
- District Calendar Committee Coordinator

Director of Transportation and Dean of Students
Chris Drury

- Transportation Program Administrator
- Bus Route Coordinator
- Radio Communications Coordinator
- FCSS Vehicle Management and Compliance
- Driver Standards and Training
- Student Code-of-Conduct/Disciplinary Oversight Coordinator
- Disciplinary Tribunals/Hearing Officer
- District Calendar Committee Member

Director of Technology and Cybersecurity
Scott Mathis

- Network Security and Cybersecurity Officer
- E-Rate Management/Technology-Related Grants
- District Website Coordinator
- Internet/Network/Email Compliance
- Technology Infrastructure Project Manager
- Technology Help Desk Manager
- Technology Inventory Manager
- Safety Grants
- District Calendar Committee Member

Director of Nutrition & Wellness
Martha Williams

- School Nutrition Program Administrator
- District Wellness Program/Committee Coordinator
- District Public Health Coordinator
- School Nurse Program Coordinator
- Board of Education Minutes/Archive Supervisor
- Feed Fannin/Snack-In-A-Backpack Coordinator
- Workers Compensation Administrator
- FCSS Teacher of the Year Coordinator
- REACH Scholarship Coordinator
- Special Presentations Coordinator
- District Calendar Committee Member

Director of Finance
Susan Wynn

- Chief Financial Officer/Certified Public Accountant
- Annual Budget and Millage Preparation
- Coordination of all Financial Audits
- Grants, Bids, and Contracts Management
- Maintenance of all Contracts
- Maintenance of all Public Records
- SPLOST Funding Manager
- Coordinator of School Activity Accounts

Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Lucas Roof

- District Charter Administrator/SGT Liaison
- Accreditation (COGNIA/GAC) Coordinator
- District School Improvement Team Chair/Coordinator
- CTAE Director
- STEM/STEAM Coordinator
- Post-Secondary/Higher Education Liaison
- Title IV-A Coordinator
- Board Policy/Admin Regulation Coordinator
- Leadership Development Coordinator
- TKES/LKES Coordinator
- GSBA Local Board Training Coordinator
- Assessment and Accountability Coordinator
- Employee Travel Coordinator
- Title IX Employee Decision Maker

Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Heather Collis

- Title I-A Coordinator
- Academic Coach/Parent Liaison Coordinator
- Interventionist Coordinator
- MTSS Co-Leader: (SST)/RTI
- Instructional Resources Coordinator
- QBE Programs (Gifted/ESOL/Remedial/EIP)
- Pre-K Program Director
- Title II-A Coordinator
- New Teacher Mentoring Coordinator
- Professional Learning Coordinator
- Community Literacy Initiatives
- Communications Co-Coordinator
- District Calendar Committee Member

Director of Student Services
Dr. Connie Huff

- Special Education Administrator
- Title VI-B IDEA Coordinator
- §504 Coordinator
- MTSS Co-Leader: (SST)/Mental Health/Wraparound Services/Behavior
- FCSS Counselor Coordinator (Schools/Crisis)
- School Social Work Coordinator
- Fannin County DFCS Board Representative
- Fannin County Family Connections Liaison
- Homebound Education Coordinator
- Title IX Student Decision Maker

Director of Communication & Information Services
Gini Tipton

- Chief Information Officer
- Open Records and Public Information Requests
- Security Officer (MyGaDOE)
- Title V-B Coordinator
- Media Services Coordinator
- Technology-Related Professional Learning
- FTE/CPI/Student Information Coordinator
- Professional Certification/PQ Coordinator
- New Teacher Mentoring Co-Coordinator
- Social Media Compliance/Coordinator
- Notification System/ Communications Coordinator
- New Student Registration/Enrollment Coordinator
- Attendance Support Team Coordinator
- Development Authority Board Representative
- Title IX Investigator/ Personnel and Student

Members of the district leadership team, as well as the principals, are required to attend regular monthly Board of Education meetings and participate in DSIT unless otherwise exempted.

Updated: July 1, 2024

STRATEGIC PHILOSOPHY

VISION

The Fannin County School System holds a vision of excellence for all students with successful progression at each level and a 100% graduation rate.

MISSION

To Develop Young Futures . . .
To Prepare for Tomorrow, Today

BELIEFS

The system has established belief statements as part of the vision and mission. The belief statements of the system form the foundational values needed to fulfill its vision and mission. They are:

1. All students can learn and deserve equal access to a high-quality, well-rounded education.
2. Higher expectations result in higher achievement.
3. High school graduation is an essential key to lifelong success.
4. Parent and community involvement increases student achievement.
5. Education is a shared responsibility and should take place at home, in school, and in the community.
6. A safe and secure environment is essential for teaching and learning.
7. All schools are committed to preparing students for success.
8. An excellent education requires high-quality staff, programs, facilities, equipment, and technology.
9. Student needs and supports should drive decision-making and school system policies.
10. Students deserve an education that focuses on creativity, critical thinking, community involvement, college and career preparation, and 21st-century learning skills.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Attaining a high level of student achievement
2. Developing organizational effectiveness
3. Ensuring stakeholder support and satisfaction

KEY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Fannin County School System recognizes the importance of meeting employee needs and utilizing employee abilities. For the effective operation of the Fannin County School System, it is necessary that sound personnel policies and procedures are known and understood by all employees. These policies ensure consistency and fairness for all employees.

Policies, protocols, and procedures are subject to change. These changes are made known to employees through memos, meetings, e-mail, and the system's website. Policies, protocols, and procedures summarized in this handbook are meant to provide employees with only a general overview of expectations related to personnel and are not intended to be part of any contract or legally binding agreement.

ASBESTOS STATEMENT

The Fannin County School System has fully complied with Federal Regulation HOCFR763 – Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). All school buildings have been inspected for asbestos by an EPA certified inspector. A Management Plan for each school is on file in the Principal's office. The Management Plan is available to the general public during regular business hours. Copies may be obtained for a fee of \$.25 per page.

ASSESSMENT

Fannin County School System employees annually acknowledge their receipt of the Georgia Code of Conduct for Educators embedded within the FCSS Personnel Handbook. The Code of Conduct specifically addresses professional conduct and expectations related to assessment and assessment security in Standard 10.

Fannin County Schools implement all testing programs required by the State of Georgia using the protocols and guidelines found in the Georgia Department of Education Student Assessment Handbook. Prior to any testing event, the appropriate personnel receive training and direction. The assessment director works collaboratively with school-level testing coordinators to ensure that all proctors are fully trained and prepared for testing events.

- The District Testing Coordinator meets with each School Level Testing Coordinator to review security, scheduling, and training materials for all state-mandated tests before the test administration window.
- School-level testing Coordinators meet with their school staff who administer state-mandated tests and train them on test security and administration prior to each administration window.
- At the conclusion of a testing event, the Principal's Certification of Adherence to Prescribed Test administration procedures is sent to the district office. The "Examiner's Certification of Adherence to Prescribed Test Administration Procedures" form is completed by each test examiner and housed on-site at each school.
- The Superintendent signs the Superintendent Certification in January and July of each year.
- Any action that compromises test security or integrity of the assessment is reviewed at the district office and is then referred to the appropriate contacts within the Georgia Department of Education, Assessment Division, and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission as appropriate.

AUTOMATED CALLS

All school employees should keep personal contact information updated with office personnel so that the automated calling system can contact them. The automated calling system will be used in the event of a school cancellation or if other important information needs to be passed along.

BENEFITS

Employee benefits make up a large part of the total compensation package and are designed to meet the most important needs of Fannin County School System employees. Currently, the Fannin County School System pays the Single Bronze (no tobacco) HRA portion of health insurance and the Dental Select PPO single portion of the dental insurance. Many additional choices for other services are offered through the Flexible Benefits plan.

Insurance

Insurance benefits become effective on the first day of the month following the completion of work for one full calendar month and a proper payroll deduction.

State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) (Employer/Employee Contributions)

Employees have the opportunity to subscribe to group health insurance. Individual or family coverage may be selected from a variety of health plans provided by the State of Georgia.

Specific rules apply to making changes to any of these plans, so please consult your plan guide to more fully understand your options and timelines.

State Personnel Administration (SPA)- GABREEZE

Fannin County School System employees can participate in plans that use before-tax and after-tax dollars to pay for benefits. Optional benefits that are included are:

1. Employee Life Insurance(pre-tax)
2. Spouse and/or Child Life Insurance(after-tax)
3. Accidental Death & Dismemberment (pre-tax)
4. Short-term Disability(after-tax)
5. Long-term Disability(pre-tax)
6. Dental Insurance (pre-tax)
7. Legal Insurance (after-tax)
8. Health Care Spending Account (pre-tax)
9. Child Care, Dependent Care Spending Account(pre-tax)
10. Long-term Care (after-tax)
11. Vision Care (pre-tax)
12. Specified Illness (after-tax)

Employees are given the opportunity to begin or discontinue participation in any of these optional benefits during Open Enrollment of each year or upon the occurrence of a qualifying event. Specific rules apply to making changes to any of these plans, so please consult your plan guide to understand your options and timelines more fully.

Social Security

The Fannin County School System participates in the Social Security System. Social Security contributions are deducted each month to provide future benefits for all employees.

Medicare Participation (Employer/Employee Contributions)

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

The Fannin County Board of Education meets on the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Staff Development Center. All board meetings are open to the public, and personnel are invited to attend. Additionally, all board meetings are streamed live on the YouTube channel, Fannin Rebel TV.

BOARD POLICIES

A link to all board policies for the Fannin County School System may be found on the system website (www.fannin.k12.ga.us), or you may go to the following link: <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/index.aspx?s=4066#>. Board policies should be consulted whenever questions arise on policies and procedures. All personnel are expected to know and abide by all Board policies and procedures. For answers to questions related to Board policies, employees should contact their building level administrator.

EMPLOYEE USE OF PERSONAL CELL PHONES

To help reduce distractions and disruptions to the learning environment, all FCSS personnel should adhere to the following guidelines regarding cell phones:

1. Faculty or staff members who choose to carry a cell phone while at work should set the device on either silent or vibrate.
2. Except for an emergency or other urgent situation, FCSS faculty and staff members should not make or receive calls or text messages during the work day.
3. Employees should refrain from using social media during their compensated work hours.

CERTIFICATION

Professional employees of the Fannin County School System must hold proper in-field certification from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and must meet all state and federal requirements. It is the responsibility of the individual to keep his or her certification current.

CERTIFICATE RENEWALS FOR CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES

All certified personnel are evaluated using the state-adopted evaluation system. Certificate renewals will be based on successfully completing Professional Goals that are included within the employee's TKES/LKES plan. Teachers who have accepted their fourth or subsequent full-time, full-school-year contract with the Fannin County Board of Education can appeal summative performance ratings.

COMPENSATION

Payday/Direct Deposit

Employees are paid monthly with earning statements issued on the last workday of the month. Employees may choose to have their pay directly deposited in their bank, or they may receive their check at their school each payday. Direct deposit forms can be located in your Frontline Central account. Once an employee applies to receive direct deposit, it may take one or two months before the first direct deposit is accomplished. Employees may sign up for direct deposit upon hiring, during Open Enrollment, or upon the occurrence of a qualifying event. Payday is usually the last working day of each month. Pay dates are subject to change.

Certificated Employees

Certificated employees are issued employment contracts. These contracts are contingent upon the employee securing and maintaining a valid certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. It is the employee's responsibility to complete the required professional learning necessary to renew his or her Georgia certificate every five years. For information on adding fields to or upgrading a certificate, employees should go to www.gapsc.com and click on the certification link. Employees should also establish their MyPSC account and may email requests for guidance from PSC certification experts regarding upgrades or adding fields. Certificated employees will be paid on the state salary schedule according to the certificate level that they have been issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and the work experience that has been verified.

Hourly Employees

Non-salaried employees are paid according to the pay schedule for their particular job. Credit for prior experience (up to ten years) is only given if the employee's past experience is the same type of work that he or she has been hired to do for the school system.

Extra Pay for Noncertified Employees

Extra pay is paid to non-exempt, noncertified employees as defined by the employee's job description and with prior approval from the employee's direct supervisor. Extra pay is paid to non-exempt, noncertified employees for **any** time worked over an employee's regular hours. Employees only receive overtime pay (time and a half) for any hours worked that exceed 40 hours in a one-week period defined as Monday - Sunday.. No extra pay or overtime will be paid unless there is prior approval from the hourly employee's immediate supervisor. Time sheets must be submitted to the principal or immediate supervisor for approval. The principal or immediate supervisor will submit the original copy of time sheets to the Finance Department according to the payroll cutoff date schedule for overtime to be paid in a timely manner.

Extra Pay for Certificated Employees

Employees who provide hospital/homebound or tutoring services to students should submit their time sheets to their principal for approval. The principal will submit the original copy of these time sheets to the Finance Department according to the payroll cutoff date schedule for overtime to be paid in a timely manner.

Garnishments

Employees are subject to garnishment according to state and federal laws that regulate garnishments.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Any employee who has a complaint should refer to the Complaints and Grievances Board Policy (GAE) for the proper procedure to follow to lodge the complaint.

COMPUTER/INTERNET POLICY STATEMENT

All staff members using school system computer resources and the Internet shall comply with the Fannin County Board of Education's *Acceptable Use of Computer/Internet Resources* regulation, the administrative procedures provided by the Technology Department regarding such use. Staff members are cautioned that no personal business should be conducted on school system equipment as anything on such equipment is subject to Open Records requests. All equipment and devices connected to the FCSS network are monitored.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any protected employee- and student-related information is confidential, and all employees are expected to honor that confidentiality. Any personnel in violation of the confidentiality standards may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and possibly including termination. Additionally, violations of confidentiality may result in a referral to the Ethics Division of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, if appropriate.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees should be aware of situations and activities that may be construed as a conflict of interest.

Fannin County School System employees are reminded that their job assignments within the school system are their first obligation, and, if outside employment is affecting their performance, the employee may have to choose between the employment opportunities. Principals at the individual schools or department supervisors have direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel assigned to their school or department.

In general, outside employment is allowed as long as it does not create a conflict of interest or otherwise interfere with an employee's duties.

TUTORING: A teacher may serve as a tutor when it is deemed beneficial to the student. However, teachers may not give private instruction for a fee to students presently enrolled in their classes. These students should receive help from the teacher after school hours if necessary without a fee. Tutoring for a fee should occur away from the school building. Principals should be made aware in advance if any teachers in their building are tutoring for a fee, and if the building is being used, prior approval for use of the building should be cleared with the Central Office.

DUAL PAY: Fannin County School System employees are prohibited from receiving dual pay for services rendered during their regular work hours. The employee may forfeit either the regular pay or the pay from the other agency, organization, or individual. Employees may receive payments for services rendered while on a non-paid leave of absence, on a personal day, or for services performed other than during the regular working day.

OTHER WORK: No employee is permitted to complete work outside of the scope of their assigned duties during work hours. This includes the use of any district-owned equipment to complete outside work for personal gain.

CONTRACTS FOR CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

Certified employees may be given a letter of intent early in the second semester of each school year. The Letter of Intent is nonbinding. This is used for planning purposes for the upcoming school year. Contracts for all certified employees, except for the Superintendent, are issued for no more than one school year.

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

An educator who wishes to terminate a contract for the upcoming school year must submit a letter of resignation or request to be released from their contract by June 1.

COPYRIGHT POLICY STATEMENT

All staff members shall comply with the Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Staff members who fail to follow the Copyright Law shall be held personally liable for copyright infringement. The Fannin County Board of Education will not be responsible for any violations of the Copyright Law by staff and hereby notifies all employees that a willful infringement of the law may result in disciplinary action.

DRESS CODE

Faculty and Staff should dress appropriately and professionally at all times, keeping in mind that they are role models for the students they teach.

Faculty and Staff should comply with the following clothing standards:

- a. Hem length for any garment should be no more than 3 inches above the kneecap
- b. No low-cut tops or blouses
- c. No clothing with advertisements for drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
- d. No clothing with insulting or insinuating messages
- e. No tight spandex-type clothing, cropped tops, tank tops, or sheer lace
- f. No tights/leggings unless top garment is approaching knee-length
- g. No beachwear type foot wear
- h. No shorts or sweatpants*

Specific dress code violations will be addressed privately and professionally on an individual basis by the administration of the school. Any aspects of appearance that cause a disruption to the learning environment will be addressed on an individual basis.

*Exceptions may be made for field days, field trips, and special events. Another exception is for physical education teachers.

EMAIL

The Fannin County School System provides Internet access and an e-mail account to employees for professional purposes. Employees should check their school e-mail account each day. Per school system guidelines, permission from an administrator must be obtained before sending any message to an entire group or school staff. The school Internet and your school system e-mail account should never be used for personal gain or personal business activities. All computer network traffic, including employee e-mail and Internet usage, is monitored by the FCSS Technology Department.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

In the event that schools must close early during the school day or be canceled due to inclement weather or other emergency situation, employees will receive an automated phone call. In addition, cancellations are posted on the system website, on the system weather line (706-946-FCSS), on local radio stations, and on area television stations.

Make-up days are scheduled in the annual school calendar in the event that school days are missed during the year. Employees should refrain from making plans on days that are designated as emergency make-up days. If an emergency makeup day becomes a regular school day, employees who miss work will have their pay docked if they miss work.

Employees will be instructed in the procedure for documenting make-up time in the event that this is the option chosen to complete missed work hours. No time should be made up until the employee's immediate supervisor gives permission for such activity to take place. Employees may not use time they are getting paid for as make-up time. For example, if an employee is receiving a stipend for extended or additional work hours that time may not count as make-up time.

EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS

All Fannin County School System personnel must be fingerprinted and successfully complete a criminal background check upon hiring. A criminal background check is updated every five years for all employees.

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION BADGES

At the beginning of their employment with our school system, new employees will be issued an ID key badge. Employees may request a replacement badge at no charge if they have a legal name change, job title change, or if the badge breaks.

An employee may request a new ID key badge for \$5.00 if their badge is lost or if the employee wants a new badge with an updated photograph.

Personnel should turn their ID key badge into their principal when discontinuing employment with the school system.

This ID key badge serves as a key to exterior doors at their respective campus. If a key card is lost or misplaced, notify your supervisor immediately so that the key can be disabled.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Fannin County School System personnel are employed by the Fannin County Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. Employees are assigned to the school/work location by the Superintendent.

Classified employees, including substitutes, must have a high school diploma, a GED, or be able to provide documentation of other appropriate training or experience to be employed. Additionally, classified employees must be 18 to 21 years of age at a minimum, depending on the work assignment. Some classified positions may have additional experience requirements beyond this minimum. Classified employees are eligible for sustained employment upon evidence of completion of required training and ability to do the work for which they are applying, satisfactory recommendations, and acceptable criminal background checks.

Teachers, principals, and other certified personnel that are part of the professional staff are eligible for sustained employment provided they meet the educational and professional standards set by the State of Georgia and the Fannin County Board of Education in addition to maintaining satisfactory performance evaluations and passing criminal background checks.

All employees must complete I-9 forms as required under federal law and must provide proof of eligibility for employment.

EVALUATION OF PERSONNEL

All FCSS personnel are evaluated annually by their administrator/supervisor. All certified employees will be evaluated on the state mandated TKES/LKES platform. Classified employees will either be evaluated on the TKES/LKES platform or by using district developed instruments. All certified evaluations will be completed no later than May 10th. All classified evaluation will be completed by May 15th. Certified employees will have an orientation on the SLDS Platform at the beginning of the school year.

FACILITIES USE REQUEST

The use of school facilities may be requested by outside groups via a Facility Use Request. Facility Use Requests, printed from the school system website, should be forwarded to the principal of the school where the facility is requested. The principal may approve a onetime use request, but any recurring requests or requests that span several dates must be approved by the School Governance Team for that school.

FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS

Employees who willfully submit false information on any records including, but not limited to, attendance records for an employee or student, records related to leave or workers' compensation, experience verification forms, employment applications and/or resumes, and registration/enrollment records for any student, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

The Fannin County School System follows federal guidelines in offering Family Medical Leave to eligible employees. Details of the Family Medical Leave Board Policy (GBRIG) may be found on Simbli.

FIELD TRIP REQUESTS

All field trips must be related to the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) being taught in that grade level, and they should be aimed at helping to reach school improvement goals. Field trip requests must be completed in Trip Tracker. The Principal will review the request and bring the request to the School Governance Team for consideration. Any educational field trip that is a long-distance trip (exceeds 50 miles one way), an extended day trip, or an overnight trip must be approved by the School Governance Team.

FRAUD

The Fannin County School System employees are directed not to engage in any type of wasteful, fraudulent, abusive, and/or corrupt behavior during the performance of their duties. Any employee found to be guilty of committing any of these acts will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

In addition, any employee who is aware of any waste, fraud, abuse, and/or corruption should report this in a timely manner to their immediate supervisor. In turn, the supervisor should report the information in a timely manner to the superintendent or his/her designee.

FUNDRAISERS

All fundraisers must be submitted to the School Governance Team for approval.

MAINTENANCE REQUESTS

Requests for maintenance require the approval of a building administrator and must be submitted to the Facilities Director to be scheduled and completed. Minor maintenance problems should be handled at the school level. Employees should report any issues requiring maintenance to their building-level supervisor.

MANDATORY REPORTING

School system employees are required to report any suspected child abuse, drug use, or alcohol use involving students to a building administrator. It is neither the employee's role nor responsibility to investigate. All employees will complete mandatory reporting training at the beginning of each school year.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Fannin County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, creed, or disability in admission to its programs, services, and activities, in access to them, in treatment of individuals, or in any aspect of operations. This also includes but is not limited to additions, modifications, or alterations to the physical plan of any school facility.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms: 1) The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS or PSERS retirement system. 2) The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. 3) An employee paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date. Qualifying events include: 1) the birth of a child of an eligible employee 2) The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee or 3) The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee. Board policy: GARHB is available on the Fannin County Board of Education website.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents should be encouraged to participate in their child's education as much as possible. Making parents feel welcome at school will benefit our students as well as our teachers. Supportive parents make a world of difference in providing our students with additional help at home and are much more willing to back up the teacher who they feel has been open and inviting to them. Teachers are expected to be at school on parent/teacher conference days. If a teacher must be out on one of those days, he or she needs to make parents aware of this and offer to reschedule a conference at another time. Teachers should always be willing to meet with parents. Teachers are also encouraged to keep parents informed through phone calls, letters, newsletters, etc. Each Title I school also shares its *Parent and Family Engagement Policy* with parents early in the school year. Parents are also encouraged to volunteer at each of our schools.

PARENT'S RIGHT TO KNOW STATEMENT

In compliance with the requirements of the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, the Fannin County School System provides information about the professional qualifications of a student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s).

The following information may be requested by parents/guardians: Whether the student's teacher:

- Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subjects in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
- Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualification

PERSONNEL RECORDS

It is the responsibility of employees to inform Human Resources when there are changes in the home address, telephone number, and/or the occurrence of a qualifying event.

Information contained in an employee's personnel file is not made available to others except as may be required by law, requested by the employee, or to those school officials with a need to know in an official capacity.

An employee may review his or her personnel file by requesting an appointment with the Human Resources Department.

PERSONNEL TIME SCHEDULE

Most full-time employees of the Fannin County Board of Education work a minimum of 40 hours per week. The principal/supervisor sets a schedule for the time of arrival and departure for all employees assigned to their school or department.

In order for an organization to achieve its desired goals, good attendance and punctuality are necessary. Therefore, regular and prompt attendance is expected and required of all employees. If it is necessary to be absent or late to work, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor as soon as possible. Teachers and/or paraprofessionals are responsible for making their own arrangements for a substitute if needed.

Professional learning days, teacher workdays, and parent/teacher conference days are scheduled to allow teachers time to attend workshops, have conferences with parents, attend faculty meetings, work collaboratively with peers, and participate in school improvement initiatives. These days are not to be used by coaches, directors, or teachers of extracurricular activities to schedule practices. All practices are to be scheduled after the eight-hour workday has been completed.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

All Fannin County School System bus drivers must pass an annual physical evaluation in order to maintain his or her bus driving job. These physicals are to be completed by a physician designated by the school system.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Teachers and paraprofessionals are strongly encouraged to become members of a professional organization, with special attention being given to joining an organization that provides professional liability insurance. The three organizations that have the largest memberships in Fannin County are the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE), the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE), and Educator's First.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

To provide teachers with an opportunity to continue learning and growing as educators, the Fannin County School System offers ongoing professional learning for all employees. Professional learning activities that are offered are tied to each school's or the district's improvement plans. For more detailed information, employees should refer to the Professional Learning information page located on the system website at the following link: <https://www.fannin.k12.ga.us/professionallearning>

PURCHASING

No purchases may be made by obligating either school or district funds without following the appropriate purchasing procedures. Please refer to the Fannin County School Activity Account Handbook and check with your individual school bookkeeper for purchasing procedures. Purchases made without following these guidelines may become the responsibility of the purchaser. Mismanagement of school system funds may result in disciplinary action including possible termination and the filing of a report with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission for a violation of the Georgia Educators Code of Ethics.

RELEASING STUDENTS

Students are always released through the school office except for release from an off-campus activity. No employee may allow a student to leave school without checking out through the office.

REPORTING OF ACTS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

House Bill 1321 passed by the Georgia Legislature amended O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.7 to require that local school systems implement a state-mandated process for students to follow in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student. Sexual misconduct includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. The following procedure is required should any student or employee need to report an act of sexual misconduct:

Reporting of Acts of Sexual Misconduct

Any student (*or parent or friend of a student*) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

RESIGNATIONS

Contracted employees are expected to honor their employment contract. Therefore, except in emergency situations, employment contracts may not be terminated without the recommendation of the Superintendent and the approval of the Board. Resignations of employees should be tendered as soon as reasonably possible to allow the school system to plan for upcoming school years and to attract the most highly qualified candidates.

RETIREMENT PLANS

Teacher Retirement System (TRS)

Teachers, administrators, supervisors, clerical employees, and paraprofessionals are eligible members of TRS. Benefits become available at 30 years of service, regardless of age, at 25 years of service with early retirement penalties, or at age 60, after 10 years of service. Employee members contribute 6.0% of their salary to TRS, while the school system contributes 20.78% for each employee. Disability retirement is available for members who qualify according to TRS guidelines.

Public School Employees' Retirement System of Georgia (PSERS)

Bus drivers, food service employees, maintenance, and custodial personnel are eligible for membership in the Public School Employees' Retirement System of Georgia. Retirement benefits are available for members who are 65 years of age with at least 10 years of creditable service or at 60 years of age with 10 years of creditable service with early retirement penalties. New members contribute \$10.00 per month for nine months. Previously employed members pay \$4.00 per month for nine months. Disability retirement is available for members who qualify according to PSERS guidelines.

Corebridge Financial for PSERS Members

The Fannin County School System participates in Corebridge Financial in order to provide additional retirement benefits for employees who are not eligible for membership in TRS. The school system contributes 3% of their salary to a Corebridge Financial account for all PSERS members. In addition, the system will also match half of what employees who are members of PSERS contribute themselves for a maximum additional system contribution of 3% more on a monthly basis.

SAFETY PLAN

Each school in the Fannin County School System has a school safety/emergency plan. Each employee should receive pertinent information about the plan from the school/location to which he or she is assigned. Specific school safety plans should not be shared outside of the work environment to protect both employees and students in the event of a crisis (i.e. active shooter training, etc.)

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The Fannin County School System is committed to continuous improvement at both the school and district levels. Our commitment is demonstrated through our annual accreditation from the Georgia Accrediting Agency (GAC) and Cognia formerly AdvancEd Accreditation through SACS/CASI. All schools and the district complete a thorough review of data each spring, including community and stakeholder meetings, to determine areas of strength and areas for improvement. The results from our comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) are used to create actionable goals that will lead to improvement. School and district improvement teams meet regularly to review goals and progress toward meeting those goals. School and district budgets are prioritized and aligned to the goals within the school and/or district improvement plans. All employees are an integral part of the continuous improvement process.

SMOKING AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Smoking, vaping, and using any tobacco products are strictly prohibited on every school campus, inside every school building, and in any school-owned vehicle including a school or activity bus.

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension with or without pay, or termination. Students who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Board policy and the student handbook.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be a useful tool for effectively communicating with stakeholders about the work of the district. “Social Media” is defined as all social media activities by employees, including but not limited to the use of blogs, forums, social networking sites, and any other web-based communications on publicly available sites. The use of social media, even off-duty and off-premises, must not violate any Board policies or otherwise interfere with the employee’s performance of duties. All employees must exercise professionalism and good judgment in any social media activities, district-related as well as non-district-related. Social media activities must comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), copyright, trademark, defamation, privacy, securities, and any other applicable laws and regulations. Any communication which is unprofessional or prohibited in any other form is also unprofessional or prohibited on social media. Employees should be mindful that any social media post, even from an employee’s personal, non-district account, may be interpreted as being made on behalf of the district.

STAFF MEETINGS

Staff meetings are a necessary part of effective school operation. Each school shall conduct staff meetings on a regular basis. All staff members, including less than full-time employees, are required, as part of their teaching/employment responsibilities, to attend such meetings as required by the principal.

STUDENT ABSENCES

State board policy requires that each school system keep accurate records of student attendance. Students who have excessive absences should be referred to the school attendance support worker.

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

The Fannin County School System has developed a Suicide Prevention Protocol that designated staff have been trained to follow. In addition, all other certificated employees complete a mandatory training on suicide prevention on an annual basis.

TRANSFERS-CERTIFIED & CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

Employees requesting a transfer may be interviewed for the position by the supervisor/principal of the receiving department or school. If the transfer is not granted, then the employee will remain at the current location or as otherwise directed by the superintendent. Being employed by the FCSS does not entitle anyone to transfer to another position.

TRAVEL APPROVAL

Approval for travel should be approved PRIOR to the event by the principal and the travel coordinator. All travel must be reimbursed to the employee during the same fiscal year that the travel occurred. All travel reimbursements must be turned in within a 45 day window from the date of the event in order to be processed in a timely manner. Employees should refer to the Fannin County Travel Regulations which can be found on the system website for travel guidelines at the following link:

<https://www.fannin.k12.ga.us/travelinformationandforms>

WASTE & FRAUD PREVENTION

Employees are directed to avoid wasteful, fraudulent, abusive, or corrupt behavior during the performance of their duties. Any employee found to be committing any of these offenses will be subject to appropriate employment action. Additionally, any employee who is aware of any waste, fraud, abuse, or corruption should report this in a timely manner to their immediate supervisor, the Superintendent, or his/her designee.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

Workers' compensation is a benefits program created by state law that provides medical, rehabilitation, income, death, and other benefits to employees and dependents due to injury, illness, and death resulting from a compensable work-related claim covered by the law.

To be eligible for workers' compensation benefits, employees must be injured while performing assigned job duties during work hours. Injuries that occur during an employee's normal commute to and from work are not covered.

Any accident that occurs should IMMEDIATELY be reported to the employee's supervisor. The required paperwork should be completed and forwarded to the appropriate department for processing. On-the-job accidents should be described as accurately as possible. If there is a witness to the accident, their name should be included in the report. Prompt notification will enable your employer to process your claim in a timely manner. Additionally, all employee accidents must be called into the central office **immediately** by a designated school administrator.

Employees who are injured on the job and need to seek medical assistance are required to go to a physician on the approved list. The "Panel of Physicians" is posted in each school or department. If an employee chooses to use a doctor who is not on the approved list or fails to make a required report, he or she may be responsible for any bills and risk losing any benefits that may have resulted from a workers' compensation claim. As with any insurance, the premiums that districts pay for workers' compensation insurance increase as accidents increase and decrease as accidents decrease. Employees should exercise safety at all times.

Workers' Safety Rules:

All employees are required to implement safety practices while on the job. Safety practices include, but are not limited to:

1. Use of safety straps while working on overhead and off-ground surfaces
2. Use of ladders while working overhead
3. Use of proper footwear in kitchens and work areas
4. Use of safety signs on floor surfaces where areas are being worked
5. Report any condition that may cause an injury immediately to a supervisor

FANNIN COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM DIRECTORY

Blue Ridge Elementary 224 East Highland Street Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-632-5772 Fax: 706-632-6069	Mark Young, Principal Lisa Taylor, Asst. Principal
East Fannin Elementary 1 Elementary Circle Morganton, GA 30560	706-374-6418 Fax: 706-374-2470	Matt Price, Principal Andrea Cook, Asst. Principal
West Fannin Elementary 5060 Blue Ridge Drive Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-492-3644 Fax: 706-492-4523	Alison Danner, Principal Dr. Scott Barnstead, Asst. Principal
Fannin Middle School 4560 Old Highway 76 Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-632-6100 Fax: 706-632-0461	Dr. April Hodges, Principal Chuck Patterson, Asst. Principal Shannon York, Asst. Principal
Fannin High School 360 Rebel Circle Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-632-2081 Fax: 706-632-6908 Counselors Office Fax: 706-632-4442	Dr. Scott Ramsey, Principal Alan Collis, Asst. Principal David Henson, Asst. Principal Mandy Housley, Asst. Principal
Fannin Co. Athletic Department 360 Rebel Circle Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-632-3111 Fax: 706-632-3121	Jeremy King, Athletic Director
Central Registrar 360 Rebel Circle Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-946-2004 Fax: 706-946-6302	Lisa Jackson, Registrar
Fannin County Vocational 300 Rebel Circle Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-632-2013 Fax: 706-632-6552	David Henson, CTAE Supervisor
Fannin County Agriculture & Environmental Science Facility 43 Station Road Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-946-2055 Fax: 706-946-2056	Rhonda Matthews, Young Farmer
FCSS Technology Center 130 Rebel Circle Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-258-2791 Fax: 706-258-3748	Gini Tipton, Director Scott Mathis, Director
Transportation Facility/Bus Garage 5961 Old Highway 76 Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-632-7802 Fax: 706-632-0068	Chris Drury, Director
Maintenance Shop 2088 East First Street Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-946-2010 Fax: 632-0068	Mike Spurling, Maintenance Coordinator
Staff Development Center Board of Education 6145 Old Highway 76 Blue Ridge, GA 30513	706-632-3771 Fax: 706-362-7583	Shannon M. Dillard, Superintendent