

COFFEE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Handbook for

Certified and Support Personnel



Coffee County Schools
1343 McArthur Street
Manchester, TN 37355

Phone (931) 723-5150
Fax (931) 723-5153

Amendment to Handbook

This handbook is not an employment contract. Every situation and/or question cannot be anticipated and may or may not be answered in this handbook.

As law, policies and procedures change, the employer reserves the right to make necessary revisions, changes or eliminate any of the policies and/or benefits described in this handbook.

Before relying upon the provisions set out herein, it is the employee's responsibility to check with the employer to see if any changes have occurred.

Click on the [link](#) for Policies of Coffee County Board of Education. Policies can also be found on the system's web-site.

Equal Employment Opportunity (Policy 5.104)

The Coffee County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin age, sex or disability ,or veteran status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning the School's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), may contact the Assistant Director of Schools or Human Resources.

“Learning Today for Brighter Tomorrows”

Mission Statement

THE COFFEE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM FOSTERS A CULTURE THAT PROVIDES FOR THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FOR ALL STUDENTS, ENRICHES THINKING AND LEARNING, AND PROMOTES STUDENT SUCCESS AND A STRONG SENSE OF CITIZENSHIP

Vision Statement

THE COFFEE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM WILL BECOME ONE OF THE TOP PERFORMING EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN THE NATION

Motto

“Children First”

Goals of Coffee County Board of Education

The Board is charged, on behalf of the public, with the responsibility for determining the educational goals of the school system. In discharging that responsibility, the Board has adopted the following goals in four primary areas:

Instruction, Personnel, Students and Operations.

The Board shall develop policies to implement the goals within each area and shall annually review these goals and revise them as necessary so that each program will at all times support the stated goals. The Director of Schools is responsible for developing procedures and strategies to implement the goals of the Board.

INSTRUCTION

1. To promote a plan for the organized improvement of school curriculum, including the articulation between elementary and secondary schools;
2. To provide offerings which explore a wide range of career and service opportunities;
3. To promote an integration of academic, physical, social and emotional growth experiences for each student; and
4. To promote the recognition of achievement in all endeavors (example, academic, athletic).

STUDENTS

1. To structure the overall instructional program to provide sufficient alternatives to meet a variety of individual needs and aspirations;
2. To ensure that each student's interests, capacities and objectives are considered in his/her learning program;
3. To develop a comprehensive program for disabled students providing the least restrictive programs; and
4. To help students gain an understanding of themselves, as well as skills and techniques in living and working with others and being responsible citizens.

PERSONNEL

1. To provide high quality performance by the staff, including both professional and classified personnel ;
2. To establish acceptable performance standards for all personnel;
3. To provide in-service training and professional growth experiences for teachers, administrators and classified personnel ; and
4. To maintain an evaluation system for the improvement of the instructional system.

OPERATIONS

1. To make every effort to secure adequate funding for the educational program in support of the stated goals;
2. To maintain an adequate system of fiscal and business management;
3. To develop plans for the efficient use of school facilities; and
4. To ensure appropriate communication between the Director of Schools and the Board

Coffee County Board of Education Office Hours

The Central Office is open on regular workdays (Monday-Friday) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. throughout the year. The office may be closed during inclement weather. The work hours may vary in the summer months of June and July.

Board Meetings (Policy 1.400)

The Board will transact all business at official meetings which may be either regular or special. Every meeting of the Board, except with the attorney to discuss pending or threatened litigation, will be open to the public. Open meetings will be physically accessible to all students, employees, and interested citizens. No one shall bring a camera, camcorder or other photographic equipment to board meetings without the consent of the Board.

REGULAR MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Board shall be held on the second Monday of the month at 5:00 p.m. In instances when any regular meeting date falls on a legal holiday, the meeting shall be rescheduled by the chair.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Board shall hold such special meetings as necessary to transact the business of the Board. Such meetings shall be called by the chair whenever, in the chair's judgment, the interests of the schools require it, or when requested to do so by a majority of the Board. Only business related to the call of the meeting, and details related to agenda items shall be discussed or transacted by the Board at a special meeting.

ADJOURNED MEETINGS

The Board of Education may hold an adjourned meeting of the Board to a specific locality and at a specific time, provided however, the Board shall give adequate public notice of such meeting. Only topics appropriate to the agenda of the meeting adjourned may be acted upon at the adjourned session.

ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE

Absent Board members may attend a regular or special meeting by electronic means if the member is absent because of work, a family emergency, or the member's military service. If a board member is absent due to military service, he/she may participate electronically as often as he/she is able to do so. However, a board member may not participate electronically more than two (2) times per year for absences due to work and/or family emergencies.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements apply to all electronic attendance, regardless of the reason for the member's absence:

1. A quorum of the Board must be physically present at the meeting in order for any member to attend electronically.
2. Any member wishing to participate electronically must do so using technology which allows the Chair to visually identify the member.
3. The responsibility for the connection lies with the member wishing to participate electronically. No more than three (3) attempts to connect shall be made, unless the Board chooses to make additional attempts.

WORK RELATED ABSENCE

The following requirements apply to electronic attendance due to a work related absence:

1. The Board member must be absent from the county due to work.
2. The member wishing to participate must give the Chair and director at least five (5) days' notice prior to the meeting of the member's desire to participate electronically.

FAMILY EMERGENCY

The following requirement applies to electronic attendance due to a family emergency:

1. The member must be absent due to the hospitalization of the member or the death or hospitalization of the member's spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, step-son, step-daughter, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, or grandparents.
2. No member may participate more than twice per year due to a family emergency.

Classifications and Qualifications (Policy 5.102)

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

All administrative and supervisory positions in the school system are established initially by the Board, by state law, or State Board Rule, Regulations, and Minimum Standards. To be considered for certificated administrative or supervisory positions, the applicant must show the following qualifications:

1. Professional teaching certification; and
2. Administrative or supervisory certification and experience in accordance with state law and State Board Rules and Regulations in the appropriate area based on the minimum of a master's degree.

Non-certified administrative and supervisory personnel shall possess sufficient training and experience to perform the services required and such additional qualifications as the Board and the director of schools shall determine.

PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

The professional staff members are the personnel whose employment status **requires** certification in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education.

SUPPORT PERSONNEL

The support staff members are personnel whose regular employment does not require certification in accordance with rules and regulations of the State Department of Education.

Terms of Employment

Certified employees are typically paid for a work year of two hundred (200) days. This work year consists of one hundred-eighty (180) days of student contact, five (5) days of staff development, three (3) administrative days, (2) personal days. The approved use of stockpiled days for approved staff development activities may reduce accordingly the number of student contact days.

Emergency School Closing (Policy 1.8011)

The Board authorizes the director of schools to close schools in the event of hazardous weather or any other emergency which presents a threat to the safety of students, staff members or school property. As soon as the decision to close schools is made, the director of schools will notify the public media and request that an announcement be made.

In the event schools need to be delayed, closed, or students need to be dismissed early, the Central Office will notify the local radio stations, and the Nashville television stations channels 2, 4, 5, and FOX.

You may also go to our website at www.coffeecountyschools.com and sign up for NotifyMe. This will send a text message regarding any closing or dismissal of schools.

ID Badges

Every full-time employee must make an appointment with Human Resources at the Central Office to have an ID badge made. This badge must be worn at all times while on school grounds.

If the badge is lost or stolen there will be a \$5 replacement cost. If the badge breaks, you must return the badge to HR for a replacement.

You may use your badge to attend school sponsored athletic activities held in the school system at no charge. This does not include tournament games.

Confidentiality

STUDENT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Students in the Coffee County Schools have the right to expect that information about them will be kept confidential by all staff. Additionally, the U.S. Congress has addressed the privacy-related concerns of educators, parents, and students by enacting the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Among other provisions, FERPA allows the government to withdraw federal funds from any educational institution which disseminates a student's education records without his or her parent's consent.

- Each student with whom you work has the right to expect that nothing that happens to or about him or her will be repeated to anyone other than authorized school department employees, as designated by the administrators at your school. Even when discussing a student with those who are directly involved in a student's education, such as a teacher, principal, or guidance

counselor, you may not share otherwise confidential information with them unless it is relevant to the student's educational growth, safety, or well-being.

- You may not share information about a student even with others who are genuinely interested in the student's welfare, such as social workers, scout leaders, clergy, or nurses (a grave medical emergency, in which confidential information may be necessary for a student's care, is the only exception). Thus, you must refer all such questions to the school employees so authorized and indicated to you, typically the student's teacher or principal.
- Parents, friends, or community members may in good faith ask you questions about a student's problems or progress. Again, you must refer all such questions to the authorized school employees. You may not share information about a student even with members of your own family or the student's family.
- Before you speak, always remember that violating a student's confidentiality isn't just impolite, it's against the law!

EMPLOYEE CONFIDENTIALITY

All employees will acknowledge that during the course of performing their assigned duties at Coffee County Schools that all access to personal information will be held in a confidential manner at all times during and after their employment and commit to the following obligations:

- Use and disclose confidential health information only in connection with and for the purpose of performing assigned duties.
- Request, obtain or communicate confidential health information only as necessary to perform assigned duties and shall refrain from requesting, obtaining or communicating more confidential health information than is necessary to accomplish assigned duties.
- Will take reasonable care to properly secure confidential health information on the computer and will take steps to ensure others cannot view or access such information. When away from workstation or when tasks are completed, the computer must be logged out of or a password-protected screensaver used in order to prevent access by unauthorized users.
- Will not disclose personal passwords to anyone without the express written permission of department head or record or post it in an accessible location and will refrain from performing any tasks using another's password.
- Will document all disclosures of confidential health information, including those authorized by clients of and any accidental disclosures, in the appropriate client's file.

Central Office Staff

Phone (931) 723-5150

Fax (931) 723-5153

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Email</i>
Mr. Scott Hargrove	Director of Schools	hargroves@k12coffee.net
Kelvin Shores	Deputy Director of Schools	shoresk@k12coffee.net
Tim Morris	Transportation Director	morrist@k12coffee.net
Joahna Sizemore	Curriculum and Inst. Grades PreK-5	sizemorej@k12coffee.net
Stephen Blessing	Curriculum and Inst. Grades 6-8/Testing	blessings@k12coffee.net
Krista Cole	Federal Programs/Secondary Ed. Grades 9-12	colek@k12coffee.net
Charlie Westmoreland	Special Education Director	westmorelandc@k12coffee.net
Keith Cornelius	Attendance Director	corneliusk@k12coffee.net
Tonya Garner	Coordinated School Health	garnert@k12coffee.net
Randy Damewood	Director of Technology	damewoodr@k12coffee.net
April Melson	Director of Business and Finance	melsona@k12coffee.net
Shay Turner	Director of Maintenance	turners@k12coffee.net
Carlan Cotten	Director of Food Service	cottenc@k12coffee.net
Carrie Davis	Family Resource Coordinator	daviscarrie@k12coffee.net
Hollyn Clark	Receptionist	clarkh@k12coffee.net
Melisa Westmoreland	Administrative Assistant to the Dir. of Schools	westmorelandm@k12coffee.net
Stephanie Langham	Human Resources	langhams@k12coffee.net

Edwina Pate	Administrative Assistant to Dir. Of Attendance	patee@k12coffee.net
Shanyna Green	Food Service Bookkeeper	greens@k12coffee.net
Ashley Jones	Administrative Assistant to Curriculum and Inst.	jonesashley@k12coffee.net
Christina Dotson	Administrative Assistant to Special Ed. Dir.	dotsonc@k12coffee.net
Donna West	Technology	westd@k12coffee.net
James West	Technology	westj@k12coffee.net
Justin Reed	Technology	reedj@k12coffee.net
Stephen Ray	Technology	rays@k12coffee.net
Sallie Alexander	Psychologist	alexanders@k12coffee.net
Jodi Smith	Benefits	smithjodi@k12coffee.net
Stacey Booth	Purchasing	booths@k12coffee.net
Melissa Todd	Payroll/Benefits	toddm@k12coffee.net
Candice Hampton	Purchasing	hamptonc@k12coffee.net
Amanda Salsbury	Payroll	salsburya@k12coffee.net
Sarah Greer	SPED Coordinator	greers@k12coffee.net
Connie Sekulich	Social Worker	sekuliche@k12coffee.net

Coffee County School Board Members

Chairman-Mr. Thomas Ballard

Vice Chairman- Freda Jones

Beth Yentsch

Gary Cordell

Chris Koon

Robert Gilley

Jennifer Peacock Hodge

Holly Matthews

Scott Hansert

Coffee County Schools

<p>Coffee County Central High School <i>Principal: Paul Parsley</i> 100 Red Raider Dr Manchester, TN 37355 Phone (931) 723-5159 FAX (931) 723-5161</p>	<p>Coffee County Raider Academy <i>Principal: Angela Mankin Sellars</i> 865 McMinnville Hwy Manchester, TN 37355 Phone (931) 570-2828 FAX (931) 723-8273</p>
<p>Coffee County Middle School <i>Principal: Dr. Jimmy Anderson</i> 3063 Woodbury Hwy Manchester, TN 37355 Phone (931) 723-5177 FAX (931) 723-5180</p>	<p>Deerfield Elementary <i>Principal: Lia Basham-Parsley</i> 9123 Woodbury Hwy Manchester, TN 37355 Phone (931) 570-2652 FAX (931) 723-7298</p>
<p>East Coffee Elementary <i>Principal: Eric Keith</i> 6264 McMinnville Hwy Manchester, TN 37355 Phone (931) 723-5185 FAX (931) 723-3231</p>	<p>Hillsboro Elementary <i>Principal: Angela Morton</i> 284 Winchester Hwy Hillsboro, TN 37342 Phone (931) 596-2775 FAX (931) 596-2107</p>
<p>New Union Elementary <i>Principal: Bobbi Gilley</i> 3320 Woodbury Hwy Manchester, TN 37355 Phone (931) 723-5187 FAX (931) 723-5197</p>	<p>North Coffee Elementary <i>Principal: Dr. Adam Clark</i> 6790 Murfreesboro Hwy Manchester, TN 37355 Phone (931) 723-5183 FAX (931) 723-3230</p>
<p>Hickerson Elementary <i>Principal: Dr. Kathy Crabtree</i> 5017 Old Manchester Hwy Tullahoma, TN 37388 Phone (931) 455-9576 FAX (931) 455-3758</p>	<p>Coffee County Koss Center Coffee County Virtual Academy <i>Principal : Jeff Johnson</i> 1756 McMinnville Hwy Manchester, TN 37355 Phone (931) 723-5189 FAX (931) 723-5172</p>

Qualifications

All teachers shall be certified in accordance with state law and the regulations of the Tennessee State Department of Education.

It is the responsibility of the employee to secure a license and to maintain its validity. A certified employee can be dismissed if the required teacher's license or certificate is allowed to expire or otherwise become invalid or inactive.

Furthermore, it is the educator's responsibility to fulfill all applicable portions of the federal law, No child left behind, in regard to "highly qualified". All teachers of the identified 'core academic' areas must be 'Highly Qualified'. All newly hired teachers of the identified 'core academic' areas must be 'Highly Qualified' upon initial employment.

Employee Data

All persons applying for any position with coffee County Schools are required, in advance of employment, to report on the application approved by the School Board if the applicant:

1. Has ever been convicted of a violation of law other than a minor traffic violation;
2. Have ever had a professional license or certificate revoked or suspended;
3. Have ever been convicted of any offense for physical or sexual abuse of a child;
4. Have ever had a charge of child abuse against you substantiated;
5. Have ever been involuntarily terminated or asked to resign in lieu of termination from another employer.

Knowingly falsifying information on the application shall be grounds for termination of employment and shall constitute a class A misdemeanor which must be reported to the district attorney general for prosecution. Additionally, all persons applying for any position with coffee county schools shall be required to:

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1. Submit fingerprints for a complete background check with the Tennessee Bureau Investigation and the Federal Bureau Investigation
2. Agree for a background check with Department of Children Services (DCS), Tennessee Sex Offender, and Tennessee Department of Health Abuse Registry
3. Submit a physical from a physician
4. Drug and alcohol screening

Any offers of employment shall be pending the return and disposition of such checks and contingent upon the satisfactory results.

Once an applicant has accepted an offer with Coffee County Schools, the following paperwork is required:

- W-4
- Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9
- ID Badge
- Transcripts (if applicable)
- Praxis scores (if applicable)
- Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS)
- Insurance Forms-In addition, various insurance options are available for purchase. Must set up an appointment with benefits coordinator
- Direct Deposit-Payroll-W-4
- Bloodborne Pathogen Training
- Drug Free Workplace Training
- Parapro Test (if applicable)
- Student and Employee Confidentiality Forms
- FMLA
- Sick Leave Bank
- Email and Technology AUP

INSURANCE

Medical, dental and vision insurance is available to all new full time employees. All necessary paperwork must be completed within the first thirty (30) calendar days of actual employment. For an additional cost, you may add dependents and a spouse to your insurance. Must contact benefits for an appointment.

It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the benefit department when a new dependent (due to marriage, the birth or adoption of a child) needs to be added to the medical coverage. This must be done within the allowed thirty (30) days of the event for the new dependent to be properly covered. It is also the responsibility of the employee to inform the benefit department if the dependent loses his/her eligibility for coverage due to a divorce or if a child marries or otherwise does not meet the definition of an eligible dependent.

SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PROVISIONS

The federal law, Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA), allows employees and dependents to enroll in health coverage under certain conditions. Exceptions will be made for eligible employees or dependents if they lose their health insurance coverage offered through their employer or the employee's spouse/ex-spouse. The required documentation must be submitted to the benefits coordinator. Coverage must be applied for within sixty (60) days of loss of health coverage.

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT TRANSFER PERIOD

During late fall of each year, employees have an opportunity to select or transfer from one state group health insurance option/coverage to another. Benefit information is mailed to your home address and you should review this information carefully. If you decide you would like to transfer to another health care option, please contact the Benefit Department. All changes are effective the following January 1, and you must remain enrolled in that health care option until the next year.

COBRA

In the event of a resignation, early retirement, or termination, each employee shall have the right to continue the same coverage of his/her insurance and dependent coverage under the COBRA Plan. Please see the Benefit Department.

TRANSFER OF SICK DAYS

If a new certified employee has previously taught in a public school system in Tennessee, the unused sick leave days can be transferred to Coffee County Schools. Out-of-state sick leave is not transferable. The new employee is responsible for

requesting the transfer of the available unused sick leave days from the previous employer. Contact payroll for more information.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Prior teaching experience may count for salary purposes. The appropriate information must be submitted and accepted at the local level before a new employee can be compensated for the experience on the salary schedule. It is the educator's responsibility to submit the forms appropriately and complete indicating in-state and out-of-state experience as soon as possible after an offered teaching position is accepted. A separate form must be submitted for each school system in which the new employee was employed. The school system will verify this submitted information as this information is no longer maintained at the state level.

CLASSIFIED EXPERIENCE

Experience can be transferred to the Coffee County School System if documented on official letterhead and pertains to position. Sick leave is not transferable.

Salary/Benefits

PAY DAY

Pay day is the fifteenth of every month. If the fifteenth falls on a weekend, the last previous working day is recognized as the payday.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

All employees must have their pay automatically deposited. A form and blank voided check or deposit slip is required to ensure that the appropriate tracking number is used. An electronic notice of wages and deductions is available to every employee at www.mybenefitschannel.com

Time Sheets

All classified employees must fill out a timesheet at the end of every month and turn it into their immediate supervisor. The timesheet provides the appropriate supporting documentation for the processing of payroll.

Workers Compensation

The Board shall maintain adequate workers' compensation coverage according to state statutes and shall post and maintain in a conspicuous place on the business premises a printed notice regarding worker's compensation as prescribed by the commissioner of labor and workforce development. The claim must be reported and filed within twenty-four (24) hours of the occurrence of the injury.

The Board shall establish a medical panel consisting of at least three (3) or more reputable physicians or surgeons, not associated together in practice, if available. Any claimant may select an operating surgeon or attending physician listed on the medical panel for treatment of on-the-job injuries. Any specialized treatment of injuries must be administered by practitioners or specialists upon referral by the medical panel. In the event an employee is injured on the job while working for the Coffee County School System and the employee receives Workmen's Compensation benefits, the board will pay the difference between the normal/usual salary and the Workmen's Compensation benefit payment. The Board salary payment shall not exceed one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) the usual salary of the employee. The payment by the Board shall be paid to the employee for the day(s) they are receiving Workman's Compensation benefits not to exceed thirty (30) working days. The Board will also continue to pay the individual insurance premium, for the employee during the thirty (30) day maximum benefit period. If the individual has family coverage, they must pay for the family coverage on a monthly basis, lump sum, or payroll deduction.

RETURN TO WORK FOR WORK RELATED INJURIES

A doctor's release must be submitted prior to the employee's actual return to work. If temporary or alternative duty assignments are needed for an employee who has been released to return to work for light or restrictive duty by the treating physician, please contact the Central Office.

Time Staff Schedules (policy 5.602)

WORK SCHEDULES

The workday for full-time licensed and professional staff will be a minimum of seven hours and thirty minutes and will continue until professional responsibilities to the student and the school are completed. Administrative meetings, curriculum development, student supervision, assigned duties, parent conferences, group or individual planning and extra-curricular activities may require hours beyond the stated minimum. Teachers shall be allotted a duty-free planning period of two and one-half (2 1/2) hours each week to provide time for planning, preparation for effective teaching and attention to major program improvement. Work schedules for other employees will be defined by the director of schools or his/her designee, consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act and provisions of this policy.

WORKWEEK DEFINED

Working hours for all employees not exempted under the Fair Labor Standards Act,³ including secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria, janitorial and maintenance personnel, will conform to federal and state regulations. The director of schools will ensure that job positions are classified as exempt or non-exempt and that employees are made aware of such classifications. Supervisors will make every effort to avoid circumstances which will require non-exempt employees to work more than forty (40) hours each week. For purposes of compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, the workweek for school district employees will be 12:00 a.m. Saturday until 11:59 p.m. Friday.

OVERTIME AND COMPENSATORY TIME

The Board discourages overtime work by non-exempt employees. A non-exempt employee will not work overtime without the express approval of his/her supervisor. All overtime work must be expressly approved in writing by the director of schools or his/her designee. All supervisory personnel must monitor overtime on a weekly basis and report such time to the director of schools/designee. Principals and supervisors will monitor employees' work, will ensure that overtime provisions of this policy and the Fair Labor Standards Act are followed and will ensure that all employees are compensated for any overtime worked. Principals or supervisors may need to adjust daily schedules to prevent non-exempt employees from working more than forty (40) hours in a workweek. Accurate and complete timesheets of actual hours worked during the workweek will be signed by each employee and submitted to the finance director. The finance director will review work records of employees on a regular basis to make an assessment of overtime use.

In lieu of overtime compensation, non-exempt employees may receive compensatory time off at a rate of not less than one and one-half (1.5) hours for one hour of overtime worked, if such compensatory time (1) is pursuant to an agreement between the employer and employee reached before overtime work is performed, and (2) is authorized by the immediate supervisor.

Employees will be allowed to use compensatory time within a reasonable period after requesting such use if the requested use of the compensatory time does not unduly disrupt the operation of the school division. Employees may accrue a maximum of 240 compensatory time hours before they will be provided overtime pay at the rate earned by the employee at the time the employee receives such payment. In addition, upon leaving the school division, an employee must be paid for any unused compensatory time at the rate of not less than the higher of (1) the average regular rate received by the employee during his/her last three (3) years of employment, or (2) the final regular rate received by the employee.

Non-exempt employees whose workweek is less than forty (40) hours will be paid at the regular rate of pay for time worked up to forty (40) hours. Such employees shall be provided overtime pay or compensatory time as provided for working more than forty (40) hours in a workweek.

This policy shall be included in the staff handbook, however, employees will be provided with a copy of this policy and will be required to sign this policy to acknowledge their understanding of overtime and compensatory time provisions. Such signed policy shall be placed in the employee's personnel file and shall constitute the written agreement in this section.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

All employees are expected to be present during all work hours. Absence without prior approval, chronic absences, habitual tardiness or abuses of designated working hours are all considered neglect of duty and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Ethics (policy 5.611)

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, all employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships. These standards include the following:

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1. The maintenance of just and courteous professional relationships with student, parent(s), staff members and others;
2. The maintenance of their own efficiency and knowledge of the developments in their fields of work;
3. The transaction of all official business with the properly designated authorities of the school system;
4. The establishment of friendly and intelligent cooperation between the community and the school system;
5. The representation of the school system on all occasions that the contributions of the school system to the community are recognized;
6. The welfare of children is the first concern of the school system when placing professional personnel. The use of pressure on school officials for appointments or transfers is unethical;
7. Restraint from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or selfish propaganda of any kind;
8. The responsibility to make any criticism of other staff members or of the school system directly to the particular school administrator who has the administrative responsibility for improving the situation and then to the Director of Schools, if necessary; and
9. The proper use and protection of all school properties, equipment and materials

Coffee County Schools Personnel Dress Code Guidelines

It is imperative that all employees of the Coffee County School System project an appropriate professional image for the students and community. Each employee, while exercising his/her right in an individual way, will show a high degree of respect for the standards of decency, cleanliness and style generally accepted by the school and community.

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

The following are considered **inappropriate**:

1. Revealing apparel
2. No part of an undergarment should be visible. (Bra straps, underwear, etc)
3. No 'see through' clothing, low-cut tops (No Cleavage), midriffs or revealing slits in skirts

4. Inappropriately sized apparel.
 - a. Clothes must fit properly
 - b. No baggy or sagging clothes (shirts and/or pants)
 - c. Athletic wear
 - d. Spandex, leggings (worn as pants)

The Principal or Supervisor shall have the authority to determine what is acceptable in maintaining a conducive educational environment in their school.

In teaching positions that require “alternative dress”, prior approval of the Principal or Supervisor must be obtained.

Custodians, maintenance, transportation and food service staff must wear appropriate clothing as approved and/or furnished by the school district.

These guidelines apply to all Coffee County employees. Appropriate clothing, as well as safety, should be considered at all times in relation to the assigned job.

A Good Rule of Thumb – “If in doubt ... don’t wear it.”

Whistleblower Protection Reporting Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines and protections for employees who report improper conduct or violations of federal law or district policy. The Coffee County School System (CCSS) is committed to providing a safe and ethical environment and encourages employees to report concerns without fear of retaliation.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, contractors, and stakeholders.

1. Definition of Whistleblower

A whistleblower is any CCSS employee, contractor, or agent who in good faith reports an activity they reasonably believe is illegal, unethical, or in violation of federal, state, or local laws or District policies.

2. Disclosures

Employees are encouraged to report activities that may involve:

- Criminal offenses
- Fraud, waste, or misuse of funds
- Gross mismanagement
- Substantial and specific dangers to health or safety
- Violations of federal, state, or District laws or policies

3. Reporting Procedure

To report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse employees may follow these steps:

1. **Internal Reporting:** Contact the immediate supervisor, HR department, or District compliance officer. Employees may submit reports verbally or in writing and are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible.
2. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Reports may be made anonymously. While complete anonymity may limit the District's ability to investigate, CCSS will maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible, consistent with legal requirements.
3. **Alternative Reporting Channels:** If the employee believes reporting to their immediate supervisor may not be appropriate, notifications can be sent outside of the district. If you observe a district employee engaging in any activity which you consider to be illegal, improper or wasteful, please call the state Comptroller's toll-free Hotline: 1-800-232-5454. Notifications can also be submitted electronically at: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline>

4. Investigation and Follow-up

Upon receiving a report, the District will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 business days.
- Assign an appropriate individual or team to investigate the report.
- Complete the investigation in a timely manner, keeping the reporting employee informed of progress where appropriate.

5. Rights and Protections

CCSS prohibits any form of retaliation against an employee who, in good faith, makes a report under this procedure. Retaliation includes but is not limited to termination, demotion, suspension, harassment, or any other adverse action.

Employees who believe they have been retaliated against may file a complaint with the District's HR department, which will be investigated promptly. Confirmed incidents of retaliation may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

6. Training and Awareness

The District will provide training to new employees on whistleblower rights and protections, ensuring that staff understand their rights under this policy.

7. Legal Compliance

This policy is intended to comply with relevant federal statutes, including but not the Whistleblower Protection Act and applicable state laws. The District will promptly update this procedure to remain compliant with any changes in legislation.

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Drug Free Workplace (Policy 1.804)

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Any employee who violates the terms of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension, dismissal, and/or referral for prosecution.

“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.

“Illegal drugs” shall include any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or any other controlled substance as defined by federal law.²

“Unauthorized drugs” shall include, but are not limited to, inhalants; any designer, synthetic, derivative, analogous, or "look-alike" substances that are manufactured, designed, or intended to resemble and/or mimic the effects of illegal drugs; any legally prescribed drugs being used in a manner for which they were not intended or prescribed including, but not limited to, the use of prescription drugs prescribed for another individual; and any lawful substances that could result in impairment of physical or mental capacity that is threatening to the health or safety of the employee or others.³

“Alcohol” shall include, but is not limited to, spirits, liquor, wine, beer, and any liquid containing alcohol as defined by state and federal law

ALCOHOL & DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

No employee while on or in the workplace shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any illegal or unauthorized drugs¹ or any alcohol

Drug and Alcohol Testing for Employees (Policy 5.403)

PRE-EMPLOYMENT DRUG SCREENING

Prior to employment, as a condition of any job offer, substance screens will be required for individuals applying for employment with the school system.

Applicants will sign an acknowledgement prior to substance screening, permitting the summary result to be sent to the director of schools/designee.

Refusal to sign the acknowledgment or to submit to substance screening will be considered as withdrawal of the individual’s application for employment. The

applicant will not be permitted to reapply for employment for at least (12) twelve months.

If substance screening shows a confirmed positive result for which there is no current physician's prescription, any job offer will be revoked. The applicant will not be permitted to reapply for employment for at least (12) twelve months.

RANDOM DRUG TESTING

In the event that evidence arises to indicate that the Coffee County School System employees have engaged a pattern of systematic abuse of drugs and alcohol, and the Director further finds that the use of Reasonable Suspicion Drug Testing, as outlined below, is not a sufficient deterrent to such use, the Director may implement a program of random, suspicionless drug testing among safety-sensitive employees. Any such program should be implemented with the highest regard for the privacy of those taking part in the testing and shall be tailored to meet the goal of deterrence and investigation, while respecting the constitutional rights of those impacted by the testing.

REASONABLE SUSPICION DRUG TESTING

Trained supervisors have the responsibility to observe and document the cause for reasonable suspicion and when appropriate, refer the matter to the director of schools/designee. It is not the supervisor's responsibility to attempt diagnosis. All information, facts and circumstances leading to and supporting this suspicion, should be included in a written report detailing the basis for the suspicion. After the report is filed, the employee should be notified.

Any employee may be required to submit to substance screening if the following conditions exist: (list is not inclusive)

Observed use, possession or sale of illegal drugs and/or use, possession, sale, or abuse of alcohol and/or prescription drugs.

Apparent physical state of impairment of motor functions.

Marked changes in personal behavior not attributed to other factors. Employee involvement in or contribution to an accident where the use of alcohol or drugs is reasonably suspected or employee involvement in a pattern of repetitive accidents whether or not they involve actual or potential injury.

Violation of criminal statutes involving the use of illegal drugs, alcohol or prescription drugs and/or violations of drug statutes.

TESTING FOR CDL EMPLOYEES

All drivers and applicants for driver positions who are required to hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to perform their job function must adhere to the requirements of this policy and all procedures relating to this policy.

The use, possession, sale, purchase or transfer of any controlled substances except medically prescribed drugs on school property, while on school business or while operating school vehicles and equipment is prohibited. Drinking alcoholic beverages during working hours, four (4) hours before reporting to work or having any measurable amount of alcohol in their system during working hours is prohibited, whether on or off school property. Working hours include all breaks. Off-duty use of drugs and alcohol is prohibited to the extent that it affects driver's attendance or performance and their ability to pass required DOT alcohol and controlled substance tests. Any violation of this policy is grounds for termination as an employee of the Board and possible legal prosecution.

The use of any prescription drug that could affect the central nervous system or one that would impair reaction time shall be reported to the director of schools/director of transportation. Notice shall be given of non-prescription (over-the-counter) drugs being taken on a regular basis. The notice shall include the duration of ingestion and the possible side effects.

PROCEDURES

The execution and enforcement of this policy will follow set procedures to screen bodily fluids, conduct breath testing, and/or search all employee/applicants for alcohol and drug use, and those employees suspected of violating this policy who are involved in a reportable accident or who are periodically or randomly selected. The procedures are designed not only to detect violations of this policy, but also to ensure fairness to each employee. Disciplinary action will be taken as necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION

The director of schools/director of transportation is authorized to implement this policy and procedures for the drug testing program, including a periodic review of the program to address any problems, changes and/or revisions of it, maintenance of all records required by the federal regulations, and determination upon Board approval of how the program will be accomplished, whether in-house, contracted or by consortium.

DISSEMINATION

The director of schools/director of transportation shall be responsible for communicating this policy and the procedures to all employees affected by this policy and shall be accountable for its consistent enforcement. The director of schools/director of transportation is designated to answer questions about this policy, procedures and all other matters involved in alcohol and controlled substance testing of CDL drivers and the reasonable suspicion testing of all other employees.

Report of Arrest

If an employee is arrested for any reason, the employee is to notify his/her immediate supervisor and Human Resources at the Central Office within forty-eight (48) hours of the arrest.

Appropriate disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal will take place if this notice is not provided as required.

Sick Leave (Policy 5.302)

PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

Professional personnel shall earn one (1) day of sick leave for each month employed during the school year, and these days shall accumulate for an unlimited number of days. 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 a teacher, including the teacher's wife or husband, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law. A signed statement listing the cause of absence shall be provided by the employee on forms furnished by the director of schools and shall promptly be given to the immediate supervisor in support of all claims for sick leave pay. A falsified statement shall be grounds for dismissal. A certificate from the physician on forms furnished by the Board may be required in support of any claim for sick leave pay. The principal shall notify the director of schools' office at once if an employee is sick beyond the limit of his/her sick leave accumulation. Permanent, cumulative sick leave records for each active professional employee shall be kept in the director of schools' office. A teacher,

upon employment, may transfer his/her accumulated sick leave from another Tennessee school system, provided that the director of schools of the system in which the accumulated leave was held provides notarized verification. Sick leave for maternity purposes may be taken during the period of physical disability only. A teacher may use up to thirty (30) days of accumulated sick leave for the adoption of a child. If both adoptive parents are teachers, only one parent may request leave. Written verification from the adoption agency or other entity handling the adoption shall be required before the leave is granted.

SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Support personnel shall earn one (1) day of sick leave for each month an employee is employed. At the termination of the employment of any employee, all unused sick leave accumulated by the employee shall be forfeited. The immediate supervisor may require a physician's certificate stating the reason for absence.

SICK LEAVE BANK

The purpose of the sick leave bank is to provide sick leave to all participating employees who have suffered an unplanned personal illness, injury, disability, or quarantine and whose personal sick leave is exhausted. To form a sick leave bank, a minimum of twenty (20) employees from the school system shall petition the Board for permission to establish a sick leave bank. Upon approval, sick leave bank trustees shall be appointed and shall operate as the governing body of the sick leave bank and shall enact rules and regulations consistent with state law. Employees wishing to participate shall initially give a maximum of three (3) days of sick leave. These days are to be deducted from the employee's personal accumulation and donated to the sick leave bank. Donations of sick leave to the bank are nonrefundable and non transferable. At any time the number of days in the sick leave bank is less than twenty (20), or one (1) per employee if there are more than twenty (20) members, or at any time deemed advisable, the trustees shall assess each member one (1) or more days of accumulated sick leave. If an employee has no accumulated sick leave at the time of assessment, the first earned days shall be donated as they are accrued by the employee. An employee who is a member of the sick leave bank may request an allotment of days (for the employee's personal illness only) in the manner designated by the trustees. The need for these days must be verified by a statement from a doctor. By written notice to the trustees, an employee may withdraw from bank participation on June 30 of any year. Membership withdrawal results in forfeiture of all days contributed. The sick leave bank shall be operated in accordance with state law.

Personal, Professional, and Bereavement Leave (Policy 5.303)

Personal and professional leave shall be granted in accordance with laws of the State of Tennessee and rules and regulations of the State Board of Education.

Certified employees shall earn personal and professional leave at the rate of one (1) day for each half-year employed for a total of two (2) days per year. Any personal and professional leave remaining unused at the end of a year shall be credited to sick leave.

If, at the termination of services, any employee has been absent for more days than leave has been earned, an amount sufficient to cover the excess days used shall be deducted from the employee's final salary payment.

Subject to the following conditions, personal leave may be taken at the discretion of the employee:

1. Except in emergency, each employee shall give the principal at least one day's notice in writing of intent to take leave;
2. The approval of the principal of the school shall be required:
 - a. If more than ten percent (10%) of the teachers in any given school request its use on the same day;
 - b. If requested during any prior established student examination period;
 - c. If requested on the day immediately preceding or following a holiday or vacation period.
 - d. If personal leave is requested for days scheduled for professional development or in-service training, according to a school calendar adopted by the Board prior to the commencement of the school year; or
 - e. If personal leave is requested for days scheduled for parent-teacher conferences, according to a school calendar adopted by the Board prior to the commencement of the school year.

Professional leave is a short, temporary absence for the purpose of attending workshops and other meetings relating to school business or serving on boards and commissions which meet during daytime hours when appointed by a mayor, city council, county executive or county commission.

Requests shall be submitted to the principal at least five (5) days prior to requested leave of absence.

In addition, certified employees shall be granted leave to serve on any board or commission of the state when the appointment is made by the Governor or General Assembly. Such leave shall not be counted against any other accumulated leave credits. The employee shall notify the principal at least five (5) days prior to leave being taken.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Full-time employees shall be eligible for a total of five (5) working days of bereavement paid leave in the death of an employee's parent, stepparent, foster parent, spouse, child, stepchild, or foster child, siblings, grandparents, or parents-in-law.

Bereavement leave requested for anyone other than listed must be approved by the principal/supervisor.

Additional requests for bereavement leave can be made from the direct supervisor/principal to the Director of Schools.

Approved bereavement days will be granted without charge to the affected employee's accumulated leave accounts and may be taken nonconsecutively.

Bereavement days cannot be added to accumulated leave or carried over from one school year to another.

Vacations (Policy 5.310)

Support personnel shall earn one (1) day of vacation time for each twenty (20) days of employment per work calendar. The time of vacation must be approved by the director of schools and immediate supervisor.

Holidays

Support personnel, if on active payroll at the time, shall be entitled to holidays specified on their work calendars. Equivalent days, as approved by the director of schools, may be taken when these days fall on weekends or when school is in session. Unused vacation days of employees who receive vacation days according to their work calendars may accumulate up to the equivalent of two years of vacation earnings (maximum of 30 days). All vacation leave accumulated in excess of the maximum allowed for that employee will automatically be converted into

accumulated sick leave at the end of each fiscal year (June 30). Upon termination of services the unused vacation days (maximum of 30 days) can be transferred into sick leave or the employee may be paid for these days.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (Policy 5.305)

ELIGIBILITY

Anyone who has been employed for at least twelve (12) months by the school district and anyone who has at least 1,250 hours of service (hours used for leave, even FMLA leave, shall not be credited for service for purposes of FMLA eligibility¹) during the previous twelve (12) month period shall be eligible to use FMLA leave.²

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

An eligible employee shall be granted, upon request, up to twelve (12) weeks unpaid leave during a fixed calendar year for the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child;
2. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
3. A serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his/her job position;
4. The care of a spouse, child, or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition; and
5. Any qualifying circumstances arising out of the fact that a spouse, child, or parent of the employee is on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty in the Armed Forces.

An employee may substitute accrued paid leave for unpaid time. Use of accrued paid leave shall run concurrently with and be counted toward the employee's total period of FMLA leave.

MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE

1. Relationship between FMLA leave and Tennessee Maternity Leave Act – FMLA leave shall run concurrently with leave provided under the Tennessee Maternity Act, which affords eligible employees leave for a period not to exceed four (4) months for the adoption, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing of a newborn child.³

2. Teachers' Leave – In accordance with state law, any teacher who goes on maternity or paternity leave shall be allowed to use all or a portion of the teacher's accumulated sick or annual leave for maternity leave purposes. In order to be eligible to use sick leave, written request of the teacher accompanied by a statement from the teacher's physician verifying pregnancy shall be submitted. Upon verification by a written statement from an adoption agency or other entity handling an adoption, a teacher may also be allowed to use accumulated leave for adoption of a

child. If both adoptive parents are teachers employed by the district, however, only one (1) parent is entitled to use such leave.⁴

3. Spouses who are both eligible employees of the school district are limited to a combined total of twelve (12) workweeks of FMLA leave in a single twelve (12) month period if the leave is taken for the birth and care of a newborn child, for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent who has a serious health condition. Under certain circumstances, spouses who share leave for the birth or adoption of a child may be eligible for limited amounts of additional leave for other qualifying FMLA reasons.⁵

4. Paid Parental Leave – Under state law, an additional six (6) work weeks of paid leave is available to eligible employees after a birth, stillbirth, or adoption of a newly placed minor child. An eligible employee taking leave under this provision shall not be required to utilize any other type of accrued leave during this period. Eligible employees include teachers, principals, supervisors, or other individuals required by law to hold a valid license of qualification for employment who have been employed with a school district full time for at least twelve (12) consecutive months.

Employees shall provide notice to the school district thirty (30) days prior to the intended use of the leave. If the employee learns about the need for leave less than thirty (30) days in advance, the employee shall give notice as soon as reasonably possible in order to be eligible for the paid leave. This paid leave does not need to be taken consecutively; however, the paid leave shall be used within twelve (12) months of the qualifying event. The leave shall run concurrently with FMLA leave.⁶

LEAVE FOR A SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION⁷

Eligible employees, upon request, shall be granted up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave when he/she is unable to work because of a serious health condition or to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition. Employees

shall contact Human Resources to determine if the reason for leave qualifies as FMLA leave. If the leave is foreseeable, the employee shall give thirty (30) days' notice. If the leave is not foreseeable, the employee shall notify Human Resources as soon as practicable, generally, either the same or next business day.

LEAVE FOR MILITARY FAMILY MEMBERS

1. Qualifying Exigency Leave⁸ - Eligible employees are entitled to up to twelve (12) workweeks of leave because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee, as defined under the FMLA, is on active duty, or has been notified of an impending call to active duty, or has been notified of an impending call to active duty status in the Armed Forces.

Qualifying exigencies may include:

- a. Issues arising from the service member's short notice deployment;
- b. Military events and related activities (e.g., official ceremonies, support programs);
- c. Making or updating financial and legal arrangements;
- d. Attending counseling;
- e. Taking up to fifteen (15) days leave to spend time with a covered service member who is on short-term rest and recuperation leave during deployment; or
- f. Attending post-deployment activities.

2. Military Caregiver Leave⁹ - An eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member or covered veteran with a serious injury or illness is entitled to up to twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave in a single twelve (12) month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in out-patient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness.

A covered veteran is an individual who was a member of the Armed Forces at any time during the period of five (5) years preceding the date of the medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy that has a serious injury or illness who is currently receiving medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

The single twelve (12) month period for military caregiver leave begins on the first day the employee takes leave for this reason and ends twelve (12) months later. An eligible employee is limited to a combined total of twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave to provide care for a covered service member. The maximum of twenty-six (26) workweeks may include no more than twelve (12) workweeks of leave that is taken for the birth and care of a newborn child, for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, for care of a parent who has a serious health condition, or for the employee's own serious health condition.

INTERMITTENT LEAVE¹⁰

Eligible employees may take FMLA leave intermittently when medically necessary to care for a seriously ill family member, because of the employee's own serious health condition, or for the care for a newborn, a newly adopted child, or a newly placed foster care child. When an employee requests foreseeable leave for planned medical treatment and the employee would be on leave for greater than twenty percent (20%) of the total number of working days in the period during which the leave would extend, the school district may require that such employee elect either to take the leave for periods of a particular duration, not to exceed the duration of the planned medical treatment, or to transfer temporarily to an available alternative position offered by the school district for which the employee is qualified and that has equivalent pay and benefits and better accommodates recurring periods of leave.

RESTRICTIONS

1. Notice Requirements

a. Employee Notice¹¹ - For foreseeable leave, the employee shall provide the Director of Schools with at least thirty (30) days written notice before the beginning of the anticipated leave.

b. District Notice - Once it has been established that the leave requested qualifies for FMLA, the Director of Schools/designee shall notify the employee within three (3) business days (absent extenuating circumstances) that any leave taken pursuant to state leave statutes (paid vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or workers' compensation) shall run concurrently with FMLA leave.¹² The notice may be given

orally or in writing. If the notice is oral, it shall be confirmed in writing, no later than the following pay day.¹³

2. Certification Requirement¹⁴

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- a. The Director of Schools may require that a request for leave be supported by certification issued by a health care provider with the following information:
 - i. The date on which the serious health condition commenced;
 - ii. The probable duration of the condition;
 - iii. The appropriate medical facts within the knowledge of the health care provider regarding the condition; and
 - iv. A statement that the eligible employee is needed to care for the son, daughter, spouse, or parent and an estimate of the amount of time that such employee is needed.
- b. If there is any reason to doubt the validity of the certification provided, the Director of Schools may require, at the expense of the school district, an opinion of a second health care provider.

3. Period Near the End of an Academic Term (Professional Employees)¹⁵

- a. If leave is taken more than five (5) weeks prior to the end of the term, the Director of Schools may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term if the leave is at least three (3) weeks of duration and the return of employment would occur during the three (3) week period before the end of the term.
- b. If the leave is taken five (5) weeks prior to the end of the term, the Director of Schools may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term if the leave is greater than two (2) weeks duration and the return to employment would occur during the two (2) week period before the end of the term.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE BOARD¹⁶

1. The employee shall be restored to the same position of employment or an equivalent position with no loss of benefits, pay, or other terms of employment.
2. The employee shall be kept under any group health plan for the duration of the leave.
3. The Board may recover the premium paid under the following conditions:
 - a. The employee fails to return from leave after the period of leave has expired; and

b. The employee fails to return to work for a reason other than the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition or other circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

Emergency and Legal Leave (Policy 5.301)

EMERGENCY LEAVE

An immediate supervisor may grant a certified employee emergency leave during the workday for a sudden, unexpected occurrence demanding immediate attention. Leave shall be taken as personal leave,¹ sick leave or leave without pay. The employee who uses emergency leave shall confirm said leave on appropriate forms the day after returning to work.

Principals or administrative supervisors shall keep a tally of the amount of time individual employees are released under this policy and when the total time reaches one (1) day, the employee shall be charged with one (1) day of applicable leave.

JURY DUTY

If a teacher is summoned for jury duty, he/she shall present written evidence that he/she has been summoned to serve on a jury. The teacher shall be entitled to the usual compensation, less the amount paid by the court.²

COURT APPEARANCES

If an employee appears in court as a plaintiff, defendant, witness, or voluntarily appears on behalf of family or friends, personal leave or leave without pay shall be granted. If an appearance is required on an involuntary basis, appropriate leave shall be granted.

Leave of Absence (Policy 5.304)

Anytime an employee is to be off from work more than ten (10) consecutive days, a leave request must be made to the director of schools. The fact that one has sick leave to cover the days off has no bearing on the leave request due to the fact that the leave can be paid or unpaid.

Any person holding a position requiring a license to teach shall be granted leave for military service, legislative service, maternity, adoption, recuperation of health,

educational improvements or other sufficient reason without loss of accumulated leave credits, tenure status, or other fringe benefits. All leaves shall be requested in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance on forms provided by the director of schools. The 30-day notice may be waived or reduced by the director of schools upon submission of a certified statement by a physician. The application for leave forms shall require:

1. A description of the type of leave requested;
2. The requested dates for beginning and ending the leave; and
3. A statement of intent to return to the position from which leave is granted.

Each request for leave must be acted upon by the director of schools within fifteen (15) days. Each applicant shall be notified in writing of the action of the director and the beginning and ending dates of the leave which is granted. All leaves, except military leave, shall be from a specific date to a specific date. However, any leave may be extended by the director of schools upon written request from the teacher. Military leave shall be granted for whatever period may be required. The procedure and condition for extending a leave are the same as those used when originally requesting and granting the leave.

Positions vacated for less than twelve (12) months by teachers on leave shall be filled with an interim teacher while the teacher is on leave. If the teacher returns from leave within 12 months, the interim teacher shall relinquish the position. If the leave exceeds twelve (12) months, the teacher shall be placed in the same or a comparable position upon return.

Part-time leaves may be granted by the director of schools upon written request for the same conditions as for full-time leave.

Any teacher on leave shall notify the director of schools at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she is on leave. Failure to give such notice shall be considered breach of contract.

PAY AND BENEFITS

All leave granted in conformance with this policy shall be without pay except as may be covered by sick leave in the case of maternity and recuperative leaves. Employees shall have the opportunity to continue participation, at their own expense, in group insurance plans subject to restrictions of the insuring carrier.

Employees who take leave under the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) shall have the same portion of their insurance premiums paid by the Board as is paid for active employees. This leave is limited to twelve (12) weeks and subject to the restrictions and conditions of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Resignation/Retirement

If an employee decides to resign or retire they must complete the resignation/retirement form and have the school principal/supervisor sign the form and return it to Human Resources. All employees who are planning on retiring can make an appointment with: Tennessee Consolidated Retirement

15th Floor, Andrew Jackson Building

Nashville, TN 37243-0201

Phone (800) 770-8277

E-mail:

TCRS.Customersupport@tn.gov

or TCRS.Members-Services@tn.gov

Website: <http://www.retirereadytn.gov>

RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES

A teacher shall give the Director of Schools notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation. A teacher who fails to give such notice, in the absence of justifiable extenuating circumstances, shall forfeit all tenure status. The Board may waive the thirty (30) days' notice requirement and permit a teacher to resign in good standing. The conditions under which it is permissible to break a contract with the Board are as follows:

1. The incapacity on the part of the teacher to perform the contract as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the Board;
2. The release by the Board of the teacher from the contract which the teacher has entered into with the Board.
3. Any teacher on leave shall notify the Director of Schools in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she has taken leave. Failure to render such notice may be considered a breach of contract. Upon a breach of contract, the Board, upon a motion recorded in its minutes, may file a complaint with the Commissioner and request the suspension of a teacher's certificate. After the Commissioner has provided the teacher an opportunity for defense during a hearing, the Commissioner may suspend the certificate

for no less than thirty (30) and no more than three hundred sixty-five (365) days.

RETIREMENT OF CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES

Retirement shall mean a termination of services under conditions which will allow the employee to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or social security benefits. Employees eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system. The benefit coordinator shall assist employees in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring employee to provide verification of eligibility in writing from TCRS to the Central Office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring employee to file for benefits. Employees who retire under TCRS may be employed up to one hundred twenty (120) days per year without loss of retirement benefits. Retired teachers may substitute teach for an additional ninety (90) days if the Director of Schools certifies in writing to the Board that no other qualified personnel are available to substitute teach. The Director of Schools may employ teachers retired for at least one year for full-time employment as a kindergarten through twelfth grade teacher on a year-to-year basis. Retirement benefits will not be lost or suspended under certain conditions, which include but are not limited to the following:

1. The Director of Schools of the employing system must certify in writing that no other qualified individuals are available to fill the position;
2. The Commissioner of Education must certify that the employing school system serves an area that lacks qualified teachers to serve in the position to be filled;
3. The retired teacher must hold a valid license and shall not be entitled to tenure status;
4. The retired teacher shall not be eligible to accrue additional retirement benefits, accrued leave or receive medical insurance coverage; and
5. The salary paid to the retired member shall not be less than the rate of compensation set by the Board for teachers with no experience filling similar positions, nor more than eighty-five percent (85%) of the rate of compensation set by the Board for teachers with comparable training and years of experience filling similar positions.

RESIGNATION OF SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Support personnel shall give the immediate supervisor written notice of resignation at least two (2) weeks (ten (10) working days) in advance of the effective date of voluntary termination. The ten (10) working days may be waived by the director of

schools for justifiable reason. The immediate supervisor shall forward copies, the day received to the director of schools' office. The payroll office will prepare final payment for the next appropriate scheduled payday.

RETIREMENT OF SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Retirement shall mean a termination of services under conditions which will allow the employee to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or social security benefits. Employees eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system. Central office personnel shall assist employees in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring employee to provide verification of eligibility in writing from TCRS to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring employee to file for benefits. Employees who retire under TCRS may be employed up to one-hundred-twenty (120) days per year without loss of retirement benefits.

Personnel Records

Personnel records are maintained for all employees. The Director of Schools/designee shall maintain all personnel records and shall permit the inspection of the same. Personnel records are considered to be public records; this means that anyone can request to view an employee's personnel record. The consent of the employee is not required. To view a record you must give adequate notice and fill out a request form. Someone from the Central Office must be present when viewing a personnel file. Personnel records may contain the following:

- Application
- Experience records
- Transcripts
- Teaching License
- Evaluation Documents
- Disciplinary Records
- Professional growth Plans
- Letters or certificates of accomplishments or reprimands

Teaching License

All certified employees are responsible for securing a license and maintaining its validity. A valid license is required for the employment of a teacher in a teaching position.

All certified employees must have an active account with TNCompass.org
For more information regarding licensing, please contact:

Tennessee State Department of Education
Office of Teacher Licensing
12th Floor, Andrew Johnson tower
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0377
Phone (615) 532-4885
FAX (615) 532-7858

Any change in a teacher's name, address, or endorsement should be made immediately to Human Resources at the Central Office.

EVALUATION (policy 5.109)

The evaluation of performance and its effectiveness must be a cooperative and shared endeavor on the part of the director of schools and administrative and supervisory personnel. The Board shall use a state-approved model for evaluating administrative and supervisory personnel and shall approve standard forms to be used in evaluating support personnel. The director of schools is responsible for ensuring that all administrative and supervisory personnel are evaluated annually.

LICENSED TEACHING PERSONNEL

The Board adopts the State evaluation model. The director shall draft procedures to ensure that the model is implemented throughout the school system. Additionally, the director of schools shall provide information to all licensed teaching personnel regarding the nature of the evaluation and the grievance procedures prescribed by the Tennessee State Board of Education.

Local Level Grievance Procedure

The director of schools shall develop procedures, consistent with State law, for processing evaluation grievances.

Evaluation Grievance Procedures

Per Tennessee Code Annotated §49-1-302 principals and teachers may challenge the following relative to evaluations:

- Accuracy of the data- Evaluation data must be linked correctly to the right teacher. This does not mean that educators can grieve a disagreement of a score or the formula used to determine the score.
- Adherence to the evaluation policies adopted by the State Board of Education- Educators may grieve procedural errors that could materially affect or compromise the integrity of the evaluation results. This includes not having met the minimum number of required observations for each domain or not having pre- and post-conferences.

Examples of items that principals and teachers may not challenge include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The final score of the summative evaluation or the score of any of its components.
- Minor procedural errors in implementing the evaluation model that do not materially affect or compromise the integrity of the evaluation results.

Grievance forms will be on the system's website under Human Resources/forms and in the office of Human Resource. The following steps shall be followed when grievances are filed under this procedure:

Step I –Grievance reviewed by the evaluator

- A written grievance **MUST** be submitted to the evaluator no later than fifteen (15) days from the date teachers and principals receive the results from each component:
 - Qualitative appraisal, or the final average observation score
 - Student growth measures
 - Other measures of student achievement

If not submitted within the applicable time, the grievance will be considered untimely and invalid.

- The following components are required in each grievance filed:
 - Teacher or principal name, position, school and additional title, if any
 - Name of immediate supervisor
 - Name of evaluator/reviewer
 - Date the challenged summative evaluation was received
 - Evaluation period in question
 - Basis for the grievance, including specifics about the inaccurate data that was used or the procedural error that occurred as part of

- your evaluation and how this materially affected or compromised your evaluation
 - Correction action desired by the grievant
 - Sufficient facts or other information to begin an investigation
- Failure to state specific reasons will result in the grievance being considered invalid.
- After receiving the grievance the evaluator shall:
 - Examine the documentation presented by the grievant and such other documentation as may be relevant and available (Investigation and fact finding)
 - Communicate a decision, in writing, to the grievant within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the grievance
 - To allow disputes to be resolved at the lowest level possible, the evaluator may take any action necessary, based on the circumstances, to immediately correct any procedural errors made in the evaluation process.

Step II-Grievance reviewed by the Director of Schools or his/her designee who shall have had no input or involvement in the evaluation for which the grievance has been filed.

- A written grievance and a copy of the decision rendered at Step I must be submitted by the grievant party to the Director of Schools no later than fifteen (15) days of receipt of the decision rendered in Step I. A designee may not be used if the grievous party is a principal.
- After receiving the grievance the Director of Schools or his/her designee will:
 - Hold informal discussion with the grievant
 - Hear facts, allegations and testimony by appropriate witness as practical
 - Communicate a decision, in writing, to the grievant within fifteen (15) days of the discussion with the grievant
 - To allow disputes to be resolved at the lowest level possible, the Director of Schools may take any action necessary, based on the circumstances, to immediately correct any procedural errors made in the evaluation process

Step III-Grievance reviewed by the Board of Education

- Teachers and principals may request a hearing before the Board of Education by submitting a written grievance and all relevant documentation to the Board of Education within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the decision rendered in Step II.
 - After receiving the grievance and reviewing the record, the Board may:
 - Grant or deny a request for a full Board hearing
 - Affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools with or without a hearing before the Board
 - If a full Board hearing is granted, the Board will:
 - Hold such hearing no later than fifteen (15) days after the receipt of a request for a hearing
 - Give written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the grievant, Director of Schools and all administrators involved
 - Communicate its decision, in writing, to all parties no later than thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the hearing
 - The Board of Education shall serve as the final step for all grievances
- *For more information regarding evaluations and grievances, you may view the Tennessee Rules and regulations for evaluations at www.tn.gov/sos/rules/0520/0520-02/0520-02-01.20110729.pdf

Procedures for Granting Tenure (Policy 5.117)

To attain tenure status,¹ a teacher shall:

- (1) meet tenure eligibility requirements;
- (2) be renewed and recommended by the Director of Schools; and
- (3) receive a majority vote of the Board.

TENURE ELIGIBILITY

A teacher that meets the following requirements is eligible for tenure:

1. Has a degree from an approved four-year college or any career and technical teacher who has the equivalent amount of training established and is licensed by the State Board of Education;

2. Holds a valid teacher license issued by the State Board of Education, based on training covering the subjects or grades taught;
3. Has completed a probationary period of five (5) school years or not less than forty-five (45) months within the last seven-year period with the last two (2) years being employed in a regular teaching position rather than an interim teaching position; and
4. Has received evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations” as provided in the evaluation guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education, during the last two (2) years of the probationary period.

If a teacher has met all other requirements for tenure eligibility but has not acquired an official evaluation score during the last one (1) or two (2) years of the probationary period due to allowable circumstances outlined in state law, he/she may utilize the most recent two (2) years of available evaluation scores achieved during the probationary period to become eligible for tenure.

ACQUISITION OF TENURE STATUS

Once a teacher is eligible for tenure, he/she shall be either recommended by the Director of Schools for tenure or nonrenewed. If tenure is denied by the Board, the teacher shall be dismissed.

The following additional guidelines shall apply:

1. The Director of Schools will recommend teachers eligible for tenure at a board meeting in ample time to send notice of non-renewal to each teacher not recommended for tenure within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year.
2. The decision to grant tenure is solely within the discretion of the Board.⁶ Only those teachers who receive a majority vote of the membership of the Board will be granted tenure.
3. A teacher who is eligible for tenure, but tenure is denied by the Board, shall not be rehired beyond the current contract year.

TEACHER RETURNING TO EMPLOYMENT

A teacher who has acquired tenure status in the school district and later resigns shall serve a two-year probationary period upon reemployment, unless the probationary

period is waived by the Board upon request of the Director of Schools. Upon completion of the two-year period, the teacher shall either be recommended by the Director of Schools for tenure or non-renewed. If tenure is denied by the Board, the teacher shall be dismissed.

TEACHER TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT⁹

A tenured or nontenured teacher with five (5) or more years of prior service that transfers from another school district to begin employment in the Coffee County School District shall serve the regular probationary period. The Board, upon the recommendation of the Director of Schools, may waive the probationary period and grant tenure status or shorten the probationary period.

If a nontenured teacher with fewer than five (5) years of service transfers from another school district, such teacher shall not be eligible for tenure status until the teacher has served at least five (5) years when service in both school districts is counted.

All tenure decisions made under this section are subject to the requirements concerning overall teacher performance effectiveness levels.

TEACHER RETURNING TO PROBATIONARY STATUS

Any tenured teacher who receives two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “below expectations” or “significantly below expectations” shall be returned to probationary status by the Director of Schools until the teacher has received two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations.”

When a teacher who has returned to probationary status has received two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations,” the teacher is again eligible for tenure and shall be either recommended by the Director of Schools for tenure or nonrenewed; provided, however, that the teacher shall be dismissed if tenure is denied by the Board.

This section does not apply to teachers who acquired tenure prior to July 1, 2011.

Professional Development Opportunities (Policy 5.113)

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In-service education¹ is a program of planned activities designed to increase the competencies needed by all personnel in the performance of their responsibilities. Competencies are defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which enable personnel to perform their tasks with maximum effectiveness.

Administrative and Supervisory Employees

These employees shall show evidence of continual professional growth by attendance at in-service programs and institutes, studying professional literature, meeting with other professionals for discussion, and otherwise keeping abreast of research in methodology, curriculum, and student growth and development.

Each principal and administrator shall be required to attend the principal-administrator academy for instruction as provided by the TN Department of Education.

Professional Employees

A system-wide in-service committee, composed of membership from a cross-section of other personnel, shall assess system-wide needs, establish priorities, develop objectives, design activities, and evaluate the in-service program.¹ A minimum of five (5) days of in-service education, each of which shall be equivalent to not less than six (6) hours of planned activities, shall be included in the annual school calendar.

In-service credit shall not be given while performing duties which are required as part of regular teaching assignments.

The Board shall include in its budget resources for providing the approved in-service activities.

Individuals who miss in-service activities must make arrangements with their immediate supervisor to make-up the day(s) missed. Failure to participate in in-service activities may result in the suspension or dismissal of the teachers.

In-service day(s) missed may be made up if approved in advance by the principal and director of instruction

Support Personnel

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The immediate supervisor shall be responsible for providing in-service trainings. Absences to attend meetings relating to the employee's job description may be granted by the director of schools without loss of pay to the employee.

Staff-Student Relations (Policy 5.610)

Staff members shall maintain professional relationships with students at all times and develop wholesome and constructive relationships with them. Staff members shall be expected to regard each student as an individual and to accord each student the rights and respect that is due.

Staff members shall promote a learning environment that encourages fulfillment of each student's potential in regard to his/her program, consistent with district goals and with optimal opportunities for students. This goal may be reached by adapting instruction to individual needs, by:

1. Insisting on reasonable standards of scholastic accomplishment for all students;
2. Creating a positive atmosphere in and out of the classroom;
3. Extending courtesy and respect to students; and
4. Treating all students with consistent fairness.

Staff members shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvement with individual students. Any appearance of impropriety shall be avoided. Sexual relationships between employees and students shall be prohibited.

Discrimination/Harassment (Policy 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 will not be tolerated.¹

Discrimination/harassment is defined as conduct, advances, gestures or words either written or spoken of a sexual, racial, ethnic or religious nature which:

1. Unreasonably interfere with the individual's work or performance; or
2. Create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; or
3. Imply that submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term of employment;
4. Imply that submission to or rejection of such conduct will 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.² 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 or the director of schools. 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:

Identity of the alleged victim and person accused;

Location, date, time and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident;

Description of what happened;

Identity of witnesses; and

Any other evidence available.

The privacy and anonymity of all parties and witnesses to complaints will 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 will 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 will itself be considered harassment and will be treated as such.

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

Separation Practices for Tenured Teachers (Policy 5.200)

SUSPENSION PENDING AN INVESTIGATION

The Director of Schools may suspend a teacher at any time that may seem necessary, pending investigation, or final disposition of a case before the Board or an appeal. If the matter under investigation is not the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation or a Department of Children's Services investigation, and if no charges for dismissal have been made, a suspension pending investigation shall not exceed ninety (90) days in duration. Under no circumstances shall the Director of Schools suspend a teacher with pay. If vindicated or reinstated, the teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension.

SUSPENSION OF THREE DAYS OR LESS

The Director of Schools/designee may suspend a teacher for incompetence, inefficiency, neglect of duty, unprofessional conduct, and insubordination. Before a teacher is suspended, he/she shall be:

(1) provided with written notice, including the reasons for the suspension along with an explanation of the evidence;

(2) given an opportunity to respond to the Director of Schools at a conference, if requested within five (5) days; and

(3) given a written decision of the suspension within ten (10) days. Both parties may be represented by counsel at the conference, which shall be recorded.

Under no circumstances shall a Director of Schools suspend a tenured teacher with pay. If reinstated, the tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension unless suspension without pay is deemed to be an appropriate penalty.

DISMISSAL OR SUSPENSION GREATER THAN THREE DAYS

When a tenured teacher is charged with offenses that may justify dismissal or a suspension greater than three (3) days, the charges shall be made in writing,

specifically stating the offenses that are charged, and shall be signed by the party or parties making the charges.

If, in the opinion of the Board, the charges are of such nature as to warrant the dismissal or a suspension greater than three (3) days of the teacher, the Director of Schools shall give the teacher a written notice of this decision, a copy of the charges against the teacher, and a copy of a form provided by the Commissioner of Education advising the teacher of his/her legal duties, rights, and recourse.

A tenured teacher who has been given notice of charges against him/her may within thirty (30) days after receipt of notice give written notice to the Director of Schools of his/her request for a hearing.

The Director of Schools shall, within five (5) days after receipt of request, assign a hearing officer from the list maintained by the Board.

The Board shall maintain a list of qualified individuals who have indicated a willingness to act as impartial hearing officers as defined under Tennessee law.

The hearing officer shall notify the parties, or their attorney, of the officer's assignment and direct the parties or the attorneys for the parties, or both, to appear before the hearing officer for simplification of issues and the scheduling of the hearing. That hearing shall be set no later than thirty (30) days following receipt of the initial request for a hearing. In the discretion of the hearing officer, all or part of any prehearing conference may be conducted by telephone if each participant has an opportunity to participate, be heard, and to address proof and evidentiary concerns. The hearing officer is empowered to issue appropriate orders and to regulate the conduct of the proceedings.

Either party may appeal to the Board an adverse ruling by giving written notice of appeal within ten (10) working days of the hearing officer's delivery of the hearing officer's written findings and conclusions. The Director of Schools shall prepare a copy of the proceedings, including all transcripts and evidence, documentary or otherwise, and transmit the same to the Board within twenty (20) working days of the receipt of the notice of appeal.

The Board shall hear the appeal on the record, and no new evidence may be submitted by either party. The appealing party may appear before the Board to argue why the adverse ruling should be overturned. In no event should such argument last more than fifteen (15) minutes unless the Board votes to extend additional time. At the conclusion of the hearing, any member of the Board may vote to sustain the decision of the hearing officer, send the record back for

additional evidence, revise the penalty, or reverse the decision. The Board shall render its decision within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the hearing. In the event that the decision of the Board is appealed to the chancery court, the Board shall transmit the entire record prepared by the Director of Schools and reviewed by the Board to the chancery court for its review.

RESIGNATION

A teacher shall give the Director of Schools notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation. A teacher who fails to give such notice, in the absence of justifiable extenuating circumstances, shall forfeit all tenure status. The Board may waive the thirty (30) days' notice requirement and permit a teacher to resign in good standing.

The conditions under which it is permissible to break a contract with the Board are as follows:

1. The incapacity on the part of the teacher to perform the contract as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the Board; or
2. The release by the Board of the teacher from the contract that the teacher has entered into with the Board.

Any teacher on leave shall notify the Director of Schools in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she has taken leave. Failure to render such notice may be considered a breach of contract.

Upon a breach of contract, the Board, upon a motion recorded in its minutes, may file a complaint with the State Board of Education and request the suspension of a teacher's license. After the State Board of

Education has provided the teacher an opportunity for defense during a hearing, the Commissioner of Education may suspend the license for no less than thirty (30) days and no more than three hundred sixty-five (365) days.

RETIREMENT

Retirement is a termination of services under conditions that will allow the teacher to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or Social Security benefits. Teachers eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system.

Central office personnel shall assist teachers in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to provide verification of eligibility in writing from the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to file for benefits.

Teachers who retire under TCRS may be employed up to one hundred twenty (120) days per year without loss of retirement benefits. Retired teachers may substitute teach for additional days if the Director of Schools certifies in writing to the Division of Retirement that no other qualified personnel are available to substitute teach.

The Director of Schools may employ teachers retired for at least one (1) year for full-time employment as a Kindergarten through twelfth (K-12) grade teacher on a year-to-year basis. Retirement benefits will not be lost or suspended under certain conditions which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The Director of Schools of the employing district shall certify in writing that no other qualified individuals are available to fill the position;
2. The Commissioner of Education shall certify that the employing school district serves an area that lacks qualified teachers to serve in the position to be filled;
3. The retired teacher shall hold a valid license and shall not be entitled to tenure status;
4. The retired teacher shall not be eligible to accrue additional retirement benefits, accrue leave, or receive medical insurance coverage; and
5. The salary paid to the retired teacher shall not be less than the rate of compensation set by the Board for teachers with no experience filling similar positions or more than eighty-five percent (85%) of the rate of compensation set by the Board for teachers with comparable training and years of experience filling similar positions.

Separation Practices for Non-Tenured Teachers (Policy 5.201)

SUSPENSION PENDING AN INVESTIGATION1

The Director of Schools may suspend a teacher at any time that may seem necessary, pending investigation, or final disposition of a case before the Board or an appeal. If the matter under investigation is not the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation or a Department of Children's Services investigation, and if no charges for dismissal have been made, a suspension pending investigation shall not exceed ninety (90) days in duration. Under no circumstances shall the Director of Schools suspend a non-tenured teacher with pay. If vindicated or reinstated, the non-tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension.

SUSPENSION OF THREE DAYS OR LESS²

A Director of Schools/designee may suspend a teacher for incompetence, inefficiency, neglect of duty, unprofessional conduct, and insubordination. Before a teacher is suspended, he/she shall be: (1) provided with written notice, including the reasons for the suspension along with an explanation of the evidence; (2) given an opportunity to respond to the Director of Schools at a recorded conference, if requested within five (5) days; and (3) given a written decision of the suspension within ten (10) days. Both parties may be represented by counsel at the conference, which shall be recorded.

Under no circumstances shall the Director of Schools suspend a non-tenured teacher with pay. If reinstated, the non-tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension unless suspension without pay is deemed to be an appropriate penalty.

DISMISSAL OR SUSPENSION GREATER THAN THREE DAYS²

The Director of Schools may dismiss or suspend for more than three (3) days any non-tenured teacher during the contract year for incompetence, inefficiency, insubordination, improper conduct, or neglect of duty after giving the non-tenured teacher, in writing, due notice of the charges.

The Director of Schools shall give the non-tenured teacher an opportunity for a full and complete hearing before an impartial hearing officer.

The Board will appoint an impartial hearing officer to conduct such hearings. The hearing officer will hear the case, and the teacher shall have the right to:

1. Be represented by counsel;
2. Call and subpoena witnesses;

3. Examine all witnesses; and
4. Require that all testimony be given under oath.

Factual findings and decisions in all dismissal cases shall be reduced to written form and delivered to the affected teacher within ten (10) working days following the close of the hearing. The teacher may appeal the decision to the Board within ten (10) working days of the hearing officer rendering the written decision to the teacher. Written notice of appeal to the Board shall be given to the Director of Schools. Within twenty (20) working days of receipt of notice, the Director of Schools shall prepare a copy of the proceedings, including all transcripts and evidence, documentary or otherwise, and provide a copy to the Board.

The Director of Schools shall also have the right to appeal any adverse ruling by the hearing officer in the same manner as the non-tenured teacher.

The Board shall hear the appeal. No new evidence shall be introduced. The non-tenured teacher may appear in person or be represented by counsel and argue why the decision should be modified or reversed. The Board shall take one of the following actions:

1. Sustain the decision;
2. Send the record back if additional evidence is necessary; or
3. Revise the penalty or reverse the decision.

Before any decision to dismiss is made, a majority of the membership of the Board shall concur in sustaining the charges. The Board shall render a decision on the appeal within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the hearing.

Within twenty (20) working days after receipt of notice of the decision of the Board, either party may appeal to the chancery court in the county where the school district is located. The Board shall provide the entire record of the hearing to the court.

NONRENEWAL

Non-tenured teachers are subject to the same rules and regulations and are entitled to the privileges of employment enjoyed by tenured teachers except that they have no claim upon continuing employment or tenure protections.

The principal is responsible for discussing deficiencies as part of the evaluation process with the non-tenured teacher and providing assistance for overcoming these deficiencies.

The Director of Schools is under no obligation to re-employ non-tenured teachers at the end of their contract period. If the Director of Schools determines not to renew the contract of a non-tenured teacher, the following action shall be taken:

1. The Board shall be notified at the next regular board meeting; and
2. Written notice of non-renewal shall be sent to the teacher by certified mail, overnight carrier or by email within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year. If the reason for nonrenewal is due only to a loss of funding for the position, then the notice shall include a statement listing it as the cause for nonrenewal.

RESIGNATION

A teacher shall give the Director of Schools notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation. The Board may waive the thirty (30) days notice requirement and permit a teacher to resign in good standing.

The conditions under which it is permissible to break a contract with the Board are as follows:

1. The incapacity on the part of the teacher to perform the contract as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the Board; or
2. The release by the Board of the teacher from the contract which the teacher has entered into with the Board.

Any teacher on leave shall notify the Director of Schools in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she has taken leave. Failure to render such notice may be considered a breach of contract.

Upon a breach of contract, the Board, upon a motion recorded in its minutes, may file a complaint with the State Board of Education and request the suspension of a teacher's license. After the State Board of Education has provided the teacher an opportunity for defense during a hearing, the State Board of Education may suspend the license for no less than thirty (30) days and no more than three hundred sixty-five (365) days.

RETIREMENT

Retirement is a termination of services under conditions which will allow the teacher to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or Social Security benefits.

Teachers eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system. Central office personnel shall assist teachers in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to provide verification of eligibility in writing from the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to file for benefits.

(Note: Nonrenewal of non-tenured teachers after the contract year is not suspension or dismissal and does NOT follow the suspension/dismissal guidelines outlined in this policy. Rather, nonrenewal of non-tenured teachers after the contract year follows the nonrenewal guidelines outlined in this policy.)

Separation Practices for Non-Certified Employees (Policy 5.202)

SUSPENSION

A director of schools/designee may suspend an employee at any time when deemed necessary.¹ Before an employee is suspended s/he shall be:

- (1) provided with reasons for the suspension;
- (2) given an opportunity to respond; and
- (3) given a written decision of the suspension.

Under no circumstances shall a director of schools suspend an employee with pay. If reinstated, the employee shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension, unless suspension without pay is deemed to be an appropriate penalty.

DISMISSAL

All non-certified (classified) employees are employed at the will of the director. The director of schools may dismiss any non-certified employee during the contract year for any reason.

RESIGNATION

Support personnel shall give the immediate supervisor written notice of resignation at least two (2) weeks (ten (10) working days) in advance of the effective date of voluntary termination. The ten (10) working days may be waived by the director of schools for justifiable reason.

The immediate supervisor shall forward copies the day received to the director of schools' office. The payroll office will prepare final payment for the next appropriate scheduled pay day.

RETIREMENT

Retirement shall mean a termination of services under conditions which will allow the employee to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or social security benefits.

Employees eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system.

Central office personnel shall assist employees in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring employee to provide verification of eligibility in writing from TCRS to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring employee to file for benefits.

Employees who retire under TCRS may be employed up to one-hundred-twenty (120) days per year without loss of retirement benefits.

Tobacco-Free Schools (Policy 1.803)

All uses of tobacco and tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes and associated paraphernalia are prohibited in all of the school district's buildings and in all vehicles that are owned, leased or operated by the district.^{1,2} Smoking and vaping shall be prohibited in any public seating areas including, but not limited to, bleachers used for sporting events or public restrooms.

Employees and students in the district's schools will not be permitted to use these products while they are participants in any class or activity in which they represent the school district.

Signs will be posted throughout the district's facilities to notify students, employees and all other persons visiting the school that the use of tobacco and tobacco products is forbidden. The following notice shall be prominently posted (including

at each ticket booth) for elementary or secondary school sporting events: Smoking is prohibited by law in seating areas and in restrooms.

Use of Internet (Policy 4.406)

The Board supports the right of staff and students to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes that it is incumbent upon staff and students to use this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner.

EMPLOYEES

Before any employee is allowed use of the district's internet or intranet access, the employee shall sign a written agreement, developed by the Director of Schools/designee that sets out the terms and conditions of such use. Any employee who accesses the district's computer system for any purpose agrees to be bound by the terms of that agreement, even if no signed written agreement is on file.

The director of schools shall develop and implement procedures for appropriate Internet use which shall address the following:

1. Development of the Network and Internet Use Agreement.
2. General rules and ethics of Internet access.
3. Guidelines regarding appropriate instruction and oversight of student Internet use.
4. A uniform signature block for use by all district employees; and
5. Prohibited and illegal activities, including but not limited to the following:
 - Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
 - Using obscene language
 - Harassing, insulting, defaming or attacking others
 - Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks
 - Hacking or attempting unauthorized access to any computer

- Violation of copyright laws
- Trespassing in another's folders, work or files
- Intentional misuse of resources
- Using another's password or other identifier (impersonation)
- Use of the network for commercial purposes
- Buying or selling on the Internet

6. Guidelines and procedures regarding the retention of email for both staff and students.

STUDENTS

The director of schools shall develop and implement procedures for appropriate Internet use by students. Procedures shall address the following:

1. General rules and ethics of Internet use; and
2. Prohibited or illegal activities, including, but not limited to:
 - Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
 - Using obscene language
 - Harassing, insulting, defaming or attacking others
 - Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks
 - Hacking or attempting unauthorized access
 - Violation of copyright laws
 - Trespassing in another's folders, work or files
 - Intentional misuse of resources
 - Using another's password or other identifier (impersonation)
 - Use of the network for commercial purposes
 - Buying or selling on the Internet

INTERNET SAFETY MEASURES

Internet safety measures shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

1. Controlling access by students to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web;
2. Safety and security of students when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
3. Preventing unauthorized access, including "hacking" and other unlawful activities by students on-line;
4. Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding students;
5. Restricting students' access to materials harmful to them.

The Director of Schools/designee shall establish a process to ensure the district's education technology is not used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The process shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Utilizing technology that filters, blocks, or otherwise prevents internet access (for both students and adults) to material that is obscene, or pornographic,
2. Prohibiting and preventing a user from sending, receiving, viewing, or downloading materials that are deemed to be harmful to minors;
3. Maintaining and securing a usage log; and
4. Monitoring on-line activities of students.

The Board shall provide reasonable public notice of, and at least one (1) public hearing or meeting to address and communicate, its Internet safety measures.²

A written parental consent shall be required prior to the student being granted access to electronic media involving district technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of online behavior, access privileges and penalties for policy/procedural violations, must be signed by the parent/legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be executed each year and shall be valid only in the school year in which it was signed unless parent(s)/guardian(s)

provide written notice that consent is withdrawn. In order to rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the director of schools with a written request.

Complaints alleging a violation of the internet safety measures shall be submitted to the Supervisor of Technology. All complaints shall be reviewed to determine how to appropriately respond.

E-MAIL

Users with network access shall not utilize district resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system. All data including e-mail communications stored or transmitted on school system computers shall be monitored. Employees/students have no expectation of privacy with regard to such data. E-mail correspondence may be a public record under the public records law and may be subject to public inspection.⁵

INTERNET SAFETY INSTRUCTION⁶

Students will be given appropriate instruction in internet safety as a part of any instruction utilizing computer resources. The Director of Schools shall provide adequate in-service instruction on internet safety. Parents/guardian(s) and students will be provided with material to raise awareness of the dangers posed by the internet and ways in which the internet may be used safely.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

1. District staff who have a presence on social networking websites are prohibited from posting data, documents, photographs or inappropriate information that is likely to create a material and substantial disruption of classroom activity.
2. District staff are prohibited from accessing personal social networking sites on school computers or during school hours except for legitimate instructional purposes.
3. The Board discourages district staff from socializing with students on social networking websites. The same relationship, exchange, interaction, information, or behavior that would be unacceptable in a non-technological medium is unacceptable when done through the use of technology.

VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy or corresponding administrative procedure shall be handled in accordance with the existing disciplinary procedures of the district.

VENDOR CONTRACTS

Prior to entering into any contract for the provision of digital or online materials created or marketed for kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12), the district shall obtain an assurance that the vendor shall adhere to state law. This determination includes ensuring that the vendor filters, blocks, or otherwise prevents access to pornography or obscenity and verifying that the technology prevents a user from sending, receiving, viewing, or downloading materials that are harmful to minors.

Cellular Phones (Policy 3.3001)

Cellular phones or data devices may be provided to a limited number of employees when essential to the operation of the school system. The assignment of cellular phones shall be approved by the director of schools/designee. The Board shall be financially responsible for the customary minimum monthly bills for pre-approved cellular phones or data devices.

Cellular phones or data devices provided to employees are for official school board business only and any charges incurred for personal purposes except in cases of emergencies shall be the responsibility of the staff. If the monthly bill reflects charges greater than the customary minimum monthly bill, the excess portion shall become the responsibility of the employee to whom the cellular phone has been issued. If the employee wishes to dispute the portion of the monthly bill for which s/he is responsible, the employee may request and become financially responsible for obtaining a listing for phone use during the disputed period of time.

Use of Personal Cell Phone

A personal cell phone may be carried by an employee of Coffee County Schools but it is to be used only in case of an emergency; no personal business shall be conducted on personal cell phones during school hours. Personal cell phones should not be visible since students are not to use cell phones during regular school hours; employees of the school system must serve as appropriate role models.

An employee's cell phone should not ring when and where students are present, or where students can actually see and/or hear the employee using the cell phone. Professionalism is expected at all times.

Private Vehicles (Policy 3.404)

The Board recognizes that certain employees may need to use their private vehicles for school purposes. With the use of private vehicles, the following policy shall be observed:

1. To use a private vehicle for school purposes, the employee must have the written permission of the director of schools/ designee and proof of vehicle liability insurance coverage in the following forms:
 - a. A copy of the insurance certificate issued to the insured indicating liability limits of at least \$100,000/300,000/50,000; and
 - b. A specific permit for each trip involving students, including field trips.
2. The school system shall assume no responsibility for liability in case of accident, unless the employee has the proper authorization described above.
3. The Board specifically forbids any employee to transport students for school purposes without prior authorization by the director of schools or his/her designee.
4. Privately-owned school buses and drivers of such shall meet all requirements of state law and state Board Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards.
5. Students may be sent on school-related errands in a vehicle owned by the student/parent only with compliance of the above liability insurance policy and must have parental permission.
6. No employee may ask for or give permission to students to transport other students to and from any school or school-related activity.

The Board recognizes that volunteer parent drivers are often needed to use their private vehicles for school purposes. The volunteer parent drivers who use a private vehicle must provide proof of vehicle liability insurance coverage in the form of an

insurance certificate issued to the insured indicating limits of at least \$100,000/300,000/50,000

Staff Conflict of Interest (Policy 5.601)

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Administrative and supervisory personnel shall have no financial interest, directly or indirectly, in supplying books, maps, school furniture, or apparatus for the schools or to act as agent for any author, publisher, bookseller, or dealer in school furniture or apparatus, however a spouse or family member of a principal, teacher or other school administrative employee may participate in business transactions with the school system where a sealed competitive bid system is used, provided that the employee does not have discretion in the selection of bids or specifications.

It shall be a misdemeanor for the director of schools to take any other contract under the Board, to perform any other service for additional compensation, to act as principal or teacher in any school, or to become the owner of a school warrant other than that allowed for his/her service as director of schools or as secretary to the Board.

PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Employees of the Board will not engage in, or have financial interest in, any activity that raises a reasonable question of conflict of interest with their duties and responsibilities as members of the school staff. This includes but is not limited to the following:

1. School employees may not purchase for sale to students any goods or equipment or render any service to the school system on a commission basis;
2. Employees who have patented or copyrighted any device, publication, or other item will not receive royalties for use of such item in the school system;
3. Employees will not engage in any type of work where the source of information concerning a customer, client, or employer originates from information obtained through the school system;
4. The Board shall make no purchase of supplies, materials, or equipment from a school system employee; and

5. Employees shall not solicit for the purpose of selling instructional supplies, equipment and reference books in a territory that includes the parents of the children of the school in which the employee is assigned.

Staff Gifts and Solicitations (Policy 5.605)

GIFTS

Employees of the Board shall not accept gifts from students unless the gifts are of token value only.

Individual employees of the Board will refrain from giving gifts to staff members who exercise administrative or supervisory jurisdiction over them, either directly or indirectly.

Employees may collect money for group gifts, subject to the approval of the principal.

Employees are prohibited from accepting things of material value from individuals, companies or organizations doing business with the school system. Exceptions to this policy are the acceptance of minor items which are generally distributed to all by the companies through public relations programs.

SOLICITATIONS

No organization may solicit funds from employees within the schools. Flyers or other materials related to fund drives shall not be distributed through the schools without the written approval of the director of schools.

Employees will not be made responsible for the collection of any money or the distribution of any fund drive literature within the schools unless such activity has the director of schools' written approval.

Volunteers

The school system encourages the constructive participation of groups or individuals in the school to perform appropriate tasks during and after school hours under the direction of a staff member. Every effort should be made to use a

volunteer resource in a manner which will ensure maximum contribution to the welfare and educational growth of students.

The school principal should annually request permission (must list the individual names and services to be provided) to the Director of Schools to use the named volunteers. If approved by the Director of Schools, these individuals, like other visitors, must sign-in and sign-out at the school office.

Visitors to the Schools (Policy 1.501)

Except on occasions, such as school programs, athletic events, open house and similar public events; all visitors will report to the school office when entering the school and will sign a log book. Authorization to visit elsewhere in the building or on the school campus will be determined by the principal or designee. Guest passes shall be issued for all persons other than students and employees of the school.¹ Parents checking out a student must sign a "sign-out log".

In order to maintain the conditions and atmosphere suitable for learning, no other person shall enter onto the grounds or into the school buildings during the hours of student instruction except students assigned to that school, the staff of the school, parents of students, and other persons with lawful and valid business on the school premises.

Students are not permitted to bring friends, relatives, or others to accompany them to class. Any exceptions must have prior approval of the principal. Deliveries made at school which are intended for students will not be accepted by school officials.

Persons who come onto school property shall be under the jurisdiction of the site administrator/designee. Individuals who come onto school property or who contact employees on school or district business are expected to behave accordingly. Specifically, actions that are prohibited include, but are not limited to:

1. Cursing and use of obscenities;
2. Disrupting or threatening to disrupt school or office operations;
3. Acting in an unsafe manner that could threaten the health or safety of others;
4. Verbal or written statements or gestures indicating intent to harm an individual or property; and

5. Physical attacks intended to harm an individual or substantially damage property.

The principal or his/her designee has the authority to exclude from the school premises any persons disrupting the educational programs in the classroom or in the school, disturbing the teachers or students on the premises, or on the premises for the purpose of committing an illegal act.

The principal shall engage law enforcement officials when he/she believes the situation warrants such measures.