

Wilkinson County School District Employee Handbook 2026-2027



WILKINSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

488 Main Street / Post Office Box 785

WOODVILLE, MS 39669

(601) 888-3582

Walter Atkins, Jr., Interim Superintendent of Education

Wilkinson County School District

District Vision Statement

The Wilkinson County School District will create a dynamic learning community where students and staff excel.

District Mission Statement

The WCSD will be an innovative institution of learning that fosters independence, builds confidence, and inspires growth of our faculty, staff and students.

District Motto

“ONE Pride, ONE Family, ONE Purpose!”

DISTRICT GOALS

- Develop and maintain an environment where all stakeholders are safe and secure.
- Utilize all resources effectively to improve student successes.
- Provide all stakeholders with opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- Promote honesty, ethical behavior, and trust to strengthen a culture of integrity.
- Strengthen relationships through open communication, trust, and effective collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure everyone is valued.
- Foster a culture of accountability by embracing responsibility and delivering consistent results to ensure excellence.

Foreword

The Wilkinson County School District sets high standards for its faculty and staff. Through its personnel policies, the district wishes to establish conditions that will attract the highest qualified personnel for all positions, and retain staff members who are self-motivated to do a satisfactory job and abide by stated procedures and policies of the district. In accordance with these goals, the following handbook has been developed.

“To the extent that there is any conflict or inconsistencies among the provisions in this handbook or manual and any policies of the board, the policies of the board shall control.”

Nothing in this handbook shall be interpreted as establishing a contract of employment between the Wilkinson County School District and the employee. Either the employee or the school district is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time and without cause. However, contracted personnel may be in violation of their contract if they terminate employment prior to fulfillment of the signed contract and may be subjected to disciplinary action.

Policy on Non-Discrimination

The Wilkinson County School District (WCSD), Woodville, Mississippi, adheres to a policy of non-discrimination in educational programs/activities and employment, and strives affirmatively to provide equal opportunity for students and staff. Employees, parents, students or others may challenge any practice thought to be in violation of this policy by notifying building-level principals or the superintendent in writing of their allegation that such specific actions are in violation of this policy. The Board of Trustees will act as the final source of appeal in cases where the Superintendent has been unable to satisfy the challenge.

The following federal legislation is referenced:

- TITLE VI and TITLE VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act (**OSHA of 1970**), as amended, which provides specific regulations regarding a safe working and learning environment.
- Age Discrimination Act, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age between 40 and 70.
- TITLE IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender.
- §504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against the handicapped.
- PL93-380 -- Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (**FERPA**), as amended, which provides protection regarding student records and release of information from said records.
- The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, which provides that four federal civil rights statutes (§504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) apply to an entire institution if any part of it receives federal financial assistance.
- PL105-95 -- Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (replaces PL94-142) (**IDEA**) which provides regulations for screening, placement, and services to handicapped students.
- PL101-645 -- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990, as amended.
- §35.130 of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (**ADA**), built upon the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which provides "a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities."

The following offices have been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies of Wilkinson County School District:

Erika Lewis
Wilkinson County School District
Human Resources
488 Main Street / P.O. Box 785
Woodville, Mississippi 39669
601-888-3582

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This handbook has been prepared to provide you with information regarding district policies and personnel procedures that affect you. We hope you will familiarize yourself with this handbook since it contains important information pertaining to your employment.

We hope this will provide a clear explanation of some of the provisions of your employment and assist you in finding answers to questions you may have concerning the policies of the Board of Trustees.

If you have questions, you may call the Office of Human Resources at 601-888-3582

Nothing in this handbook shall be interpreted as establishing a contract of employment between the Wilkinson County School District and the employee.

Wilkinson County School District provides equal employment opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin.

INTRODUCTION

June 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff:

As an employee of the Wilkinson County School District, you are among the best educators and support staff in the state. As we push the reset button this year, it is imperative that we focus on excellence for all students. Although the task is great, it will be accomplished only through the combined efforts of all staff members. Each position within the district plays a major role in the academic success of our students. WCSD is redefining what it truly means to be a Wildcat.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a reference to the policies pertaining to the daily operations of the Wilkinson County School District. This handbook will assist you in performing your job and informs you of the district's expectations. If you need additional information on governing policies, please visit the district website at www.wilkinson.k12.ms.us.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence.

Walter L. Atkins, Jr.

Interim Superintendent of Schools

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

The Wilkinson County School District Board of Trustees hereafter referred to as the Board of Trustees or the Board has adopted policies, and the administrative staff has developed regulations relating to all aspects of the operation of the school district. These policies and regulations are included in this handbook.

Wilkinson County School District Board of Trustees

Mr. Walter L. Atkins, Jr.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Shamekia L. Isaac – Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/DTC/MTSS Coordinator	Erika Lewis – Business Manager/Primary MSIS Coordinator
Carmella Scott – Director of Federal Programs	Dr. LaTayna Herrington, Director of Special Education Services
Dorothy McCoy, Executive Administrative Assistant	Lathuchur Davis- Child Nutrition Supervisor
Amanda Washington - Operations / Fixed Asset Coordinator	Sharon Tolliver, Accounts Payable
LaToya McPipe – Special Education Administrative Assistant/Secondary MSIS Coordinator/SAM's Coordinator	Sarah Stanwood – Federal Programs Administrative Assistant

Wilkinson County School District Schools

Wilkinson County Elementary School

522 Pinckneyville Road
Woodville MS 39669
601-888-4331
Chander Jenkins
Dejuvana Caldwell

Principal
Assistant Principal

Martin Luther King Career and Technical Complex

1106 Highway 24 East
Woodville MS 39669
601-888-4394
Patricia Gaines

Vocational Director

Wilkinson County High School

522 Pinckneyville Pond Road
Woodville MS 39669
601-888-4228
Glenda Douglas
Hayes Harris

Principal
Assistant Principal

SECTION A

PROFESSIONAL AND CERTIFIED STAFF

Recruiting

Although the Office of Human Resources has the major responsibility of recruiting personnel, attracting new employees is everyone's responsibility. All employees are encouraged to inform others about employment opportunities with the Wilkinson County School District and refer them to the Office of Human Resources. Open positions will be posted in the Office of Human Resources, other official bulletin boards, the district's web page, and on the Mississippi Department of Education (**MDE**) Teacher Center's web page.

Application Process

Persons interested in securing employment with the school district must complete an application and provide all necessary informational forms to complete the application process.

Selection Process

Applicants must possess a valid Mississippi Standard or Alternate Educators License with the appropriate area of endorsement(s) for teaching positions. Non-certified instructional staff must have completed at least 60 college hours. The selection of personnel shall be based upon the qualifications and employment history of the applicant and the performance responsibilities of the position for which he/she is applying. Employment verification is also required.

Appointments

When a vacancy occurs in any position in the certified and/or classified area, the supervisor or principal may review a list of names of applicants who have completed the screening and pre-employment process and who appear to be qualified to fill the vacancy. After interviews with the applicants, the supervisor or principal shall determine the best-qualified applicant to recommend for the position. Before a qualified applicant will be placed on the payroll, he/she shall have the following items on file in the Office of Human Resources.

1. Completed application
2. Tax forms - State and Federal
3. Retirement Enrollment Form & Beneficiary Nomination Form
4. Recommendation
5. Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9 Form)
6. Background Check Verification (Fingerprints)
7. Drug Test Results (if applicable)
8. Health Insurance Application
9. Work History Verification

Upon notification of initial employment, employees will receive the following information from the Office of Human Resources or their supervisor: orientation to school district policies; information on fringe benefits and salary data; and, explanation of job description and evaluation procedures.

Voluntary or Involuntary Termination of Employment

Employees leaving the district for any reason are charged with the responsibility of returning any and all property in their possession belonging to the district. Failure to comply with this responsibility will result in the district retaining the final payroll check until such property has been returned. The district's approved exit procedure will be followed by all employees leaving the district.

Personal Data

It shall be the responsibility of the employee to keep his/her address, telephone number, name change, and any other pertinent information current with the Office of Human Resources. All change requests must be made in writing and turned in to the Office of Human Resources. Requests for change in the number of exemptions on the W-4 forms must be made no later than eight working days before payroll is due.

Reemployment (Policy GBP)

Former employees with good records are eligible for rehire and consideration will be given to rehiring such applicants. A former employee who is rehired begins as any other new employee with no vested seniority or benefit (sick leave, vacation, personal leave) status. A former employee of the Wilkinson County School District who is reemployed into *the same or a similar position*, within a year's time, shall be placed on the same salary step he or she was on at the time he/she left the district. The employee must complete a background check before being rehired.

The superintendent has the authority to enter into a contract of employment with employees that meet the requirements for employment. A valid license is required. The contract period may vary based upon the duties and responsibilities of the employee.

Letter of Intent

A letter of intent is sent each year to certified teachers, usually on or before February 15. The teacher is asked to indicate on this letter if s/he expects to continue employment with the Wilkinson County School District. This allows the administrative staff time to plan for the next year.

Non-Renewal of Contract (Policy GBN) §37-9-101 & §37-9-113

The Wilkinson County School District Board of Trustees recognizes that it is necessary, from time to time, to release from future employment certified/licensed personnel whose performance fails to meet the standards established by the State Department of Education and/or the board or when their services are no longer needed.

In the event that a determination is made by the school district not to offer a certified/licensed employee a renewal contract for a successive year, written notice of non-renewal shall be given to the employee within seven days of the date when the recommendation to reemploy would have been made under the provisions of § 37-9-15 and §37-9-17 Mississippi Code, and amendments thereto, but in any event no later than the following:

- If the employee is a superintendent, the school district shall give notice on non-reemployment on or before March 1.
- If the employee is a principal or assistant superintendent, the school district shall give notice of non-reemployment on or before March 1.
- If the employee is a teacher or other professional educator, the school district shall give notice of non-reemployment on or before April 15.

Any non-reemployment decision of this school district shall be rationally related to a legitimate educational interest and not arbitrary and capricious or based upon some constitutionally impermissible reason such as

race, gender, religion, handicap or exercise of First Amendment rights. A professional educator receiving written notice under the provisions of this policy shall, upon written request within ten (10) calendar days of notice of proposed non-reemployment, be entitled to:

Written notice of the reasons for non-reemployment together with a summary of the factual basis, therefore a list of witnesses and a copy of documentary evidence substantiating the reasons intended to be presented at the hearing. The school district shall give this notice to the principal or other professional educator at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to any hearing.

- An opportunity for a hearing at which to present matters relevant to the reasons given for the non-reemployment, including any reasons alleged by the principal or other professional educator to be the reason for non-reemployment.
- A fair and impartial hearing before the school board or hearing officer selected by the school board.
- Be represented by legal counsel, at his/her own expense.

If the employee does not request a hearing, the recommendation regarding the non-reemployment of the employee shall be final.

It is the intent of the school district to establish procedures for providing professional educators with notice of the reasons for not offering him/her a renewal of his/her contract, to provide an opportunity for principals and other professional educators to present matters relevant to the reasons given for the proposed non-reemployment determination and to the reasons the employee alleges to be the reasons for non-reemployment. The board is required to determine whether the recommendation of non-reemployment is a proper employment decision and not contrary to law and whether the nonrenewal decision is based upon valid educational reasons or noncompliance with the school district personnel policies.

Note: See also Education Employment Procedures Law Handbook (EEPL), published by MSBA. Employee Dismissal (Policy GBN)

Employees may be dismissed due to negligence or violation of policies and/or procedures.

SECTION B

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

In the interest of good discipline, a supervisor may suspend and/or place on probation or dismiss any classified employee with the approval of the appropriate authority. Causes for employee suspension, probation, or dismissal shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Improper conduct or inferior job performance
- Unexcused and/or extended absences
- Excessive tardiness and absences without acceptable excuses
- Evidence or admission of dishonest or improper conduct on the job
- Deliberate damage or destruction of school property
- Continued carelessness or recklessness
- Striking, fighting, or attempting to injure another employee
- Unauthorized possession of a firearm on school properties

- Unauthorized use of school equipment
- Possession of alcohol or drugs on school grounds
- Insubordination
- Repeated failure to notify supervisor when unable to report to work
- Reporting to work or being on duty under the influence of alcohol or other prohibited substances
- Any action adversely affecting the well-being of employees and students
- The use of tobacco on school campuses, in district vehicles, or at school events. Striking, fighting, threatening, or attempting to injure another employee or any other person.

Employee Code of Conduct

Successful schools must have policies and procedures to govern the conduct of its employees who may choose to deviate from their professional expectations. No school can operate properly where individuals are without a standard of conduct and behavior. Wilkinson County School District is no exception. In addition to the Code of Ethics for Educators, Wilkinson County School District has a standard of conduct so that employees know what is expected of them.

Therefore, the administration of each school throughout the district expects its employees to fully comply with the Mississippi Department of Education Code of Ethics for Educators, policies and procedures outlined in the Faculty and Staff Handbook, Wilkinson County School District Board Policies and any other expectations that may be subsequently adopted by your school's administration, the Board of Education, Mississippi Department of Education, federal and state laws.

Employee Discipline Matrix

This discipline matrix is to serve as a guide for administrators when making decisions regarding employee interactions. Before any final decisions are made, administrators will adhere to the following procedures to insure due process of each employee:

- Employees will have the opportunity to provide a written statement of events.
- Witnesses will have the opportunity to provide a written statement of events.
- Physical and/or verbal evidence related to the offense will be examined.
- Proper documentation from the school administrator will support final decisions.

A-1 Safety (Verbal & Physical Combat)

Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.

A-Safety	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Verbal Altercation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Teacher conference with all involved parties and/ or recommendation for suspension, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 3-5 day suspension without pay, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 5-10 day suspension without pay or termination, pending investigation
Verbal Altercation: with use of profanity	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for 1-3 day suspension without pay, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 5-10 day suspension or termination without pay, pending investigation	
Verbal Altercation: threatening bodily harm	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 5-10 day suspension without pay or termination, pending investigation		
Fighting: pushing, shoving (minor scuffle)	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 5-10 day suspension without pay or termination, pending investigation		
Fighting: Mutual combat	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation		
Assault/Battery on an employee or parent	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation		
Fighting or Assault on a Student	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation		

B- Safety (Weapons)

Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, or other object that can be used as a weapon

B-Safety	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Possession of a dangerous object with reasonable suspicion of committing harm to oneself or others	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 5-10 day suspension without pay, or termination, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation	
Possession of or brandishing a gun in or around campus	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation		
Possession of explosive device (not used for instruction)	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation, pending investigation		
Furnished or gave access to a weapon or firearm for the purpose of harm (to another employee, parent, or student)	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation		

C- Safety (Substance Abuse, Use, & Sells)

Possessed, used, sold, transferred, or otherwise furnished; or been under the influence of any controlled substance, alcohol or intoxicant.

C-Safety	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Use of tobacco and/ or tobacco products	Administrative <u>Action</u> Recommendation for suspension for 2 days without pay, pending investigation	Administrative <u>Action</u> Recommendation for suspension for 5 days without pay, pending investigation	Administrative <u>Action</u> Recommendation for suspension for 10 days without pay, pending investigation
Possession of drugs, alcohol, or any controlled substance	Administrative <u>Action</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation		
Under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or any controlled substance	Administrative <u>Action</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation		
Possession of drugs for sale	Administrative <u>Action</u> Recommendation for termination, pending investigation		

D- Non Safety (Non Compliance & Neglect of Professional Duties)

Displayed actions of non-compliance towards students, employees, parents, or general assigned duties

D-Non-Safety	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Leaving students unsupervised;	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written warning	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written reprimand/ Plan of Improvement	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for 3-5 day suspension without pay pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 5-10 day suspension without pay or termination, pending investigation
Excessive absenteeism or tardiness	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written Warning	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written reprimand/ Plan of Improvement	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for 1-3 day suspension without pay, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 5-10 day suspension without pay, or termination, pending investigation
Sleeping on the job	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written Warning	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written reprimand/ Plan of Improvement	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for 1-5 day suspension without pay, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 8-10 day suspension without pay, or termination, pending investigation
Unsatisfactory work Performance or Neglect of assigned duties	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written Warning	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written reprimand/ Plan of Improvement	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for 1-5 day suspension without pay, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 8- 10 day suspension without pay, or termination, pending investigation
Use of personal cell phones during instructional periods	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Written Warning	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Written reprimand/ Plan of Improvement	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 1-5 day suspension without pay, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 8- 10 day suspension without pay, or termination pending investigation
Use of profanity	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written Warning	<u>Administrative Action</u> Written reprimand/ Plan of Improvement	<u>Administrative Action</u> Recommendation for 1-5 day suspension without pay, pending investigation	<u>Administrative Action:</u> Recommendation for 8-10 day suspension without pay, or termination, pending investigation
Failure to Clock-in or Clock-out; Failure to sign-in or sign-out	Administrative Action: Written Reprimand	Administrative Action: Plan of Improvement	Administrative Action: Recommendation for 1-5 day suspension without pay.	Administrative Action: Recommendation for 8-10 day suspension without pay; Possible Termination

WCSD Employee Conduct Documentation 2026-2027

Name:	Position:	Date:	Time:
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Offense: ____1st ____2nd ____3rd ____4th ____5th

Incident Location: • Playground • Classroom • Cafeteria • Restroom • Gymnasium • Office Area • Hallway • Exterior of building • Other: _____	Others Involved: • Teacher: _____ • Staff Member: _____ • Substitute: _____ • Administrator: _____ • Parent: _____ • Student(s): _____ • Other/Unknown: _____
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Incident Type:**Detailed Incident:**

- A: Safety (Verbal/Physical Combat)- _____
- B: Safety (Weapons)- _____
- C: Safety (Substance abuse, use, etc.)- _____
- D: Non-Safety (Non-Compliance)- _____

Specific Description of the Incident:

Action Taken by Administrator:

- Warning
- Employee Conference- Date: _____
- Reteach /discuss expectations: Date: _____
- Growth Target/Plan of Improvement
- Recommendation for suspension: with pay without pay
- Recommendation for termination

Employee Signature/Date:	Administrator Signature/Date:
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GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES (Policies GAE & GAE-P)

Any employee of the school district will have the right to appeal the application of policies and administrative regulations affecting the employee. An individual wishing to issue a complaint or grievance will do so in written form and will present this to their immediate supervisor within five (5) days of the occurrence. In the event a satisfactory solution cannot be reached at this level, within five (5) days, a chain of command will be pursued. The chain of command begins at the building level with the principal. It then progresses to the superintendent and then the school board. The purpose of this grievance procedure is to secure at the first possible administrative level, an equitable solution to any grievance.

DEFINITIONS

1. A "grievance" is a complaint by an individual based upon an alleged violation of his/her rights under state or federal law or board policy.
2. A "grievant" is a person or persons making the complaint.
3. The term "days" shall mean working school days and shall exclude weekends, holidays and vacation days.

PROCEDURE FOR PROCESSING GRIEVANCES

Grievances shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

Level One

1. All grievances, as defined above, must be presented in writing to the principal or immediate supervisor of the grievant within five (5) days of the act or omission complained of, and the principal or immediate supervisor and grievant will attempt to resolve the matter informally.
2. If the grievant is not satisfied with the action taken or the explanation given by his/her principal or immediate supervisor, the grievant shall, within five days after meeting with his/her principal or immediate supervisor, file a written statement with his/her principal or immediate supervisor setting forth in detail how the grievant claims to have been discriminated against. This written statement shall contain, in addition to the above, the time, place, and nature of the alleged act or omission and the state or federal law or board policy violated. The statement must be signed by the grievant.
3. In the event the grievant does not submit to his/her principal or immediate supervisor a written statement as required, his/her failure to do so shall be deemed as an acceptance of the informal decision rendered by his/her principal or immediate supervisor.
4. Within five days after receiving the grievant's signed statement the principal or immediate supervisor shall send to the superintendent a copy of the grievant's statement, along with a statement from the principal or immediate supervisor setting forth his/her response to the grievant and/or his/her decision, as is applicable. At the same time, the principal or immediate supervisor shall also provide a copy of his/her written statement to the grievant.

Level Two

1. Upon receipt by the superintendent of the written notice that the grievant intends to appeal the decision of his/her principal or immediate supervisor, the superintendent shall notify the grievant in writing within five (5) days and shall advise the grievant of the date, time, and place upon which matter will be considered by the superintendent. The superintendent shall schedule a hearing on the matter no later than ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the grievant written notice of intention to appeal the written decision of his/her principal or immediate supervisor.
2. The written statement submitted by the grievant to his/her principal or immediate supervisor in Level One shall form the basis of the grievance before the superintendent. The grievant shall submit in writing any and all additional information on his/her behalf that he/she desires to the superintendent not later than five (5) days prior to the date upon which the matter is scheduled for hearing by the superintendent.

3. In the event the grievant does not personally attend the hearing scheduled by the superintendent, his/her failure to attend shall be deemed as an acceptance of the written decision rendered by his/her principal or immediate supervisor at Level One.
4. The superintendent shall render a written decision to the grievant within five (5) days of the date upon which the matter was heard.

Level Three

1. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant at Level Two, or if the superintendent does not render a decision within five (5) days, the grievant may file the grievance with the secretary of the school board.
2. If the grievance is not filed with the secretary of the school board within five (5) days of the hearing at Level Two, the grievance shall be considered resolved.
3. Within five (5) days after receipt of the grievance, the board secretary, in concert with the board chairman and superintendent, shall schedule a hearing before the school board on the grievance.
4. The board shall render its decision within seven (7) days of the hearing.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/ADA

The Wilkinson County School District (**WCSD**), Woodville, Mississippi, adheres to a policy of non-discrimination in educational programs/activities and employment, and strives affirmatively to provide equal opportunity for students and staff. Employees, parents, students or others may challenge any practice thought to be in violation of this policy by notifying building-level principals or the superintendent in writing of their allegation that such specific actions are in violation of this policy. The Board of Trustees will act as the final source of appeal in cases where the Superintendent has been unable to satisfy the challenge.

(Policy GAAA)

EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION DOCUMENT (Policy GACD)

All employees of the Wilkinson County School District must complete an I-9 INS form with the Office of Human Resources prior to employment. Supporting documentation must be provided within three business days.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING (Policy GBD) §37-9-17 All new hires employed after July 1, 2000, must have a state child abuse registry check and criminal records background check via fingerprint card. Applicants are ineligible for employment if checks disclose a guilty plea, conviction, or nolo contendere plea to a felony conviction for:

Possession or sale of drugs, Murder, manslaughter, or armed robbery, Child abuse, arson, grand larceny, or burglary, Gratification of lust or aggravated assault, Rape, sexual battery, or sex offense as listed in MS Code Section §45-31-3(1).

Failure to disclose in writing pending charges, an arrest, or conviction for the felonies referenced above shall be considered grounds for immediate dismissal.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT (Policy GBR)

The Wilkinson County School District affirms employee protection provided under Title VII and, therefore, “shall not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee, male or female, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another’s work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.”

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

In accordance with Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as amended in 1972, Section 703, no employee in the Wilkinson County School District shall be subject to sexual harassment.

It is the intent of the school board to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment of any kind. Therefore, unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment are prohibited.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when certain criteria are met. These criteria are as follows:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either implicitly or explicitly, a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Complaints of violation of this policy may be made to the appropriate administrative officer or the Title IX coordinator (Director of Human Resources) without fear of reprisal. Should violations prove to be legitimate, the offending employee shall be subject to disciplinary action.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Where there is "reasonable cause" to suspect a child has been abused and/or neglected or threatened with abuse [as defined in §43-23-3 (h) (i) and §93-21-3 (a) (i) (ii) (iii) Mississippi Code] school personnel, as mandated reporters, will act in accordance with the state laws and report incidents to the Mississippi State Department of Human Services (1-800-222-8000) or its successors, or other such duly constituted authorities.

Reports of child abuse or neglect—including the name and address of the child, family, mandated reporter, or any other identifying information in the report—shall remain confidential and will not be public information. As provided in state law, any mandated reporter making a report or participating in judicial proceedings will be presumed to be acting in good faith and will be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might be incurred or imposed. The reporting of an abused person will not constitute a breach of confidentiality. When students elect to confide in an employee, the employee should say, "I cannot keep what you tell me in confidence if it leads me to believe that someone is in danger or a law has been broken."

SECTION C

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Fair Labor Standards Act (Policy GCRAA)

The Wilkinson County School District complies fully with the Fair Labor Standards Act, its regulations, and relevant court decisions. This district will inform employees of the Act through proper posting of information as disseminated by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Unemployment Compensation

Employees are not eligible for unemployment benefits in the summer months between school terms. An employee hired during the school term that has reasonable assurance of employment for the same or similar work for the coming term will be denied unemployment benefits.

Board of Trustees policy states that it shall be grounds for dismissal for any employee to make a false statement or representation knowing it to be false, or to willfully fail to disclose a material fact for the purpose of obtaining or increasing any benefit under the Mississippi Employment Security Law.

Working Hours (Policy GBRB)

ALL employees except bus drivers without other duties are required to clock-in **AND** sign in upon arrival and clock-out **AND** sign out upon departure each day. Leaving school earlier than the time designated without administrative approval will become a part of the employee's evaluation. Absentees and tardy to work or class will also be part of the employee's evaluation. Elementary, middle, and high school instructional staff members are expected to be on duty at their respective school by **7:00 a.m. each day when on duty and 7:30am on non-duty days**. Except when carrying out assignments of the principal, teachers are expected to remain at school or on duty during the designated hours. It is expected that all teachers remain at school Monday through Friday as follows:

Teachers **not** on duty may leave at **3:30 p.m.** Teachers on duty **must** remain on campus until all students are off campus.

Contracted staff members are expected to serve duty at designated games and/or campus activities as assigned by the school level administrator(s). This falls under the "as assigned" on the signed contract.

Principals are expected to be on duty from 7:00 a.m. until all students are off campus.

The superintendent or designee shall determine the hours during which the offices and departments shall be open for business.

Attendance

Employees shall be at their post of duty in accordance with the time regulations set forth by the supervisor and approved by the superintendent or her designee. All departments and schools shall maintain attendance records showing the hours worked by his/her employees. All employees are to clock in and out using the District fingerprinting system each day as well as sign the attendance logs daily. Each employee is responsible for completion of his/her own attendance document.

ABANDONMENT OF JOB §37-9-55 & §37-3-2(Q) & §37-9-57

An employee who is absent from his employment and who has not informed his/her supervisor shall, after four (4) consecutive days of such unauthorized absence, be considered to have abandoned the position and

will be deemed to have resigned, unless it is shown by the employee that special circumstances prevented him/her from reporting to the place of work.

Pay Administration

Licensed staff shall be paid their contract in twelve (12) equal payments, on the last business day of each month until the contract has been fulfilled or the employee is terminated.

Classified employees shall be paid on the last business day of each month based on their hourly rate and days of service.

An employee's electronic payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of accumulated leave. If you have a question regarding your payroll statements, please contact the Payroll Department.

Automatic Payroll Deposit

All employees **must** have their paycheck electronically deposited into an account at the banking institution or credit union of their choice. With automatic deposit, the funds are dispersed to the employee's financial institution on the specified date, but the availability of said funds is determined by that financial institution. Contact the Payroll Clerk for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Salary Schedule §37-9-33, §37-9-37 & §37-19-7

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. The district's salary schedules are reviewed by administration each year. Professional and administrative employees are generally classed as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation.

Salary schedules are reviewed annually and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the board. All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of the school year. Classroom teachers, librarians, and counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule. Employees should contact the Director Human Resources for more information about the District's pay schedules.

Contracts §37-9-33

The superintendent shall enter into a contract with each administrator and licensed employee approved for employment by the Board of Trustees. The contracts will be in such form as shall be prescribed by the State Board of Education and shall be executed in duplicate copy with one copy retained by the superintendent and one copy retained by the licensed employee.

Transfer

A staff employee is eligible for consideration for a lateral transfer or reassignment to another location within the school district after serving in a staff position for a period of not less than one (1) year. Also, lateral transfers and reassignments may be made by the Superintendent when necessary for the fulfillment of District goals and objectives.

LEAVES AND FRINGE BENEFITS

It is the desire of the Wilkinson County School District to provide the maximum possible benefits for all its regular employees in order to attract conscientious and long-term employees. The following benefits are provided for all full-time employees of the Wilkinson County School District.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (Policy GBRIA)

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) requires Wilkinson County School District to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during a twelve-month period to eligible employees for specific family and medical reasons. Eligible employees are those who have been employed by the district for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours.

FMLA leave may be taken for the following documented reasons: birth, adoption, or placement of a child; care of a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition; or the employee's own serious health condition which makes him/her unable to work.

Before utilizing unpaid family or medical leave, eligible employees must first apply all earned paid leave time in accordance with district policies, with the remainder of the 12-week period consisting of unpaid leave. In other words, an employee who has available paid leave days (sick days, personal days, vacation days, etc.) must utilize them while on FMLA leave.

If the need for leave is foreseeable, the employee is required to provide notice of the need for leave to the Office of Human Resources **at least thirty (30) days** before the leave is to begin. If the need is not foreseeable, the employee must provide notice within two (2) working days of the need for leave except in extraordinary circumstances. The employee must provide medical certification of the need for leave at the time the leave is requested. The district may require second or third opinions and a fitness for duty report prior to a return to work.

During FMLA leave the district will continue to pay the employee's medical insurance. Upon return to work, most employees will be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay and benefits. (See Appendix A)

Use of Sick Days (GBRI)

Method of Calculating

Each full-time employee of the Wilkinson County School District who begins work on the date specified for that job will be credited with seven (7) sick days per year on a prorated basis.

Accumulating Sick Days

Unused sick days shall accumulate without limitation from the most recent date of uninterrupted employment with the Wilkinson County School District. An employee **cannot earn sick days while on leave of absence or suspension**. The Business Office has the responsibility of maintaining a record of the total number of sick days accumulated. This information is reported to the employee on his paycheck stub each pay period.

Verification of Sick Days

1. Should an employee's absence extend for three (3) or more consecutive school days, the employee must submit on or before the fourth day, a statement to the employee's immediate supervisor from a licensed medical doctor or dentist. If the absence extends for two consecutive school days immediately preceding a

holiday, the statement must be submitted on the day following the holiday. If the absence extends for two consecutive school days immediately following the holiday, the statement must be submitted the third day following the holiday. The statement must include the expected length of absence. The original letter from the doctor should be sent to the Office of Human Resources. The district reserves the right for the supervisory officer of any employee to request a doctor's statement for verification of illness at any time regardless of the length of absence, including an absence of one day.

2. Should an employee be absent during the state assessment window, he/she must provide a statement from a licensed doctor or dentist to the employee's immediate supervisor detailing the date of absence no more than 24 hours after the employee's return.
3. When the absence of an employee is projected to extend beyond four (4) weeks, eligible employees may be placed on family medical leave (FMLA). Contact the Office of Human Resources for additional information.
3. The Office of Human Resources or the Superintendent may contact the employee and/or physician's office for additional information where clarification appears to be needed or when a request is made.
4. Should an employee be absent from duty and fail to comply with regulations covering sick days, such employee shall be charged with unauthorized absence.
5. If the absence of the employee is caused by optional medical treatment or surgery which could, without medical risk, have been provided, furnished, or performed at a time when school was not in session, the employee may forfeit the accumulated or future sick days.
6. Any materially false statement by the employee as to the cause of absence may result in full deduction from salary for days absent or entry on the work record or other appropriate penalty deemed justified by the Board.

Extended Leave (Policy GBRI)

Professional staff will be granted seven (7) days of leave annually, with unlimited accumulation for personal illness, or illness or death of a member of immediate family.

Absences of a professional staff due to illness, death, or injury beyond time covered by sick leave will be deducted at a rate equal to the highest regular substitute salary up to a maximum of ten (10) days. Absences for personal leave in excess of two days annually will be included in computing the 15 and 10 days total respectively. Any absence beyond 15/10 days over fully covered sick leave will be deducted at a rate equal to the salary of the employee absent.

Special circumstances for extended sick leave will be considered by the board provided the individual is a longstanding licensed staff member of the district and has not abused the use of the sick leave policy. MS code §37-7-307, (1972) the superintendent may adopt the following rules and regulation to implement the policy:

1. Require the absent licensed employee to furnish the certificate of a physician or dentist or other medical practitioner as to the illness of the absent licensed employee, where the absence is four or more consecutive school days, or for two consecutive school days immediately preceding or following a non-school day.

2. Provide penalties, by way of full deduction from salary, or entry on the work record of the licensed employee, or other appropriate penalties, for any materially false statement by the licensed employee as to the cause of absence;
3. Forfeit accumulated or future sick leave, if the absence of the licensed employee is caused by optional dental or medical treatment or surgery which could, without medical risk, have been provided, furnished or performed when school was not in session.

Any unusual portion of the total sick leave allowance shall be carried over to the next school year and credited to such licensed employee if the licensed employee remains employed in the same school district. In the event any public school licensed employee transfers from a public school district in Mississippi to the Wilkinson County School District, any unused portion of the total sick leave allowance credited to such licensed employee shall be credited to such licensed employee in the computation of unused leave for retirement purposes under MS Code §25-11-109 (1972). Accumulation of sick leave allowed in the school district shall be unlimited.

The following definitions apply for this section:

Serious health condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

- (1) Inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including incapacity (defined as an inability to work, attend school or perform other regular daily activities), or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care; or
- (2) Continuing treatment by a health care provider – A serious health condition involving continuing treatment by a health care provider includes:
 - a. A period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition
 - b. A period of incapacity due to pregnancy, or for prenatal care

Immediate Family Member – The child or parent of the employee. The child must be 18 years of age, or 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of mental or physical disability. The term parent is defined as the biological parent of an employee. This does not include parents-in-law.

Terminal Illness or Permanent Disability

Should an employee's condition be diagnosed as terminal or should he/she suffer an accident, which causes permanent disability so that the employee cannot return to work, a physician's statement verifying this condition must be submitted. Compensation during this absence shall be paid at the end of each month until the employee's sick days and his or her ten (10) days of extended leave has been exhausted. If the employee should die before the bank of days has been exhausted, all compensation shall cease upon the day of death.

Donation of Leave (Policy GBRI) §37-7-307

Any employee may donate a portion of his or her unused accumulated personal or sick leave to another employee of this or another school district if the recipient is suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness or a member of his immediate family is suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness. To be eligible to receive donated leave, the employee must have used all of his or her available leave including their ten (10) days of extended leave, before donated leave can be accepted and/or utilized. The donor employee must have seven (7) days remaining after donation.

“Catastrophic injury or illness” means a severe condition or combination of conditions that affects the mental or physical health of an employee or a member of an employee’s immediate family. The person suffering from the catastrophic injury or illness must require the services of a licensed physician for an extended period of time, must have exhausted all accumulated leave time, and thereby must be in danger of losing compensation from the school district.

“Immediate family” means spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, child, or stepchild. To donate leave time to an employee, the following steps must be completed:

1. A donation of leave of time must be completed and notarized.
2. The donating employee must have seven (7) days remaining after the days are donated.
3. The receiving employee must provide medical certification from the attending physician indicating that it is a life-threatening illness.
4. The receiving employee must have exhausted all leave time.

Donation of leave forms must be completed and received within the pay period of the absence time that it will be used for. Donations must be made in accordance with **Policy GBRI**. Donations may be made through the Office of Human Resources.

Bereavement Leave

Employees may utilize sick leave for the death of an immediate family member.

Jury Duty (Policy GBRI)

The WCSD will provide leave with pay for employees who serve on juries. Performance of jury duty is with full pay and does not count against any type of leave of absence by the employee. When excused from jury duty prior to 11:00 a.m., the employee must report to their work site. The school board cannot recover jury fees from employees who serve on juries. A copy of the summons must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources as soon as it is received. Once an employee serves jury duty, the verification document from the court house must be submitted within 24 hours of the employee’s return to work.

Military Leave (Policy GBRID)

Upon written request, a leave of absence without pay shall be granted to any employee who may be selected or called for military service. Employees who are members of the reserve components of the armed services of the United States of America shall be entitled to leave of absence without loss of pay, time, annual leave, or professional rating for a maximum of fifteen (15) days if ordered to duty for training exercises. Employees involved in military service longer than fifteen (15) days shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges that are described in state and federal law.

Military FMLA

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (**NDAA**), Public Law 110-181, amended the FMLA to allow eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave in the applicable 12-month period for any “qualifying emergency” arising out of the active duty or call to active duty status of a spouse, son, daughter or parent. The NDAA also amended the FMLA to allow eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of job-protected leave in a “single 12-month period” to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness. These two new types of FMLA leave are known as the military caregiver leave.

Military Caregiver Leave: A covered employer must grant an eligible employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member with a serious injury or illness up to a total of 26 work weeks of unpaid leave during a “single 12-month period” to care for the service member. (See Appendix B)

Personal Leave

Who May Earn Accrued Personal Leave (Policy GBRI) Miss. Code § 37-7-307

Full pay shall be allowed to an employee while absent from duty for personal business for two days for each fiscal year. These days shall be in addition to the days allowed for sick leave. Beginning of the fiscal year, any days in excess of five accrued personal leave days will roll over to sick leave.

Personal leave requests shall not be made for any day immediately preceding or following a holiday, during state assessment windows, or during the first or last week of the school year except in cases of

- military deployment, or
- jury duty or witness in court, or
- death of immediate family members (spouse, parent, stepparent, child or stepchild, grandparent or sibling, including a stepbrother or stepsister). The supervising officer may deny request for personal leave if there were reason to believe such leave would disrupt the school or the department program, or
- if the employee has a minimum of 10 years in the WCSD or a minimum of 30 days unused accumulated leave earned in the District.

Accrued Personal Leave Who May Earn Additional Personal Days (AEAA)

Employees become eligible for an additional ten (10) personal days upon commencement of employment in a 235 or more days’ position. Benefits are accrued monthly based on a prorated percentage.

Use of Earned Vacation Days

Requests for use of vacation days must be made in writing on the approved vacation request form and approved by the appropriate supervisor at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the desired absence. Vacation leave may not exceed twenty (20) days in one fiscal year unless approved by the superintendent of schools or his designee.

Termination of Employment at Retirement (GBQ)

Upon termination of employment, unused leave days for which the employee is entitled to full pay may be counted as creditable service for purposes of the retirement system to the extent provided in Section 25-11-103 of the Mississippi Code and the policies of the Public Employees Retirement System. An employee may be paid at his/her per diem rate for no more than 30 days of accumulated vacation days.

Retirement

All regular full-time certified employees must participate in the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System. Employee mandatory contribution is 9.00 percent of salary. Effective July 1, 2019, Employer contribution rate increases to 17.40 percent. Eight (8) years of service are required for vested interest. Effective July 1, 2011, thirty (30) years of creditable service is required for full retirement benefits without penalty for persons hired on or after July 1, 2011. Employees desiring specific information concerning their retirement should contact the Office of Human Resources (601) 888-3582 or the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System (601-359-3589) or (800-444-7377) or visit the website at www.pers.state.ms.us.

Insurance

Full-time employees are eligible for state-paid group health insurance. New employees must sign up for the insurance within thirty (30) days of their date of hire without having to specify pre-existing conditions. If an employee does not wish to be covered by the group health insurance, that employee must sign the line on the application waiving the insurance.

Health Plan Coverage

Consolidated Budget Reconciliation Act Requirements (COBRA)

Any employee who participates in the Health Plan will be offered continued health benefits coverage if the employee is terminated or put on reduced hours (except when termination is for misconduct); also, dependents of the employee may receive continued coverage, although not at district expense if the employee dies, divorces, or is terminated. Spouses and children of employees are eligible for up to 36 months of continued coverage if one of the following events occurs:

1. Death of covered employee
2. Divorce or legal separation
3. Entitlement of the employee to Medicare benefits
4. A dependent child reaching the maximum age of coverage

In addition, spouses, children, and the employee are eligible for 18 months of continued coverage if the employee is terminated for reasons other than gross misconduct or if there is a reduction in the hours of employment that would cause coverage to cease. Continued coverage will stop before the end of the applicable period upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

1. Failure to pay the premium
2. Initiation of coverage under another group health plan
3. Entitlement of the qualified beneficiary to Medicare benefits
4. Remarriage of a former spouse and coverage under another group plan
5. Termination of the employer's group health plan

The employer may charge a premium for continued coverage of 102 percent (100% premium plus 2% administrative costs).

Cafeteria Plan

The Cafeteria Plan is a pre-tax, employee spending account plan made available under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Tax Code. The plan allows employees to pay for certain expenses using before tax income. Dollars may be set aside from the employee's pay before state, federal, and FICA taxes are deducted. The employee may authorize an automatic, before tax, payroll deduction for any of the following qualified expenses:

1. Group medical insurance
2. Dental insurance
3. Cancer/Intensive care insurance
4. Term life insurance

For tax purposes, the plan is treated as a nontaxable benefit paid for by the employer. The plan is flexible.

Payroll Deductions

Payroll deductions consist of both required deductions and optional deductions.

Required Deductions

1. Withholding tax (Federal and State)
2. Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System
3. Social Security

Optional Deductions (temporary and substitute employees not eligible)

1. Board approved insurance (Life, Health, etc.)
2. Tax-sheltered annuities
3. United Way Pledges
4. Credit Union

The employee decides whether or not to participate and selects which benefits and the amounts to set aside. Social Security benefits do not accrue on funds set aside for the Cafeteria Plan.

SECTION D

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Wilkinson County School District Board of Trustees believes that its schools and facilities should be safe, orderly places of learning. The board hereby directs the superintendent to establish procedures and safeguards for crisis management and response, building and ground security, and Maintenance and code of conduct for students, staff, and patrons that promote the safety and well-being of all concerned.

Safety Statement

It is the belief of the Wilkinson County School district that every employee is entitled to work under the safest possible conditions. Every reasonable effort will be made to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace. The Wilkinson County School District will maintain safe equipment and will insist upon safe work practices at all times. All safety rules and regulations are to be considered directive in nature and applicable to all school employees. Employees are obligated to observe the rules of conduct and to properly use the safety equipment provided. Our employees are our most important assets and their overall safety and health is our top priority.

Contagious and Communicable Diseases

Communicable diseases may occur with both students and teachers. Teachers should be aware of the types of diseases that students may contract and be on the alert for symptoms. Each staff member has the responsibility to observe students and notify the principal of any suspected infectious or contagious disease.

The law provides the school district with the power to exclude from school any staff member and/or student suffering from contagious or infectious diseases.

Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco-Free Workplace (GBRL)

The Wilkinson County School District is a Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco-free workplace. Anyone convicted under this Act shall be recorded as being fined for a civil violation and not for violating a criminal statute.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY

The following is Wilkinson County School District's Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy enacted pursuant to the MS Drug and Alcohol testing law, MS Code Annotated Sections 71-7-1 *et seq.* Supp. (1994). This policy is effective upon adoption. After this date, the district may require testing of personnel if it reasonably suspects that an employee is under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol. In addition, the district will begin conducting random testing of all bus drivers, and pre-employment testing of all prospective employees. This policy will be enforced uniformly with respect to all personnel. All of the district's personnel, including administrators, will be subject to testing.

The purposes of this policy are as follows.

- A. to maintain a safe, healthy working environment for all employees;
- B. to maintain the highest quality educational program for our students by insuring that no personnel of the district are users of illegal drugs or under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
- C. to reduce the number of accidental injuries to person or property; and
- D. to reduce absenteeism and tardiness and improve the quality of educational services.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The following are rules representing the district's policy concerning substance abuse.

1. All employees are prohibited from being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on duty or on district premises. All employees are prohibited from using illegal drugs, or prescription medication for which they do not have a proper prescription.
2. The sale, possession, transfer, or purchase of illegal drugs on district property or while performing district business is strictly prohibited. Such action will be reported to appropriate law enforcement officials.
3. The use, sale, or possession of an illegal or non-prescription drug or controlled substance while on duty is cause for immediate termination.
4. No alcoholic beverage will be brought or consumed on district premises.
5. No prescription drug will be brought on district premises by any person other than the person for whom the drug is prescribed. Prescription drugs will be used only in the manner, combination, and quantity prescribed.
6. Any employee whose off-duty use of alcohol, illegal, or non-prescription drugs results in excessive absenteeism, tardiness, poor work, or an accident will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

Effective upon passage, the Wilkinson County School District will begin conducting pre-employment testing, **reasonable suspicion testing of all personnel** and random testing of bus drivers.

1. An employee will be allowed to provide notice to the Wilkinson County School District of currently or recently used prescription or non-prescription drugs prior to the time of the test.
2. Random testing of bus drivers and other drivers of district vehicles will be implemented using a neutral selection basis. Wilkinson County School District will not waive the selection of any employee chosen pursuant to the random selection procedures.

- Reasonable suspicion is defined under this policy as the belief by Wilkinson County School District that an employee is using or has used drugs or alcohol in violation of Wilkinson County School District's policy. Reasonable suspicion may be based upon, among other things:
 - Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of drug use and/or the physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug;
- i. Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work, absenteeism, tardiness, or deterioration in work performance;
 - ii. A report of drug use provided by reliable and credible sources and which has been independently corroborated;
 - iii. Evidence that an individual has tampered with a drug and alcohol test during his employment with the current employer;
 - iv. Information that an employee has caused or contributed to an accident while at work; and
 - v. Evidence that an employee is involved in the use, possession, sale, solicitation, or transfer of drugs while working or while on school premises or while operating one of the school's vehicles, its machinery, or its equipment.
- a. **If there is reasonable suspicion that an employee is using or has used drugs or consumed alcohol in violation of Wilkinson County School District's policy, that employee will be required to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test.** The superintendent (or in his or her absence an appointed replacement) must approve in advance all reasonable suspicion testing. If the test result is confirmed positive for drugs or alcohol in violation of Wilkinson County School District's drug and alcohol policy, the employee will be subject to immediate termination of his or her employment with the district.
1. Any employee who refuses to take a drug and alcohol test will be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.
 2. The following are drugs for which the district may test: alcohol, opiates, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP), marijuana, and cocaine.
 3. An employee who receives a positive confirmation drug and alcohol test result may contest the accuracy of the result or explain the results within ten days of the date of such result by filing a written statement with the superintendent. An employee, at his or her own cost, also may request that the specimen be retested at a certified laboratory of his or her own choosing.

An employee who receives a positive confirmation test result and who fails to present a satisfactory contest or explanation to such result, or a contrary result from a certified laboratory of the employee's own choosing, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

If the district determines that discipline and/or discharge are not necessary or appropriate in a case where an employee is in violation of Wilkinson County School District's Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy, the employee as a condition of continued employment must complete a certified substance

abuse rehabilitation program at the employee's own cost and expense. The employee may be allowed to work for the district while undergoing the treatment, but the employee must provide evidence of continued treatment and/or rehabilitation upon request. The employee must also agree to submit to random testing for three years after the date of the positive confirmation drug and alcohol test result.

Safe-Work Procedures (Policy GBRHA)

It is the responsibility of each employee to perform work in accordance with sound safety practices. Safe-work regulations establish guidelines for safe practices and must be used at all times. Violation of any of the regulations will be considered proper cause for disciplinary action consisting of a warning, suspension without pay or termination of employment. Any person who believes he or she is working in an unsafe place is required to immediately report the condition to an immediate supervisor, administrator or the manager of operations/designee. Any person who believes he or she is subjected to perform an unsafe task or use unsafe tools must immediately report the unsafe condition to his or her supervisor, administrator or the manager of operations/designee. The task shall not be performed until the immediate administrator specifies and creates a safe task or provides safe tools.

Supervisors or administrators who receive a complaint alleging unsafe conditions shall immediately investigate and assure a safe condition for work to continue at the work site. Conditions that are unresolved or need attention shall be reported to the manager of operations/designee and the site safety committee.

Accident Reports

Accident reports are required for any accident occurring on school property or at school activities. This report is to be completed and submitted to the site administrator within 24 hours of accident. The same report may be used to report incidents where hazards exist but where no injury or damage has occurred. A copy of all accident reports involving employees should be filed with the Business Office. A copy of all accident reports involving students should be filed with the safety coordinator and a copy placed in the student's record.

Steps in Reporting Accidents - Please follow the following steps in reporting accidents

The worker involved in the accident will fill out the Employee Statement of the Accident form.

The site administrator or his/her designee will complete the Workmen Compensation First Report of Injury or Illness form and submit it to the ***Business Office, on the day of the accident.***

- The site administrator or his/her designee will complete the Supervisor's Accident Investigation Report Form within two days (48 hours) of the accident.

The site administrator will notify the safety coordinator and the Business Office by telephone at the time of the accident.

The safety coordinator will notify the Director of Operations/designee by telephone at the time of the accident.

The safety coordinator will interview the accident victim and witnesses and make the appropriate recommendation for corrective action and/or penalties.

The site safety committee will conduct an investigation and make appropriate recommendations.

Please remember that the site administrator is responsible for reporting and investigating all accidents on his/her site. This means that the building principal must assume responsibility for all accidents including those involving cafeteria workers. When a cafeteria worker is involved in an accident, the food service supervisor will also be contacted and should receive a copy of the accident report. However, the building principal must assume responsibility for the accident. Please note that all employee accident reports are to be sent to the Business Office. The Business Office will submit copies to the Director of Operations.

Penalties of Unsafe Work Practices - Unsafe work practices may result in:

- Warning
- Suspension without pay
- Termination of employment

A flagrant violation of a written regulation or a safety rule constitutes cause for immediate suspension or termination without a warning.

Penalties for Not Reporting Accidents - Violation of the accident reporting requirements will constitute cause for termination of employment.

SECTION E

BUSINESS SERVICES

Purchasing Procedures

All requests for purchases must be on an official district purchase requisition form submitted and approved by the immediate supervisor. Then, the employee must submit the document to the Purchasing Department with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the District can be made without a purchase order. The District will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use.

No employee, individual, or group, including booster club or support organization, may use the name, address, telephone number, tax identification number, or any other identification of the District, or its individual schools and departments, when purchasing for private or personal use.

No employee has the authority; individually or by right of his/her position, to enter into service contracts, service agreements, and other similar documents, representing the District, unless such contracts are first approved by the Board of Trustees. After obtaining Board approval, contracts will be overseen by the Director of Operations and filed in the Business Office.

No employee, individual, or group, including booster club or support organization may use the name, address, telephone number, tax identification number, or any other identification of the District, or its individual schools and departments when contracting for private or personal use.

Travel Guidelines

Section §25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, established guidelines for travel reimbursement of officers and employees of the State of Mississippi, or any department, institution, board or commission thereof. The provisions governing meal and mileage reimbursement govern officers and employees of all political subdivisions of the State as well as state officers and employees.

These guidelines are intended to serve as a quick reference for the provisions of Section §25-3-41, other relevant statutes, and rules and regulations adopted by the Wilkinson County School District affecting all areas of reimbursable District travel. The District's policies on travel and travel expense reimbursement can be found in policies BID, CDI, DKC, and GBO.

General Information

The Business Office publishes OUT-OF DISTRICT TRAVEL request forms. It can be obtained from the Business Office or school bookkeepers. Any questions concerning travel or travel reimbursements should be directed to the Business Office. As changes to the forms are required, new forms are emailed from the Business Office to all employees when applicable.

All travel, out of District and out of state, on behalf of the Wilkinson County School District must be approved before the travel occurs. Travel must be pre-approved on the current *Request for Out-of-District Travel* form by the Superintendent. All out of state travel and any out-of-District travel that exceeds \$550 must also be approved by the Board of Trustees before travel can occur. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed for travel that was not pre-approved.

Requesting Reimbursement for Travel

All employees of the Wilkinson County School District shall use the *Request for Reimbursement for Out-of-District Travel* form when seeking reimbursement for authorized travel for and on behalf of the school District and this must be submitted within 45 days of the employee's return to the District. Travel expense reimbursement checks will be processed and distributed based on the Accounts Payable Schedule. Approved travel reimbursements should be submitted through the proper channels in accordance with the schedule established by the Business Office.

The request for reimbursement must be completed. Incomplete travel forms will be returned for completion, which may delay the reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement submitted without proper paperwork will be returned.

An employee traveling on official school District business is expected to exercise the same care incurring expenses, as would a prudent person traveling for personal reasons. Travel for business should be conducted at a minimum cost for achieving success of the mission. Travelers shall request air/rail, hotel, and rental car reservations as far in advance as possible and shall utilize the lowest logical rates available. Travel in first class is not a reimbursable expense.

Airline Travel

All purchases of tickets shall be done on an official school District purchase order and billed to the Wilkinson County School District or purchased directly by the employee by check or credit card.

The travel should request airline reservations as far in advance as possible and shall utilize the lowest logical rates available. Travel in first class is not a reimbursable expense.

When an airline reservation changes involuntarily and results in additional costs, (delay flight requiring overnight hotels/meals), a note of explanation must be attached to the travel voucher.

Private Automobile Use on District Business

Reimbursement for personal automobile or other private motor vehicle will be at the rate established by the State Department of Finance and Administration per mile traveled for business purposes. When two or more employees travel in one private vehicle, only one travel expense at the authorized reimbursement rate per mile shall be allowed.

Conference Hotels

When hotel rooms are blocked for a conference, seminar, etc., and a special discounted conference hotel rates provided, the employee should go through the conference-housing bureau, or, when appropriate, directly to the hotel to obtain lodging.

Conference Meals

Meals shall not be claimed as a separate item of expense on the travel reimbursement when included in the conference registration fee.

Conference Registration Fees

Registration fees paid by an employee for a conference will be reimbursed on a travel voucher only when supported by a paid receipt.

Lodging

Lodging receipts submitted should be the original from the registration desk provided when the bill is paid, as opposed to a copy or credit card receipt. Only itemized receipts are acceptable. The employee has two choices when making lodging reservations.

- In any case, the employee should make reservations as far in advance as possible in order to obtain the lowest rate and utilize the conference rates and facilities whenever available.
- The District will reimburse for lodging expenses incurred by employees when supported by an itemized invoice.

Lodging shared with another District employee

When more than one employee shares a motel/hotel room, only one employee shall request reimbursement and the other shall indicate with whom the employee stayed.

Lodging for students and chaperones attending school related programs

Section §37-3-01, Mississippi Code of 1972, states that activity funds may be expended for travel costs, including advances, incurred by students and their chaperones in attending any in-state school related program, conventions or seminars. The employee (chaperone) can use the two options listed above when making hotel/motel reservations.

Other Authorized Expenses

Miscellaneous Charges

Hotel/Airport Parking: Receipts must be attached to the travel voucher for parking.

Travel Advances

Only the Superintendent is authorized to approve travel advances for airline tickets and chaperoned student activities.

Persons receiving advances must be officers or employees of the District.

Travel advances may not be used for personal expenses or for any purpose other than the actual expenses of the authorized travel.

Accounting for any travel advance shall be made within five working days after the end of the month in which the official travel was made. Any money not used for travel-related expenses shall be repaid at this time.

SECTION F

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Room Maintenance

All employees share the responsibility of instructing students in the proper care and protection of school property. If an employee should permit damage to property by gross negligence or willful neglect of duty, the person may be held financially responsible.

Employees should report any unsanitary conditions, damage to school property, or needed repair to the principal who will request needed repair and/or replacement of the equipment or facilities according to established administrative regulations and procedures.

SECTION G

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES, PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES

Appearance and Dress (Policy GAB)

Each employee of the Wilkinson County School District shall be expected to give proper attention to his/her personal appearance as required by work responsibilities. The Wilkinson County School District recognizes that an appropriately dressed employee is seen as a more suitable role model. The Wilkinson County School District further recognizes that personal appearance also has a bearing on the teaching authority, confidence, and self-esteem of teachers, administrators, and staff. A professional appropriate dress influences the way staff interacts with students and positively affects the general environment. Each employee of the Wilkinson County School District will contribute to the formation of a positive, professional public image by maintaining high standards of personal appearance through appropriate dress and grooming regardless of job category.

General Guidelines

1. District issued employee identification badges are required to be worn and visible at all times.

2. Hair must be clean, neat and well groomed.
3. Foundation garments shall be worn and not visible with respect to color, style, and/or fabric. No see-through or sheer clothing shall be allowed, and no skin shall be visible between pants/trousers, skirts, and shirts/blouses at any time.
4. Sunglasses, hats, caps, headbands, curlers, or other headgear shall not be worn in the buildings, unless prescribed by a doctor. The only exception to any head gear includes a hair net and or cap where long hair poses a health or safety threat near open flames, moving machines, or in food preparation.
5. Shoes traditionally worn around the home (slippers, house shoes, or beach slippers) or to the beach/pool (flip-flop shower shoe design or thongs) are not permitted. District advises against wearing open-toed, open-heeled, wedges, high heeled shoes. **However, if you choose to wear them, it is at your own risk.**
6. Yoga pants, tights, pajama pants, leggings, and/or jeggings are NOT permitted. Jeans are ONLY permitted on days designated by the principal or Superintendent.
7. Patches, decorations, slogans, designs, symbols, tags, marks or advertisement of beer, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or similar items or displays and/or expressions of obscenities, sexual references, or similar references deemed detrimental and disruptive to the operation of the school, education, discipline, health or welfare of students are prohibited. Clothing that has any type of drawing or words that are vulgar, profane, suggestive, or advertising an affiliation with drugs, alcohol, violence or gang related activities are prohibited.
8. Employees who are furnished uniforms must wear them at all times while performing duties of the job assignment.

Pants

1. Pants/trousers must have a hem or cuff. No cut-offs, cutouts and/or ragged edges are permitted.
2. Pants must be sized appropriately. No hip-huggers that reveal flesh are allowed. Pants must not be excessively tight or sagging.
3. No jeans of any color or fabric are permitted, except on such days as designated by the principal.

Shirts/Blouses

1. Shirts/blouses shall not expose the midriff. Sleeveless shirts/blouses are not permitted when worn as a single garment.
2. Casual tee shirts (faded, sheer, out of shape or inappropriately sized) are not allowed.
3. Tank tops and spaghetti strap garments are prohibited when worn as a single garment. These garments are permissible with a sleeved shirt/jacket layered on top. Camisoles, slips, and tee shirts that are intended to be worn as undergarments may not be worn as outer garments.

Skirts/Dresses

1. No miniskirts, halter tops, backless, strapless (without a jacket or sweater) and/or cut-out/see-through dresses shall be permitted.

Shorts

1. Shorts and Skorts are not allowed.
2. Warm-ups/Jogging Suits, and Shorts
 - a. Warm-ups, jogging suits, wind suits and/or sweat suits, leggings, jeggings, yoga pants, tights, and other athletic apparel are **NOT** permissible, except for physical education gym and dance teachers.

Shoes

1. Footwear must be worn at all times.
2. Shoes traditionally worn around the home (slippers, house shoes, or beach slippers) or to the beach/pool (flip-flop/shower shoe design or thongs) are not permitted.
3. District advises against wearing open-toed, open-heeled, wedges, high heeled shoes. However, if you choose to wear them, it is at your own risk.

Accessories

1. Noisy, distracting jewelry/accessories that could cause a safety hazard may not be worn. In keeping with professional decorum, only female employees can wear earrings, and ears are the only exposed areas of the body on which pierced jewelry may be worn. Exposed tattoos can not include vulgar language and/or images, drugs, alcohol, violence or gang related activities.
2. No hats are allowed in the building unless part of the employee's uniform or if religious headgear is required to be worn by the employee's religion.

Spirit Days

The principal may designate "school spirit" day on special days/events or circumstances such as Western Day, Red Ribbon Week, homecoming, and/or testing days with specific guidelines to ensure a safe and orderly school environment.

Arrest of an Employee

An employee who is arrested or charged with a felony or misdemeanor is required to notify his/her immediate supervisor and the assistant superintendent as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours after the arrest. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. If the arrest occurs on campus, the matter will be handled as discreetly as possible with the least disturbance to the educational process.

Cell Phone Use

No employee of the school district is to have a personal cell phone activated while on duty unless use of such device is required by the school district. Use of cellular telephones for personal use during work hours is in violation of school board policy GBQ and will result in discipline including, but not limited to, dismissal.

Change of Name and Address

Teachers should report to the appropriate office to change or request any of the information:

1. Any changes in name, address/or telephone number. You may contact the Office of Human Resources.

2. Expected completion of degree or change in certification that will affect salary. Contact Office of Human Resources.
3. Changes in number of dependents, using W-4 forms. You may contact the Business office.
4. Copies of W-2 forms, payroll forms or check stubs, contact the Business Office.
5. Any other information pertinent to keeping accurate and complete payroll and individual earning records. Contact the Business Office.

Computer and Internet Usage

The Wilkinson County School District provides students and employees' access to the district's computer network system, including internet access, to expand informational and communication resources, promote its educational excellence, enhance students' research capabilities, increase faculty and staff productivity, and result in better communication between the district and its patron.

Rules have been established for district use of technology. No software will be installed on the district's computers without the consent of the Office of Educational Technology. Use of the Internet is encouraged both for students and teachers, as appropriate, in the educational setting; however, certain types of websites will not be tolerated. These include websites dealing with pornography, hate groups, weapon making, etc.

Students are not allowed use of the Internet unless the "Internet User Agreement and Parent Permission Form" form has been completed by the parent/legal guardian, signed by both the student and parent, and submitted to the school. In addition, all administrators, faculty, and staff must sign the "Faculty and Staff Acceptable Use Policy" and return it to the office prior to accessing the Internet for the first time each school year.

Social Media Networking Websites (GABBA)

Access to social networking websites for individual use during school hours are prohibited. Employees, faculty and staff should not give social networking website passwords to students.

All employees, faculty and staff of this school district who participate in social networking websites (like Instagram and Facebook) shall not post any data, documents, photos or inappropriate information on any website that might result in a disruption of classroom activity or negatively impact the school and/or District. Social media posts in the name of the school or district must be approved by the school administrator and/or superintendent. The determination will be made by the superintendent.

Fraternization via the internet between employees, faculty or staff and students is prohibited and violation of any of these policies may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination. Wilkinson County School District employees are required to exhibit ethical and professional behavior at all times. Ethical and professional behavior requires that employees show consideration and respect whenever using computers or electronic communication/technology/devices/resources.

Acceptable Use

Use of the district's system, whether by students, faculty, or staff, must be in support of educational objectives of the district. The transmission or receipt of any material in violation of any United States or state law or regulation and the transmission or receipt of any material in inconsistency with the education objectives of the district is prohibited.

Copyright Laws

Teachers have access to copiers for non-copyrighted materials. Teacher use of the school copier will be set and regulated by the building-level principal. The school district, recognizing the rights of authors and producers of materials concerning the works they create, is committed to the observance of PL 94-553, the federal copyright laws of the United States. The following guidelines have been developed to guide school personnel and to protect the Board of Trustees and school personnel from lawsuits. School personnel are required to comply with PL 94-553 in the use of any material, print and non-print, protected by copyright. All administrators, coordinators, supervisors, teachers, and staff are responsible for the implementation of the administrative guidelines:

1. Individual schools will not be permitted to negotiate and/or enter into written licensing agreements for copyrighted material; this is a district-level responsibility.
2. Each school is hereby directed not to use any material—print or non-print—for which the district does not have written permission from the copyright holder. The librarian/media specialist is directed to determine the use of said material and cost for copyright license.

Education Enhancement Funds

Every teacher in the school district will receive an amount of money provided by the state and district to purchase educational materials and supplies for the classroom. These monies are assigned per classroom, and materials purchased belong to the school district, not to the individual teacher. When a teacher is reassigned, materials purchased with EEF funds will remain in the classroom for which they were purchased or be reassigned by the principal.

Fixed Assets

Items included in the school inventory must remain in the designated classroom unless the principal makes an equipment transfer request. Such fixed asset items are the responsibility of the teacher and must be maintained in a careful, protective manner. Fixed asset items should not be taken out of the school building without the express written permission of the building-level principal. Items found to be missing during an inventory conducted by the district or the state will be replaced by the teacher or other staff member on whose inventory they were listed.

Fund Raising

The superintendent or designee prior to any agreement entered into with a vendor must approve all fund raising activities. Under no circumstances may anyone conduct any kind of sale on school property for personal gain. Staff members selling anything for personal gain will be referred to the Superintendent for disciplinary action. The school district receives a dividend from companies for processing required paperwork, e.g., school day pictures, fundraisers, etc.

Gifts and Favors

Employees may not accept gifts or favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks or instructional materials may result in the prosecution of a misdemeanor offense. This does not include staff development, teacher training, or instructional materials, such as maps, worksheets, that convey information.

Lines of Communication and Authority

Each employee of the Wilkinson County School District is responsible to the Board of Trustees through the Superintendent. All personnel will refer matters requiring administrative action to the administrator immediately in charge of the area in which the problem arises, e.g., building-level principal or supervisor.

Administrators will refer such matters to the next higher authority when necessary. All matters to be submitted to the board should first be brought before the superintendent for investigation. If these matters require board action, they will be presented to the board by the superintendent or designee.

Parking

The school district does not require staff members to purchase parking decals. At the time of the approval of this handbook, no school has designated/assigned parking for staff other than administrators and administrative assistants.

Professional Development

Professional Development is supported by the Mississippi Department of Education as a means of school improvement. The purpose of professional development is to improve instruction and ultimately improve student achievement. The state legislature has codified professional development: §37-17-8 specifies that each school district will develop an annual professional development plan, and §37-3-49(1) states that time must be specified in the professional development plan to work on the district's instructional management plan.

The district's professional development plan originates at the school level where unique needs of the school are addressed. At the district level, the focus is on major commitments. Many of the topics covered are mandated either by state or federal government or a continuation of the district's major focus over a three to five year period, or based on personnel appraisal.

Education Employment Procedures Law (EEPL)

§ 37-9-105 of the Mississippi Code provides for procedures that the school district must follow in the event that an employee's contract is not renewed.

The law states that the notice must be given according to the following guidelines:

- For a Superintendent, the school district must give notice of non-re-employment on or before February 1,
- For a principal, the school district will give notice of non-re-employment on or before March 1,
- For a teacher or other professional educator, the school district will give notice of non-re-employment on or before April 15 or within ten days after the governor approves the appropriation budget for K-12.

§ 37-9-109 of the Mississippi Code provides for an employee who has received notice under § 37-9-105.

Upon written request, the employee will be entitled to the following:

- Written notice of reasons for non-re-employment, together with a summary of the factual basis therefore, which notice will be given at least five (5) days prior to any hearing.
- An opportunity for a hearing at which to present matters relevant to the reasons given for the non-re-employment decision, including any reasons alleged by the employee to be the reason for non-re-employment;
- Receive a fair and impartial hearing before the board or hearing officer;
- Be represented by legal counsel, at his own expense. If the employee does not request a hearing, the decision of the board with regard to the re-employment of the employee will be final.

Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers may be secured in a timely manner by contacting your building –level secretary no later than 6:30 a.m. Substitutes CAN NOT be secured for teacher assistants or non-certified staff members.

The following items should be placed in a folder available to the substitute:

1. Copy of the class roll.
2. Daily programs and lesson plans.
3. Materials to be used in the day's work.
4. Attendance, lunch report, and supply forms.
5. Emergency drill signal with exit routes.
6. A schedule of the teacher's special duties.
7. Discipline plan with rewards and consequences.

Teacher Certification

All professional employees must hold a valid Mississippi Educator's License appropriate for the position held at the time of employment. The license must be valid at the time of execution of the contract. If the certificate expires during the life of such contract and is not renewed, the contract will be null and void until the certificate is renewed. The district does not maintain records related to license renewal. Certificated personnel are responsible for maintaining the required documentation and submitting it for license renewal. To renew a license, the employee must send the appropriate documentation (CEU certificates and/or transcript) to the Mississippi Department of Education, which indicates requirements for renewal have been met. A copy of the renewed license must be submitted to the personnel office no later than the end of the second week in June of the year it is renewed. The Mississippi Department of Education is the States Educator's Licensure Authority.

Teacher Negligence

Emphasis must be given to the issue of teacher negligence and the legal implications that may arise due to negligence. Examples of teacher negligence include, but are not limited to, :

- Classes and students left unattended;
- Improper enforcement of policy on medication and first aid;
- Improper enforcement of policy on corporal punishment;
- Pupil injury due to teacher carelessness, neglect, etc.;
- Teacher profanity and verbal abuse of students;
- Improper enforcement of dress and grooming regulations;
- Improper release of students;
- Use of students for off-campus errands;
- Improper enforcement of search and seizure policy.

Telephone Use

Office personnel will take all messages and put them in the employee's mailbox. Use of the telephone in the office will be confined to necessary calls. Students should not be dismissed from class to use the office telephone. In case of a student illness, the call shall be made in the nurse's station by the nurse.

Searches

All searches must be pre-approved by the superintendent, principal, and assistant principal or acting principal. At least two district employees must be present while a search is conducted. All searches must be reasonable in scope.

Searches of persons, possessions, and/or lockers can be conducted if a district employee has reasonable suspicion that a student has violated or is violating a district policy, school rules or regulations, or the law, and that the search will result in discovery of evidence of such violation. Searches of desks and other school property may be conducted at any time, with or without reasonable suspicion of a violation.

Searches of vehicles driven to school by or for students may be searched by visual inspection with or without reasonable suspicion of a violation. If a visual search results in individualized reasonable suspicion of a violation, a more intrusive search of the vehicle may be conducted at the direction of the principal.

The district may, at any time, utilize canines to search vehicles, possessions not on the student's person, desks, lockers, and other school property, with or without reasonable suspicion of a violation. A canine response indicating the presence of contraband constitutes reasonable suspicion and a more intrusive search may be conducted at the direction of the principal.

Staff Protection

The school district is vigorous in its protection of all employees from physical and/or psychological abuse. Personnel are also protected by §37-11-21 of the Mississippi Code, which states:

If any parent, guardian, or other person will insult or abuse any superintendent, principal, a teacher, support staff member, or bus driver during the session of the school in the presence of school pupils, such person will be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, will be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five dollars (\$25) nor more than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150).

Any employee who is threatened with harm is to notify the building-level principal or supervisor immediately. Steps will be taken at once to protect the employee. The district will use the full protection of the courts with respect to threats and intimidation of school personnel.

WILKINSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Employee Orientation/Mandatory Notifications

Please complete this form and submit it to your building administrator or department supervisor no more than five days after the first work day of the 2026-2027 school year.

(Please Print)

Name: _____

School / Department: _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Wilkinson County School District Staff Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, district policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

I hereby acknowledge that nothing in this handbook shall be interpreted as establishing a contract of employment between the Wilkinson County School District and the employee.

I also understand that the information in this handbook and Board Policy Manual are subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or eliminate the information summarized in this booklet. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that this handbook intends no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will relationships. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor or the WCSD Human Resources Department if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

Employee's Signature

Date

Principal's Signature

Date

Office of Human Resources

Form Received by

Date