



2024-25

EMPLOYEE



HANDBOOK

COMMITTED TO CHANGING LIVES



CARROLL COUNTY SCHOOLS

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Carroll County 24STRONG Team:

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! With the theme of **Elevate**, all of us – the board of education, administrators, faculty, and staff – intend to raise the bar in 2024-25. This year, let's embrace challenges with a growth mindset and celebrate successes, big and small. Let's collaborate, innovate, and inspire one another to strive for greater excellence and deeper impact.

Our vision is to be recognized as a **premier** school district, and everyone in our system has an important role in pursuing premier and empowering students to graduate ready to be enrolled, enlisted, employed, and engaged in their community. Carroll County Schools is committed to positively changing lives by **Focusing** on Learning, **Creating** Future Focused Mindsets, **Pursuing** Premier Experiences, **Maximizing** Our Talent, and **Serving** Our Communities. We believe that by focusing on these commitments, Carroll County Schools will continue to be recognized among the best districts in the state.

You are part of a school system that has been recognized as a **Top Workplace** 2023 by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, a four-time **Best Places to Work** winner by the Atlanta Business Chronicle, and the Times-Georgian Reader's Choice **Best Employer** for the last six years running. These accolades are evidence that we care about our people. Our board of education and leadership understand that taking care of employees is the right thing to do and guarantees continued success for our system.

We encourage our students to be **Future Focused** in everything they do, and employees are no different. We must all set goals, make plans, and never stop learning! We invest in our faculty and staff with professional learning opportunities and expect you to take full advantage of these as part of your own professional development. Your success is our success, and we want to help you get where you want to go.

Thank you for choosing Carroll County Schools! We're glad you're here. Together we are 24STRONG with premier teachers, premier leaders, and premier schools!

Sincerely,

Scott K. Cowart
Superintendent

Their future is our mission.

Table of Contents

GENERAL INFORMATION.....	5
Vision, Mission, and Purpose.....	5
Strategic Directions Chart	6
Purpose	7
Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination	7
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity	7
About Carroll County School System	8
Board of Education.....	9
Leadership Essentials	10
Teacher Essentials	11
KEY PERSONNEL POLICIES/PROCEDURES	12
Certification.....	12
Consulting.....	12
Divisive Concepts.....	12
Dress Code Guideline for Employees	12
Approved Exceptions	13
Drug and Alcohol Testing Procedure	13
Drug-Free Workplace	14
Employee Assistance Program (EAP).....	14
Employee Complaints and Appeals	15
Employee Work Calendars, Payroll Calendar, and Certified Salary Schedules.....	15
Evaluation.....	15
Identification and Security Badges	15
Internet Acceptable Use Agreement for Employees	16
Terms of Internet Usage.....	16
Social Media Guidelines for District Employees	18
Your Personal Responsibility	18
Specific Guidelines to Consider	18
Employee-Student Relations Online	20
Expressing Your Ideas and Thoughts	21
Mentor Program	22
Professional Development	22
Reassignment	22
Reduction in Force	22
Staff Meetings.	23
Suspension/Termination.	23
Tobacco/Vape Products.	23
Transfers.....	23
Travel.....	24
Vector Solutions.....	24
Workers' Compensation.....	24
Workers' Compensation Early Return-to-Work Program	24
Panel of Physicians.....	25

INSURANCE AND BENEFITS26

Health Insurance26

Short-Term and Long-Term Liability.....26

Basic Group Term Life Insurance26

Optional and Supplemental Group Term Life26

Accidental Death and Disbursement Insurance26

Dental Insurance26

Vision Insurance27

Medical Flexible Spending Account27

Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account27

Cancer, Accident, and Critical Illness Insurance27

Social Security and Medicare Insurance27

Tax Deferred Investments27

EMPLOYEE LEAVE.....28

Accrual of Sick Leave & Absence for Medical Related Reasons28

Personal Leave29

Paid Parental Leave29

Professional Leave30

Observance of Religious Holidays30

Jury and Witness Leave31

Military Leave31

Construction with the Family & Medical Leave Act31

Annual Leave32

Family and Medical Leave32

Sick Leave Pool33

Procedures for Sick Leave Withdrawal.....34

Pension35

 Teacher Retirement System (TRS)35

 Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS)35

THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS36

Introduction36

Definitions36

Standards37

Reporting41

Disciplinary Action41

Sanctions.....42

Application Procedures.....43

The information in this handbook does not create or amend any contract of employment. Changes made in Board Policy subsequent to the distribution of this handbook take priority.

Vision

Carroll County Schools will be recognized as a **premier** school district.

Mission

Carroll County Schools empowers students to graduate ready to be **enrolled, enlisted, or employed, and engaged** in their community.

Purpose

Carroll County Schools is committed to **positively changing lives**.

Carroll County Schools is committed to:

Focusing on Learning

Creating Future Focused Mindsets

Pursuing Premier Experiences

Maximizing Our Talent

Serving Our Communities

Desired Outcomes

- Elementary Schools will prepare students to be successful in middle school.
- Middle Schools will prepare students to be successful in high school.
- High Schools will prepare students to graduate and successfully enroll, enlist, or be employed and engaged in their community.
- Students will excel in academics, athletics, arts, and activities.
- Students will be taught and supported by qualified, passionate and caring adults.
- Students and staff will have a safe, orderly and positive climate conducive to learning.



24STRONG refers to the Carroll County Schools initiative to be unified in our direction, culture, values, beliefs, processes and practices to ensure all students receive a premier educational experience in our unique settings.



2024-2025 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Vision: To be recognized as a Premier School District.

Mission: To empower students to graduate ready to be enrolled, enlisted, or employed, and engaged in their community.

Purpose: To Positively Change Lives.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Improve Student Learning

- Ensure Academic Success for All Students
- Implement Expectations for Improving Student Performance
- Provide Personalized Learning
- Focus on the 4 Cs at All Levels (STEM)
- Use CCSS Instructional Framework

Create Future Focused Mindsets

- Provide Multiple Pathways to Graduation
- Provide Rigorous Experiences for All Students
- Ensure Aligned Future Focused Efforts
- Create Career Awareness
- Implement Student Essentials

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Create Premier Experiences

- Provide Premier Academics
- Provide Premier Activities
- Provide Premier Arts
- Provide Premier Athletics
- Provide Premier Classrooms & Schools

Serve Our Communities

- Create a Safe & Hospitable Climate
- Focus on the Well-Being of Students & Staff
- Build Relationships & Connections
- Utilize Effective Communication Strategies
- Ensure Equitable Opportunities

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Productive Internal Processes

- Strive for Excellence
- Ensure Vertical Alignment of Efforts
- Focus on Process Improvement
- Execute Strategically
- Manage People, Data & Processes

Practice Good Stewardship

- Practice Financial Stewardship
- Practice Resource Stewardship
- Practice Talent Stewardship
- Practice Asset Stewardship
- Practice Customer Stewardship

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Maximize Talent

- Attract, Develop, & Retain Talent
- Value Relationships & Results
- Cultivate Leadership
- Embrace Self Directed Learning
- Implement Teacher & Leader Essentials

Advance a Performance Culture

- Plan Strategically
- Continually Reinvent
- Seek Innovation
- Accept Ownership & Accountability
- Embrace Change to Drive Improvement

Their future is our mission.

Purpose

This handbook is designed to answer frequently asked questions concerning policies, procedures, benefits, services, work rules and other areas of concern to employees. While it is intended to be as comprehensive as possible, the handbook may not cover every situation. For further information, please review the [Carroll County Schools website](#). The information in this handbook does not create or amend any contract of employment. The Carroll County Board of Education has the right to adopt new policies and procedures and to modify, amend or eliminate any of its existing policies and procedures. The Board of Education periodically undergoes a review of Board policies. Any changes will take priority over the information stated in this guide even if the changes have not been reprinted or substituted into the guidebook. Local schools may institute additional procedures relating to normal school operations, but those may not conflict with the Board Policy or items specified in this handbook.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

The Carroll County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability or sex in its employment practices. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and all accompanying regulations.

Any employee, applicant for employment or other person who believes he or she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined in [Policy GAAA](#).

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity

Carroll County Schools believe an equitable, diverse, and inclusive school community is critical for preparing students to participate in a complex, pluralistic, and interconnected society. We challenge ourselves to regularly evaluate and refine curricula, policies, and practices, and to commit the appropriate resources to ensure we embody these beliefs every day. We aspire for all members of our community – students, parents, caregivers, faculty, staff and community – to develop a sense of belonging and for our graduates to bring about positive change in the world.

To this end we look to:

- **Respect** all
- **Trust** each other to engage in difficult conversations
- **Share** our unique stories and listen to other
- **Learn** from different perspectives and experiences
- **Examine** our biases and endeavor to understand their influence
- **Foster** belonging, connectedness, and safety

About Carroll County School System

The Carroll County School System is thriving, thanks to the efforts of our entire 24 STRONG Team. Our schools have received local, state, and national recognition for innovative learning practices, all five high schools continue to earn record graduation rates, the district was named Best Employer in Carroll County for the sixth consecutive year, and one a top workplace in the metro-Atlanta area. Total enrollment for the district is approximately 16,000 students, and the Carroll County School system employs approximately 2,000 staff members.

24STRONG

As a member of the 24STRONG Team, you are our greatest asset. Your health and well-being are important to us, and we have resources available to support your success. The district provides free, confidential, supportive counseling services through our partners at Tanner Health System. And, each year all employees have the opportunity to participate in a district health challenge to encourage making healthy living and good nutrition a priority.

21st-Century Learning

In Carroll County, innovation and creativity drive academic instruction at all grade levels. By integrating science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) into hands-on, real world experiences we are preparing students to excel upon graduation. The district is one of only three school systems in Georgia to have a District STEM certification process and the only system in the state with a STEAM certification process.

Graduation Pathways

Offering multiple graduation pathways has proven successful in our historic graduation rates. Students have the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment through partnerships with the University of West Georgia and West Georgia Technical College, award-winning College and Career pathways at our two College and Career academies, work-based learning with businesses in our community, and more.

Positively Changing Lives

Being recognized locally and in the metro-Atlanta area as a top workplace is testament to the premier culture we strive for throughout the district. We believe strongly in professional development opportunities and cultivating leaders who serve as role models and as lead learners for our students and community.

Our people and their commitment to positively changing lives makes us incredibly proud every day. Carroll County teachers, leaders, and staff have not only provided premier opportunities in academics, arts, activities, and athletics, but they have also worked together to serve our community in a variety of ways. We have countless stories about students succeeding in the classroom and beyond because our 24STRONG team is dedicated to making a difference.

Educating the Whole Child

Our district recognizes that students' education and life outcomes are significantly influenced by their access to safe, welcoming learning environments and enriching experiences both in and out of school. We are committed to creating a supportive atmosphere where students feel valued and empowered to explore and learn.

In addition to being an active PBIS school district, our schools implement Capturing Kids' Hearts, a program that focuses on social-emotional wellbeing, relationships, and student connectedness. We have observed the positive impact of this approach, noting strong correlations between emotional wellbeing and academic success, reduced disciplinary issues, and increased teacher satisfaction.

Board of Education

The Carroll County School System is governed by a seven-member Board of Education. The Board exercises authority over the schools in accordance with applicable laws. It determines policy, delegates executive, supervisory and instructional authority to its employees, and appraises the results achieved in light of the goals of the school system.

The Board oversees the school system and establishes general policies for its operation in keeping with the State Board of Education rules and regulations and the requirements of the law. In carrying out this function the three fundamental duties of the Board are:

- Formulating and interpreting educational policies;
- Delegating administrative duties; and
- Making a continuous appraisal of progress

Reference: Policies: [BA](#) and [BBA](#)

Leadership Essentials

Carroll County leaders are expected to exhibit the highest standards of ethical, professional and personal behavior. Additionally, they are expected to deliver high levels of performance in their job tasks. To clearly delineate what is expected of leaders, Carroll County Schools has established a set of four leadership essentials to guide how leaders should act; the cross-cutting attributes they are expected to display; and what they are expected to do in order to be successful in Carroll County. These essentials are displayed in the chart below with supporting clarification for each.

Passionate – Courageous – Reflective – Committed

Lead by Example	Build Relationships	Accept Ownership and Accountability	Embrace Change to Drive Improvement
Leads staff in a clear direction, is energetic and acts professionally in the way they communicate, dress, treat people and treat information.	Builds others by listening to their opinion and ideas to make decisions. Develops credibility, promotes positive relationships and creates loyalty.	Accepts responsibility for improving the organization and personal performance.	Embraces and champions ways to improve performance and leverage success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads a vision of academic success for ALL students Demands excellence Executes strategically Practices inclusive leadership Learns continuously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earns trust Builds successful teams Communicates effectively Ensures connectedness Promotes engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes initiative Focuses on results Manages people, data and processes Monitors progress Provides GREAT service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads change Transforms school culture Encourages innovation Fosters creativity Demonstrates resiliency

Teacher Essentials

To clearly delineate what leaders should look for when looking for teachers to work for Carroll County Schools, the district has established a set of four teacher essentials - Lead by Example, Build Relationships, Accept Ownership & Accountability, and Embrace Change to Drive Improvement. These are used to guide what we are looking for in teacher applicants, the cross cutting attributes they are expected to display and what they are expected to do in order to be successful in Carroll County.

Passionate – Courageous – Reflective – Committed

Lead by Example	Build Relationships	Accept Ownership and Accountability	Embrace Change to Drive Improvement
Serves as a role model in the way they deliver instruction and the way they look, communicate, treat people, and treat information.	Works in a collaborative way that builds credibility, mutual respect, trust and positive relationships with students, parents, and peers.	Demonstrates self-efficacy by embracing responsibility for student performance and professional growth.	Seeks and uses innovative practices to improve student achievement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exhibits a professional demeanor ● Implements quality instruction ● Uses effective pedagogy ● Displays curricular and content knowledge ● Contributes to the profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishes a positive learning environment ● Engages students ● Cultivates equity and inclusiveness ● Plans collaboratively ● Communicates effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Takes initiative ● Improves student achievement ● Creates a well-organized and managed classroom ● Assesses for learning ● Provides GREAT service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Influences a positive school culture ● Improves student literacy skills ● Uses technology effectively ● Differentiates student learning ● Provides rigorous learning opportunities

KEY PERSONNEL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

For further information, refer to the [Carroll County Board Policy Manual](#).

Certification

Professional employees of the Carroll County School System must hold proper certification from the [Georgia Professional Standards Commission](#) or be granted a waiver in accordance with the strategic waiver process. It is the responsibility of the individual to keep his/her certification current. Employees receive a renewal email from Human Resources with detailed instructions of steps required for recertification. This email is sent to employees in November of the year their certificate expires.

Consulting

Administrative personnel serving as consultants outside the school district must have prior approval of their immediate supervisor before accepting consultation positions. Personal, annual or unpaid leave shall be used in situations where personnel are serving as paid consultants. All personnel must give priority to execution of contract duties before accepting consultation commitments.

Reference: [Policy CGPEA](#)

Divisive Concepts

In Carroll County our teachers and staff members are required to teach the Georgia Department of Education state standards. Staff members, while performing official duties as part of his or her employment or engagement with a school or local school system, intentionally encouraging or attempting to persuade or indoctrinate a student, school community member, or other school personnel to agree with or advocate for such individual's personal beliefs is not tolerated.

Employees are expected to practice tolerance and mutual respect and create a classroom and/or working environment that is free of espousing personal and political beliefs. Parents' Bill of Rights affords parents the right to inspect and object to instructional materials, right to opt out of sex ed and review materials in advance, and right to object to having photography of children taken.

Dress Code Guidelines for Employees

Appropriate appearance by employees contributes to a positive learning environment. All employees are expected to set a positive example for students and the community by being professionally dressed to perform their duties. These guidelines are intended to reduce questions about expectations and to provide consistency in the type of dress worn throughout the system by all employees.

Modesty and cleanliness are always expected. Good taste must be displayed with regard to fit. Tight, extremely baggy, low cut or revealing garments are not acceptable for the school setting.

Piercings, body art, hairstyles or other adornments that are detrimental and distracting to the learning environment are not permitted.

Business apparel is appropriate. Casual clothing should not be worn to work unless otherwise approved by the principal or supervising administrator. PE teachers may wear appropriate wind/jogging suits, shorts, t-shirts and athletic shoes to fulfill their responsibilities while teaching physical education classes. Employees should wear some form of identification.

Business casual dress is appropriate for School Spirit Days, which includes the appropriate items listed above in addition to casual slacks, denim garments, school spirit shirts and athletic shoes.

Approved Exceptions

- Special accommodations may be made for dress code, based on health reasons documented by a physician's note.
- Business casual or more relaxed dress is appropriate during the summer for 12 month employees.
- Exceptions to these guidelines shall be made for those employees whose department has a specific dress code or uniforms, such as Maintenance, Transportation, School Nutrition, and Nurses.
- The principal is allowed discretion to make adaptations to the dress code guidelines for field days, field trips or other special events.

The building level principal or supervising administrator will make the final decision regarding appropriate dress.

Drug and Alcohol Testing Procedure

The Carroll County Board of Education is dedicated to providing safe and efficient transportation for students transported on school buses. The Board recognizes that safe student transportation depends on unimpaired judgment, physical dexterity, reflex action and unimpaired senses of sight and hearing of employees in safety-sensitive functions. The goal of this Board is, therefore, to provide our employees and students with an environment which promotes health and safety.

In order to meet this goal, effective January 1, 1995, the Carroll County Board of Education implemented and continues to comply with the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 as it applies to Drug and Alcohol Testing and regulations of the Federal Highway Administration. The purpose of this policy is to deter the use of drugs and alcohol in the workplace by establishing standard procedures for drug and alcohol testing for all employees required to hold a Commercial Driver's License and who are engaged in safety-sensitive functions. Employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions are: employees of a local school system who hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and who also operate or have reason to move a school bus. Other employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions include, but are not limited to, mechanics, school bus drivers who are coaches, teachers and administrators.

This Board will not tolerate unauthorized use, abuse, possession or sale of controlled substances by its employees. Training and education will be provided. Additionally, information will be provided on other assistance available to our employees to help them understand their responsibilities in achieving an alcohol and controlled substances free environment. Non-compliance with this policy or violation of the regulations may result in severe disciplinary action including suspension or dismissal.

Reference: [Policy GCRA \(1\)](#)

Drug-Free Workplace

The Board recognizes that a drug-free workplace encourages employee productivity and promotes the accomplishment of the Board's missions and goals. In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Board of Education hereby declares that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession of or use of a controlled substance or alcohol is prohibited in the workplace, on school premises, or as a part of any of the school's activities for all school system employees. As a condition of employment, employees will abide by the terms of this policy and shall notify the Superintendent of any criminal arrest or conviction not later than five (5) days after such conviction.

Reference: [Policy GAMA](#)

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Carroll County Schools believes the health and well-being of our employees is of critical importance. In recognition of this, a free and confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for our employees and their families, through an expanded partnership with Tanner Health System's Engage.

Engage EAP can be mandated, strongly encouraged or self-selected. For more information, visit their [website](#), [Introduction to Engage EAP](#), or call 770-834-8327.

In addition, the Georgia Department of Education in partnership with Kepro provides a free and confidential Employee Assistance Program for all public school employees who work at least 29 hours a week, along with their household members and children up to age 16. The services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information, visit the [KEPRO Employee Resource Guide](#) and [KEPRO EAP Flyer](#).

An EAP can provide employees with support in the following areas:

- Stress, Depression, Anxiety
- Relationship Issues
- Job Stress, Work Conflicts
- Anger, Grief, Loss
- Family and Parenting Problems
- Substance Abuse
- Many Other Areas

Employee Complaints and Appeals

The Carroll County Board of Education supports the process of certified personnel having the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. The Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible.

Teachers who have accepted from their local board a school year contract for the fourth or subsequent consecutive school year may appeal the following issues:

1. Summative performance ratings of “Unsatisfactory” or “Ineffective” contained in personnel evaluations conducted pursuant to Code Section 20-2-210;
2. Procedural deficiencies on the part of the local school system or charter school in conducting an evaluation; and,
3. Job performance.

Reference: Policies [GAE \(2\)](#); [GBIA](#)

Employee Work Calendars, Payroll Calendar, and Certified Salary Schedules

The work calendars provide the scheduled work days for all categories of employees. The calendars include holidays and school closings. Some categories of employment have floating adjusted work calendar days that will be scheduled by the employee’s supervisor. Employee work calendars, payroll calendar and certified and paraprofessional salary schedules are posted on www.carrollcountyschools.com on the [Business and Finance page](#).

Evaluation

All employees of the Board of Education will have their performance evaluated annually by an appropriately trained evaluator. Performance evaluation records are a part of the personnel evaluation file and are confidential. All certified teachers will be evaluated with Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and all certified administrators will be evaluated with Leadership Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) unless otherwise notified. All other certified and classified employees will be evaluated with a board approved, position-based evaluation tool.

Identification and Security Badges

All employees of the Carroll County School System will have picture identification badges. The badge allows the employee and one guest to be admitted to Carroll County extracurricular activities for no fee; this excludes tournaments and certain other events as posted by individual schools and special programs. Badges for terminated employees should be returned to the Human Resources Department.

Internet Acceptable Use Agreement for Employees

The Carroll County School System strongly believes in the educational value of internet electronic information services and recognizes the potential to support curriculum and student learning in facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication.

The Carroll County School System will make every effort to protect students and teachers from any misuse or abuse as a result of interacting with an information service. Inappropriate and/or illegal interaction with the information service is strictly prohibited.

By virtue of using Carroll County School District technology, employees are subject to the provisions of this acceptable use agreement. If any user violates these provisions, access to the information service may be denied and you may be subject to disciplinary action.

Terms of Internet Usage

1. **User Responsibility.** As an employee of this school system, employees will accept user responsibility for reporting any misuse of the network to their school administrator. Misuse may come in many forms, but is commonly viewed as any message(s) sent or received that indicates or suggest pornography, unethical or illegal solicitation, racism, sexism, inappropriate language and other issues described below.
2. **Acceptable Use.** The use of assigned employee accounts must be in support of education and research aligned with educational goals and objectives of the Carroll County School System. Employees are personally responsible for the following provisions at all times when using the electronic information service:
 - a. Use of other organization's networks or computing resources must comply with rules appropriate to that network.
 - b. Transmission of any material in violation of any United States or other state organizations is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secret.
 - c. Use of commercial activities by for-profit institutions is generally not acceptable.
 - d. Use of product advertisement of political lobbying is also prohibited.
3. **Privileges.** The use of the information system is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The school administrator may close an account at any time deemed necessary. The administration of a particular school may request that the system administrator deny, revoke or suspend specific user accounts.

Access to district provided applications (i.e. Infinite Visions, Infinite Campus, Google) will end the day after the last day of employment.

4. **Network Etiquette and Privacy.** You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette.

5. Services. The Carroll County School System makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for electronic services provided. Carroll County Schools is not responsible for any damages suffered while on this system. Potential damages may include but are not limited to loss of data, non-deliveries, deliveries to unintended recipients or service interruptions. Use of any information obtained via the information system is at your own risk. Carroll County Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through these services.
6. Security. Security is a high priority. Any employee identifying a security problem should notify the school administrator immediately. Never demonstrate the problem to other users. Never use another individual's account without written permission from that person. All use of the system must be under the user's assigned account. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access to the information system. Usernames and passwords should be kept confidential. Sharing any secure information with unauthorized users is not permitted.
7. Vandalism. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user including any other public or private provider connected to the system. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Any vandalism may result in the loss of computer services, disciplinary action and legal referral.
8. Updating. The information service may occasionally require new registration and updated account information from the employee to continue the service. Employees must notify the information system of any changes in account information.
9. Social Media. When participating in social media activities, even off duty and off premises, such activities must not violate any Board policies or otherwise interfere with the employee's or co-workers' job performance. All policies that govern employee behavior, ethics, performance and professionalism apply to social media, just as it would anywhere else. The Board expects all employees to exercise professionalism and good judgment in social media activities. Employees are prohibited from communicating with students or parents via disappearing messaging apps or social media platforms. Furthermore, social media activities must comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, copyright, trademark, defamation, privacy, securities and any other applicable laws and regulations.
10. AI Use: Employees are allowed to responsibly integrate artificial intelligence (AI) tools into their work to enhance productivity and efficiency, provided that AI complies with all relevant policies and does not compromise the quality of education or the privacy of students and staff. In an effort to create a supportive and innovative learning environment, our school system is committed to ensuring the ethical use of AI while safeguarding the privacy and rights of students, faculty, and staff.

Employees using Carroll County Schools technology agree to abide by the provisions and conditions of this internet usage agreement. Because students may use the network for individual work or in the context of another class, employees cannot be held responsible for student use of the network. However, employees are responsible for instructing students in their classes on acceptable use of the network and proper network etiquette.

Reference: [Policy IFBG](#)

Social Media Guidelines For District Employees

The Carroll County School System recognizes that many of our staff, students, parents and community members are active social media users. As a school district, we are also incorporating social media as part of our communications strategy.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help you participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation and the reputation of the Carroll County School System, and that respects the relationship among employees, students, parents and community members.

These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet that are in place at Carroll County Schools.

Your Personal Responsibility

We encourage responsible participation in social networking sites, subject to existing policies, including, but not limited to, those concerning non-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-bullying and copyright/fair use. All employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our schools and to remember they are role models to students in this community. We ask that you carefully consider the public forum you are participating in and act in a way that properly represents both your professional reputation and Carroll County Schools.

Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Seek to build trust and responsibility in your relationships. Avoid insulting others, including students, staff, parents, our extended school community or other school districts. Do not use racial slurs, innuendos, obscenity or other inappropriate content. Avoid posting, sharing, commenting or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information.

Represent the district and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. You are responsible for what you post and communications that would be deemed inappropriate or actionable if they occurred inside or outside the classroom do not become acceptable merely because they are made online. Always bear in mind that once posted, you cannot take it back.

Specific Guidelines to Consider

Use common sense when posting online. While these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to free speech, it remains good practice to never post anything that would embarrass you or Carroll County School System, or would call your professional reputation into question.

Any content you publish will be public for a long time. Not only can your content show up in Google and other search engines, but the FTC allows private corporations to store publicly accessible Facebook posts for a period of some seven years to be used in employee background checks made by current or potential employers. Moreover, even posts that are “private” may be subject to discovery in legal actions.

Ask yourself if you would want your post in the media. Would you feel comfortable if your content was read by colleagues, your students, parents or the School Board? If the answer is “no,” then the content is best not shared.

Special care should be taken when posting personal photographs. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality and professional reputation. All photographs should be posted with the assumption that they could end up in the public realm.

Content should not include provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, content showing or promoting the excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol or use of drugs, or any activity students are legally prohibited from doing. Remember, even with privacy settings in place, your content could be seen by students or parents or find its way into the public realm.

The lines between personal and professional are blurred in the online world. When you are online, you may be connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Sometimes those connections may be direct and obvious. Other times the connections may be indirect or via mutual connections. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at Carroll County Schools.

Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration you apply offline.

Protect your privacy. You are responsible for understanding and controlling privacy settings on each social network you use. Always assume default settings will make your profile and any content you share publicly accessible. You should also understand that even with maximum privacy settings in place, content can still find its way into the public domain.

Use your personal email addresses on personal social sites and while engaging in off duty social media activities or sites that are not connected with or approved by the district. Never use your district email address on personal sites.

At no time should you claim to be speaking or issuing opinions on behalf of Carroll County Schools, except with prior consent from the appropriate supervisor.

Respect the privacy and rights of both colleagues and students. Confidential student or personnel information should not be posted online. Be sure not to violate any provision of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Do not use any school logo or image without permission on personal sites. You may use them on district-sanctioned sites.

Do not create any social media account, blog or website intended to represent Carroll County Schools without express prior consent from the superintendent or designee. It is important for the district to protect its brand, ensure certain brand standards and content guidelines are maintained, and ensure any new accounts fit overall communications and education standards established by the district.

Employee-Student Relations Online

The district recognizes the role that communication and collaboration between employees and students play in the educational process and experience. The district further recognizes that the advancement of electronic communication and social media technologies creates greater opportunity for interactions between employees and students and provides these additional guidelines for your own and students' protection.

Employees are never under any obligation to accept friend or follower requests from any student or to use personal social media accounts to engage with students or participate in district projects. In addition, you should bear in mind that unless your account has privacy settings correctly configured, everything you post may be publicly accessible to your students whether you are connected to them or not.

Employees must exercise great care in connecting with students on any social media channels. Do not send permission-based friend or follower requests to students, such as a Facebook friend request. Use discretion and carefully consider the guidelines provided by the district before accepting any permission-based friend or follower requests received from students. It is Carroll County Schools recommendation that if an employee decides to accept friend or follower requests received from students that they should accept all such requests and not selectively limit their interactions to what could be perceived as a few preferred individuals.

The district recognizes there may be certain limited exceptions to these guidelines, such as a student being a family member or relative, or in those instances where an employee's interaction with a student is as a result of certain extra-curricular activities, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, religious organizations or other similar relationships. Any employee-student communications or relationship via social media should be of an appropriate professional nature, have content that is appropriate for both the communications medium and the

audience addressed, and must not violate any provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Employees who are connected to or communicate with students via social media must understand they may be granting those students access to all content in their personal social media profiles and should consider the guidelines the district has provided to ensure students are protected from exposure to inappropriate content or content that might compromise the employee's professional reputation.

Employees are also responsible for immediately reporting to the district any inappropriate communication received from a student. This is as much for the employee's protection as the student's. Any content or communication generated either by you, or by a student, which would be inappropriate in the classroom should also be considered inappropriate when shared via social media.

Expressing Your Ideas and Thoughts

Always express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Make sure your communications are in good taste. Do not denigrate or insult others. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. Remember that our communities reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view.

Be sensitive about linking to content. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content. Just by identifying yourself as a district employee, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the district by community members, parents, students, and the general public; and you are creating perceptions about yourself with your colleagues and managers.

Are you adding value? Communication associated with our District should help fellow educators, parents, students, and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community and engagement. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand education better—then it's adding value. Keep the conversation informative and educational for all. Be sure that all content is consistent with your work and with the district's beliefs and professional standards.

Keep your cool. One of the aims of social media is to create dialogue, and people will not always agree on an issue. When confronted with a difference of opinion, stay cool. Express your points in a clear, logical way. Be accurate. Don't pick fights or look for an argument. Sometimes, it's best to ignore a comment and not give it credibility by acknowledging it with a response.

If you make an error, correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper, deal with it quickly, and/or ask for additional assistance.

Be honest and transparent. Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty – or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out.

Mentor Program

The mentor program is designed to support new teacher induction and provide a positive impact on teacher effectiveness, retention and leadership. Mentor teachers are assigned to new teachers who hold Induction Certificates and may also be assigned to those lacking certification. The job-embedded support is structured to meet the timely needs of the teacher and impact student growth and learning.

Professional Development

All employees are required to participate in required training designed to maintain or improve their job skills. The Carroll County Board of Education requires the development and implementation of a system-level comprehensive school improvement plan that prioritizes staff and professional development.

Reference: [Policy GAD](#)

Reassignment

The Superintendent is authorized by the Board to reassign at his/her discretion any employee to a location other than the one previously assigned. The right to reassign and transfer personnel to other positions should be for the betterment of the school system when such conditions as the following exist:

- Increases or decreases of enrollment in various grades
- Opening of new buildings or closing of old ones
- Changes in organization of the school system
- Addition or elimination of an educational service
- Vacancies created by promotions, leaves of absences, death, retirement, resignation and the like
- Personnel adjustments
- Compliance with federal court orders and new state or federal requirements

Reduction in Force

Under certain circumstances, the Carroll County Board of Education may implement a reduction in force. Examples include:

- A decrease in student enrollment in the School District which would necessitate a decrease in personnel or a discontinuation of programs;
- A change in state or local curriculum, personnel, or financial practices which would necessitate a change in or elimination of program or services provided by the School District;

- A loss of funds due to a reduction in state funds, reduction in local funds or other funds that make necessary a reduction in spending;
- A lack of funding for programs, personnel, or services provided by the School District;
- Any reasonable reorganization plan to achieve a more efficient school district.

If the Board acts at the recommendation of the Superintendent to terminate an employee under contract or to downgrade an employee's position, the Superintendent shall notify the affected employee in a manner consistent with the provisions of Georgia's Fair Dismissal Law and he or she shall have whatever rights the Fair Dismissal Act provides for such employee.

Reference: [Policy GAKA](#)

Staff Meetings

Regular staff meetings are a necessary part of the district operations. Each school shall have a schedule for staff meetings on a regular basis. The principal shall call special staff meetings for professional learning, accreditation and/or workshops as deemed necessary. All staff members are required as part of their teaching/employment responsibilities to attend any or all such meetings as designated by the principal.

Suspension/Termination

If the Board acts at the recommendation of the Superintendent to terminate an employee under contract or to downgrade an employee's position, the Superintendent shall notify the affected employee in a manner consistent with the provisions of Georgia's Fair Dismissal Law and he or she shall have whatever rights the Fair Dismissal Act provides for such employee.

Since classified personnel are employed by the Board of Education for an indefinite period of time, their employment may be suspended or terminated at any time by the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

References: [Policy GAKA](#)

Tobacco/Vape Products

All Carroll County Schools are tobacco/vape free zones. All employees of the Carroll County Board of Education shall be prohibited from the use of tobacco or vaping products while performing their duties as an employee of the Carroll County Board of Education. All persons at off-campus school sponsored events are prohibited to use tobacco/vape products.

Transfers

An employee recommended for employment for the next school year may request a transfer to another school or department. Employees wishing for a transfer to another school should apply for any open positions for which they are qualified through the application system used by the

school district. The window for transfers will be set by the Human Resources Department. The Superintendent's decision shall be final in all transfer cases.

Travel

Employees must obtain approval prior to incurring work-related travel and mileage expenses. Carroll County Schools adheres to the State of Georgia Travel Policy when determining reimbursement allowability and requirements. Employees are responsible for adhering to these requirements. The State of Georgia Travel Policy is located at: <http://sao.georgia.gov/travel/state-travel-policy>.

Vector Solutions

Vector Solutions is an online training system that focuses on the safety of Carroll County Schools employees. It provides information and strategies for employees to help prevent injury and comply with state and federal mandates. The information and strategies are provided through online training courses that pertain specifically to different departments as well as courses that apply district wide. Each employee will receive an email with directions on how to access the program and complete the courses required for their specific department.

Workers' Compensation

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. The injured employee must provide notice of the injury immediately, but no later than 24-hours after the accident, to the employer, the employer's representative or the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. The injured employee may select a medical care provider from the list posted by the Board of Education Panel of Physicians. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work-related injury. It is the employee's responsibility to schedule follow-up visits/treatments after work hours. The Panel of Physicians is posted in visible locations at all schools and in all facilities maintained by the Carroll County Board of Education.

Workers' Compensation Early Return-to-Work-Program

The Early Return-to-Work program is a proactive way for the Carroll County School System to help an injured worker stay or return to productive and safe work as soon as physically possible. This program, with proper implementation, can benefit all parties involved. The employee is responsible for active participation in the program and the school/supervisor is responsible for implementation and monitoring of the program outcome. The board office and supervisors will work in conjunction with the authorized treating physician to obtain physical limitations and develop a position to accommodate the specific restrictions. The school system understands the value of the contributions of all employees; thus, every effort will be made to accommodate physical restrictions. Once a First Report of Injury is submitted, the return to work coordinator will contact the injured worker to discuss their participation in the Early Return-To-Work program.

Panel of Physicians		
Physician Name	Address	Number
Georgia Vision Institute (Ophthalmology)	158 Clinic Avenue Carrollton, GA 30117	770-834-1008
Caduceus Occupational Medicine - Douglasville (Occupational Medicine / Industrial Clinic)	7421 Douglas Boulevard Suite A Douglasville, GA 30135	678-483-0288
Piedmont Orthopedics by OrthoAtlanta Mark S. Duffield (Orthopedic Surgery)	2976 Chapel Hill Rd Suite 200 Douglasville, GA 30135	770-949-8558
Peachtree Immediate Care (Urgent Care)	209 Cooley Drive Suite 101 Villa Rica, GA 30180	770-456-0911
Resurgens Orthopaedics Freddy A. Achecar, Jr. (Orthopedic Surgery) Raj Bhole (Orthopedic Surgery)	6001 Professional Parkway Suite 1040 Douglasville, GA 30134	770-949-7400
Tanner Occupational Health Clinic (Walk In Only) (Occupational Medicine / Industrial Clinic)	1480 Hwy 27 S Carrollton, GA 30117	770-836-9445
Carrollton Ear, Nose, and Throat	150 Clinic Avenue Suite 201 Carrollton, GA 30117	770-832-1488
Orthowest (Orthopedic Surgery)	150 Clinic Avenue Suite 101 Carrollton, GA 30117	770-834-0873

INSURANCE AND BENEFITS

Carroll County Schools offers a comprehensive benefits package to employees. New employees have 30 days to select their benefits options. All employees can make changes to benefits plans during the annual Open Enrollment period, held each fall. Below is brief information on benefits that are available to employees.

Health Insurance

The System's Health Insurance Program is administered by the State of Georgia, Department of Community Health, and offered through a defined carrier. Employees may choose from the program that best meets his/her needs. The school system pays an employer's share of each employee's health insurance premium. Employees on leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) who exhaust all paid leave will be responsible for the employee's portion of health care premiums.

An employee going on unpaid leave may be able to continue health insurance for a limited time. The benefits department can provide details regarding coverage and possible premium increases. Employees who retire (and will be receiving a monthly pension check) may be able to continue their health insurance coverage. Employees whose health insurance is terminated for other reasons, or covered dependents of employees whose health insurance is terminated, may continue their coverage for a limited period under COBRA.

Short-Term and Long-Term Disability

Insurance Short-Term Disability (STD) and Long-Term Disability (LTD) insurance is available for purchase by eligible employees. The employee pays 100% of the premiums.

Basic Group Term Life Insurance

Life insurance is provided free to all active, regular employees in amounts based on their classification.

Optional & Supplemental Group Term Life and Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance

Optional and Supplemental Life Insurance and Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance is available for eligible employees at group rates. Spousal and children's coverage is also available. AD&D coverage pays only in the event of an accidental death or dismemberment, and should not be considered "life" insurance. The employee pays 100% of the premiums. Optional and Supplemental Life Insurance is offered when an employee is hired. If it is refused at that time, and the employee later seeks to enroll, proof of insurability will be required.

Dental Insurance

Dental Insurance is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. The Dental Insurance plan provides benefits for Preventive, Basic, Major and Orthodontic procedures. There is

no waiting period for coverage under the plan if enrolled at time of hire. The employee pays 100% for dental coverage.

Vision Insurance

Vision Insurance is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. Benefits are available for both in-network and out-of-network providers and procedures. The employee pays 100% of the vision insurance.

Medical Flexible Spending Account

A Medical Flexible Spending Account (MFSA) is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. A MFSA is not insurance, but rather a way to pay for certain qualified, non-reimbursed medical expenses in a pre-tax salary reduction. The amount which can be placed in an MFSA each year may be limited by the Internal Revenue Service, but may not exceed the annual maximum established by the school system. The employee contributes 100% to the MFSA.

Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account

A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. A DCFSA is not insurance, but rather a way to pay for certain qualified dependent care expenses in a pre-tax salary reduction. The amount which can be placed in a DCFSA each year may be limited by the Internal Revenue Service, but may not exceed the annual maximum established by the school system. Any monies placed in a DCFSA against which qualified expenditures cannot be filed are forfeited according to Federal Law. A DCFSA cannot be used if claiming a Dependent Child Credit on your Federal Income Tax return for that year (please consult a tax professional for specific details). The employee contributes 100% to the DCFSA.

Cancer, Accident, and Critical Illness Insurance

Cancer, Accident and Critical Illness Insurance offers you and your family supplemental insurance protection in the event you or a covered family member is diagnosed with cancer or one of the other specified diseases covered under this plan or an accident occurs. It protects you and your family 24-hours a day, seven days a week, and is easily convertible. This plan pays benefits directly to you. The employee pays 100% of the premium.

Social Security and Medicare Insurance

The school system participates in the Social Security and Medicare portion of FICA. Generally, 6.2% will be withheld from your earnings for Social Security and 1.45% of your earnings will be withheld for Medicare. The withholding amounts are determined based on IRS regulations.

Tax Deferred Investments

Current IRS regulations allow employees to participate in tax deferred investments under Sections 403(b) and 457(b) of the Internal Revenue Code (commonly known as 403(b)/457 plans) if they qualify. All full time employees are eligible to participate.

EMPLOYEE LEAVE

All school employees are encouraged to be present every day. If an absence is necessary, fill out an absence form on [Frontline Absence Management website](#) several days in advance of the scheduled absence. Each teacher will have their own Frontline ID username and password. If the absence is unplanned and you cannot enter an absence in Absence Management, contact your school absence approver or ESS district account manager. If you have any questions or problems, you will need to call 877.983.2244 or email Support@ESS.com. Lesson plans must be provided for substitutes. Please designate a team member to support your sub in the event that you are absent.

Teachers who must leave school for more than one (1) class period must secure a substitute and take ½ day leave time. If a teacher wishes to secure a personal leave day, teachers should follow the above procedures in the Frontline Absence Management System. Teachers are encouraged to study the sick and personal leave policy of the Carroll County Board of Education. A teacher cannot be absent with pay for a reason that is not covered by this policy. The teacher's absentee record and reasons for being absent will be considered during evaluation and at the time of contract renewal. Employees will be required to provide a written doctor's excuse for any absence after five (5) sick days have been used. Attendance is part of the annual evaluation.

A minimum five-school day notice is required for personal leave. Teachers must email the principal and assistant principal requesting the use of a personal day at least five (5) working days before the personal day is needed. Teachers do not need to state the purpose of the personal time desired. The administration will only deny a request for personal time if it will jeopardize the effectiveness of the school operation. Enter your request using the Frontline employee portal. The principal and/or assistant principal must approve personal leave in advance. Personal leave taken without prior approval will be reported as unauthorized absence and result in pay being docked. Personal leave should not be taken during preplanning, post-planning, teacher workdays, or on a day before or after a holiday per board policy.

Board Policy GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences

This [policy](#) shall apply to all employees of the Carroll County Board of Education. Deductions in pay will be made for absences not covered by this policy. Any incentives for perfect attendance will be addressed in the employee handbook.

Accrual Of Sick Leave And Absence For Medical And Related Reasons

Benefits-eligible employees of Carroll County Schools shall be entitled to annual sick leave with pay to be accrued at the rate of one and one-fourth (1 1/4) days for each completed month. All employees' unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next up to a maximum of ninety (90) unused sick leave days, although the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia allows participating employees to accumulate an unlimited number of unused sick leave days for credit towards retirement. All certified employees may transfer forty-five (45) unused sick leave days from another system. Accumulated sick leave may be transferred to another Georgia school system within the limits set by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-850.

The leave provided for under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness or death in the employee's immediate family. For purpose of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, grandchildren, in-law equivalents of the above, other relatives living in the household, or any individual listed on the employee's most recent tax return.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. However, if the local school Board disagrees with the doctor's statement of disability or ability, it may appoint a physician for the purpose of receiving independent medical judgment.

It will be the responsibility of the employee to fill out a report for the days absent for sick leave.

Employees may be required, at the discretion of the supervisor, to provide a written doctor's excuse for any absence after five (5) sick days have been used.

An employee may donate up to ten (10) accumulated sick leave days to his or her spouse given the spouse is also an employee for purposes of maternity leave, illness, or death of a family member.

Carroll County School System does not pay for unused sick leave when an employee leaves the system. Carroll County Schools follows guidelines from TRS and/or other retirement entities regarding sick leave procedures.

Personal Leave

Three (3) days of an employee's accumulated sick leave may be utilized during each school year for personal reasons provided prior approval from the Superintendent or authorized supervisor is obtained. The principal or supervisor shall withhold approval of personal leave when the absence of the employee would jeopardize the effectiveness of the school operation. Any personal leave taken by an employee beyond that accumulated will result in the loss of pay for those days. Personal leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays, unless the principal in his or her discretion recommends that such leave should be granted. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought.

Paid Parental Leave

The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms:

1. An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:

- a. The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and
 - b. The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.
2. A qualifying life event means:
- a. The birth of a child of an eligible employee;
 - b. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
 - c. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.
3. The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12 month period is 240 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period.
- a. The rolling 12 month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee has a qualifying event.
 - b. Parental leave may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than eight hours. The smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is .5 of a work day.
 - c. Any unused paid parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.
 - d. Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.

Paid parental leave under state law shall run concurrently with any leave provided under federal law, ensuring that the employee receives paid leave initially while also counting that time towards their total FMLA leave entitlement, thereby not extending the total leave period beyond what FMLA allows. For more information, please refer to the [Ga Paid Parental Leave SOP](#).

Professional Leave

The Superintendent may authorize professional leave for attendance of personnel at state, regional, and national meetings without pay deduction and with expenses paid by the district according to established allowances. The number of absences for professional leave is a judgment value on the part of the Superintendent of Schools and is subject to budget limitations for employing substitutes and reimbursement for travel, meals and lodging.

Observance Of Religious Holidays

Employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays in excess of the days allowed for personal leave, the employee may take unpaid leave for such purposes provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

Jury and Witness Leave

Each person employed by the Carroll County School System shall be allowed leave with pay for the purpose of serving as a juror in any court or when attending a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of the employee's duties. Any employee who serves as a juror or witness shall not have the jury or witness leave deducted from sick, personal or professional leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of their duties shall be allowed to keep any jury/witness pay they receive.

Employees who are subpoenaed to appear in court for reasons that are not job related may use any unused personal leave or be docked for such absence.

Military Leave

Employees of the Board of Education are entitled to take leave for the purpose of complying with ordered military duty with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. The term "ordered military duty" shall mean any military duty performed in the service of the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including but not limited to, attendance at any service school or schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States by an employee as a voluntary member of any force of the organized militia or any reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia pursuant to orders issued by the competent state or federal authority, without the consent of the employee.

An employee shall be paid regular salary for a period or periods of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from such duty, not to exceed a total of eighteen (18) days in any one federal fiscal year.

In the event the Governor of Georgia declares an emergency that results in an employee being ordered to military duty, the employee is entitled to leave not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one federal fiscal year. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the Superintendent or designee annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

A request for military leave (paid or unpaid) must be submitted to the employee's supervisor and the appropriate personnel administrator with a copy of the official military orders.

Construction with the Family & Medical Leave Act

To the extent that any provision in this policy conflicts with or is superseded by the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"), the regulations promulgated thereunder, or any other federal or state law, the provision of the FMLA, its regulations or other law, as the case may be, control.

Annual Leave

Annual leave is granted only to 12-month, annual (240-day) employees. Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or the Board, annual leave shall be accumulated based on the number of verified continuous, consecutive years of service with the system, as follows:

0-5 Years 12 days; 96 hours

6-10 Years 15 days; 120 hours

11+ Years 18 days; 144 hours

Carroll County Schools leave accumulation service shall be credited on a fiscal year basis using the salary credit formula. If an employee breaks service with the system and is re-employed, leave accumulation reverts to zero (0) years of service. Regular part-time (at least fifty percent) employees in 12-month positions accrue annual leave in proportion to the percent of time worked. Employees are encouraged to use all earned vacation leave each year. Individuals may carry over up to but not more than twenty-five (25) unused days of annual leave from a prior fiscal year into the next fiscal year.

An employee will be paid for accrued, unused annual leave only if the employee leaves employment in good standing. Annual leave will be paid at the current rate of pay. If the employee is terminated, no payment for unused annual leave will be made.

Family and Medical Leave

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) is a federal law that helps employees balance work responsibilities with family and medical needs. At times, employees may need to take leave from their jobs for a temporary period to address certain family responsibilities or their own serious health conditions. Employees of the Board who have been employed by the Board for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave are eligible to take twelve (12) weeks unpaid leave under the FMLA subject to certification by appropriate health care provider. A “rolling year” shall be used to determine the twelve-month period during which the leave entitlement may occur. That is each time an employee takes FMLA leave, the remaining leave entitlement would be any balance of the number of weeks that has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months.

The District will require that any accrued paid leave (sick, vacation, approved accrued compensatory time, or any other paid leave) be substituted for all or a part of the otherwise unpaid FMLA leave under the terms and conditions of the District’s normal leave policies.

If an employee is eligible for FMLA and needs to be out ten (10) or more consecutive days for one of the reasons listed, an electronic FMLA Request must be completed, submitted and sent. The electronic FMLA Request is on the Carroll County Schools website, eFMLA Request.

If you have any questions, please contact your school/building level FMLA point of contact.

Even if the employee has sick leave or sick leave pool to cover the ten (10) or more absences, the employee is required to submit an electronic FMLA requesting FMLA. FMLA is regarding time and job security, not pay. FMLA runs concurrently with sick leave, sick leave pool, and unpaid leave.

An employee may request FMLA leave for one or more of the following reasons:

- Birth of a son or daughter and to care for the newborn child;
- Adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter with the employee;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent, if the person has a serious health condition; and
- Serious health condition of employee that prevents the employee from performing his/her job functions.
- Any qualifying exigency arising from the fact that the employee's family member (the covered service member) is on covered active duty. Qualifying exigencies are defined as short-notice deployment (seven or less calendar days); military events and related activities; childcare and school activities; financial and legal arrangements; counseling; rest and recuperation (up to five days per instance); post-deployment activities; additional activities where the employer and employee agree that the leave is an exigency and agree to both timing and duration of the leave; and
- Military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of the service member.

If the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, the employee requesting leave should provide at least thirty (30) days advance notice to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources by completing the eFMLA Request. If such advance notice is not possible, the employee must give notice as soon as possible by completing the request, ordinarily within one or two working days of the need for leave. When planning medical treatment, the employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment, subject to the approval of the health care provider, so that corresponding leave will not unduly disrupt the operations of the school district.

Upon return from leave, the employee is entitled to be reinstated to his/her previous position and school or department held when he/she left on FMLA leave, with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment. For more information, please refer to the [Applying for FMLA SOP](#).

Reference: [Policy GBRIG](#)

Sick Leave Pool

Employees who are eligible for sick leave accrual may join the Carroll County Sick Leave Pool for the purpose of applying for additional sick leave after their own accrued leave has been exhausted. Employees who elect to become members of the Sick Leave Pool are required to contribute part of their accumulated sick leave to the Pool. Withdrawals from the Sick Leave Pool

will be granted for catastrophic illness, injury, or non-elective surgery with debilitating consequences in accordance with guidelines established by the Sick Leave Pool Committee.

Reference: [Policy GARHA](#)

Procedures for Sick Leave Withdrawal

- A member of the Sick Leave Pool shall be eligible to make application for withdrawal of days from the Pool provided that:
 - He/she has been absent due to catastrophic illness, injury or non-elective surgery, with debilitating consequences beyond their control at least 10 consecutive school days immediately prior to the day that Sick Leave Pool days are utilized for themselves or an immediate family member, to include spouse or child in life threatening situations. Consideration may be given to a parent, sibling, or other relative for whom the employee member is the primary caregiver as verified by a medical doctor;
 - He/she has exhausted all accumulated leave on record; and
 - He/she has been a member of the Sick Leave Pool for 30 days from the closing date of the open enrollment period.
- No member shall be permitted to use the Sick Leave Pool if he/she is receiving Workers Compensation or any other remuneration for the absences provided by the Carroll County Board of Education.
- No member shall be permitted to use the Sick Leave Pool if the personal illness or personal temporary disability is related to any illegal activity.
- Withdrawals will be considered only for catastrophic illness, injury, or non-elective surgery with debilitating consequences beyond their control that is verified by a medical doctor. Examples of serious illness, injury or non-elective surgery include, but are not limited to, the following: strokes or any major cerebrovascular rupture or aneurysm, cancer, organ transplant, heart surgery or cardiovascular rupture, heart attack, major trauma accident where major bones are broken (back, hip, etc.) and brain or head trauma.
- All requests to withdraw days from the Sick Leave Pool shall be filed with the Committee on the Sick LeavePool Application Form.
- Leave grants from the Sick LeavePool shall be in increments up to 20 workdays.

Reference: Policies [GARHA](#) and [GARHA-R\(1\)](#)

Pension

All employees who are employed at halftime or more in the Carroll County School System must belong to one of two retirement systems (TRS or PSERS).

Teacher Retirement System (TRS)

The majority of Carroll County School System employees participate in the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). TRS administers the fund from which teachers in the state's public schools, many employees of the University System of Georgia, and certain other designated employees in educational-related work environments receive retirement benefits. TRS offers a defined benefit plan, guaranteeing a monthly benefit – based on a member's average salary (two highest consecutive years) and service – which is payable for the life of the member, and when applicable, transferable to a member's spouse or beneficiary(ies). The State of Georgia guarantees TRS members will receive retirement income for life. Also, depending on the plan of retirement chosen, a TRS retirement benefit can be passed to a beneficiary at a member's death, and the beneficiary continues to receive this income until his or her death. For detailed information, visit the TRS website at www.trsga.com.

Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS)

The Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) serves all eligible Carroll County Board of Education employees not covered under the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia. PSERS began in January 1970. The purpose was to provide a supplemental retirement plan for public school employees who did not belong to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS). This means that PSERS is intended as an addition to other retirement income. Members include bus monitors, bus drivers, bus shop personnel, school nutrition assistants and maintenance personnel. Some managers in these positions are members of TRS. If you have questions about which system you are a member of, please ask your payroll department. PSERS provides lifetime retirement benefits, disability benefits, and death benefits. These are available once you have enough years of service to qualify. For detailed information, visit the PSERS website at www.ers.ga.gov.

505-6-.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

Effective January 1, 2024

Note: This Code of Ethics applies to ALL employees of Carroll County Schools

1) Introduction.

The [Code of Ethics for Educators](#) defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

2) Definitions.

- a) "Breach of contract" occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the GaPSC.
- b) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the GaPSC.
- c) "Child endangerment" occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.
- d) "Complaint" is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the GaPSC alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.
- e) "Educator" is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the GaPSC and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.
- f) "Inappropriate" is conduct or communication not suitable for an educator to have with a student. It goes beyond the bounds of an educator-student relationship.
- g) "Physical abuse" is physical interaction resulting in a reported or visible bruise or injury to the student.
- h) "Student" is any individual enrolled in the state's public, or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the school year of graduation.

3) **Standards.**

- a) Standard 1: **Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

- b) Standard 2: **Conduct with Students** - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
 - 1) Committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
 - 2) Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
 - 3) Committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
 - 4) Engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student;
 - 5) Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
 - 6) Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
 - 7) Failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

- c) Standard 3: **Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
 - 1) Being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while

under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and

- 2) Being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc.).

- (i) For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered “under the influence” if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.

- d) Standard 4: **Honesty** - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

- 1) Professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
- 2) Information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
- 3) Information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
- 4) Reasons for absences or leaves;
- 5) Information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
- 6) Information submitted in the course of professional practice.

- e) Standard 5: **Public Funds and Property** - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- 1) Misusing public or school-related funds;
- 2) Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
- 3) Submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);

- 4) Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
 - 5) Using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.
- f) Standard 6: **Remunerative Conduct** - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- 1) Soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
 - 2) Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
 - 3) Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
 - 4) Coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.
- g) Standard 7: **Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- 1) Sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
 - 2) Sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
 - 3) Violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and

- 4) Violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.
- h) Standard 8: **Required Reports** - An educator shall file with the GaPSC reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7- 5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- 1) Failure to report to the GaPSC all requested information on documents required by the GaPSC when applying for or renewing any certificate with the GaPSC;
 - 2) Failure to make a required report of an alleged or proven violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for Educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
 - 3) Failure to make a required report of any alleged or proven violation of state or federal law as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.
- i) Standard 9: **Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students; or failure to supervise a student(s).
- j) Standard 10: **Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- 1) Committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
 - 2) Compromising the integrity of the assessment.

4) **Reporting.**

- a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the GaPSC must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).
- b) The GaPSC notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Clearinghouse.

5) **Disciplinary Action.**

- a) The GaPSC is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the educator:
 - 1) Unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule [505-6-.01](#));
 - 2) Disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule [505-6-.01](#));
 - 3) Order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Services that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6- 28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
 - 4) Suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
 - 5) Violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16- 13-111); and
 - 6) Any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics for

Educators. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

- c) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no probable cause as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2- 984.4(e) and § 20-2-984.5(e) if:
 - 1) After a preliminary investigation is concluded it is unlikely that there exists a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove at a hearing that a violation occurred; or
 - 2) After a hearing the administrative law judge makes a determination that there is not a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove that a violation occurred.
- d) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no further action is necessary pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.5(a) if after review of the report of the preliminary investigation, sanctions should not be imposed.

6) **Sanctions.**

- a) As outlined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.5(c), the GaPSC has the discretion to issue a probable cause sanction against an educator. Common violations and associated sanctions can be found in the accompanying GaPSC Guidance.
 - 1) Denial is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate;
 - 2) Monitoring is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the GaPSC through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit periodic criminal background check (GCIC). The GaPSC specifies the length of the monitoring period;
 - 3) Reprimand admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action;
 - 4) Revocation is the permanent invalidation of any certificate held by the educator. A Voluntary Surrender is equivalent to and has the same effect as a revocation. A Voluntary Surrender shall be accepted and becomes effective upon receipt by the GaPSC;

- 5) Suspension is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the GaPSC; and
- 6) Warning informs the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

7) **Application Procedures.**

- a) "Yes" answers to Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) require submission of information identified in the accompanying GaPSC Guidance.
- b) With respect to an initial applicant, an application and corresponding ethics case that is initiated pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.3(c) will automatically close and be placed on hold if the applicant fails to submit requested documentation to the Ethics Division within 45 days of the request to the applicant. The application will be placed on hold in anticipation of the submission of a new application and the applicant's responding to any requests for documentation in a timely fashion.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200

Their future is our mission.

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