

# Employee Handbook

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Danielle Collins

DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION | 110 S. PUBLIC SQUARE, SMITHVILLE, TN 37166

# DeKalb County Schools

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## Introduction

### Welcome

#### Our Vision:

We will be recognized nationally for our rigorous curriculum, academic excellence and extracurricular achievement. Strengthened by diversity, our district will foster partnerships of staff, families and the community to develop students' educational, physical and social-emotional well-being.

#### Our Mission Statement:

DeKalb County School District's mission is to develop a commitment to lifelong learning that equips the students with skills and motivation to achieve their career dreams.

#### Slogan:

Every Student Matters - Every Moment Counts

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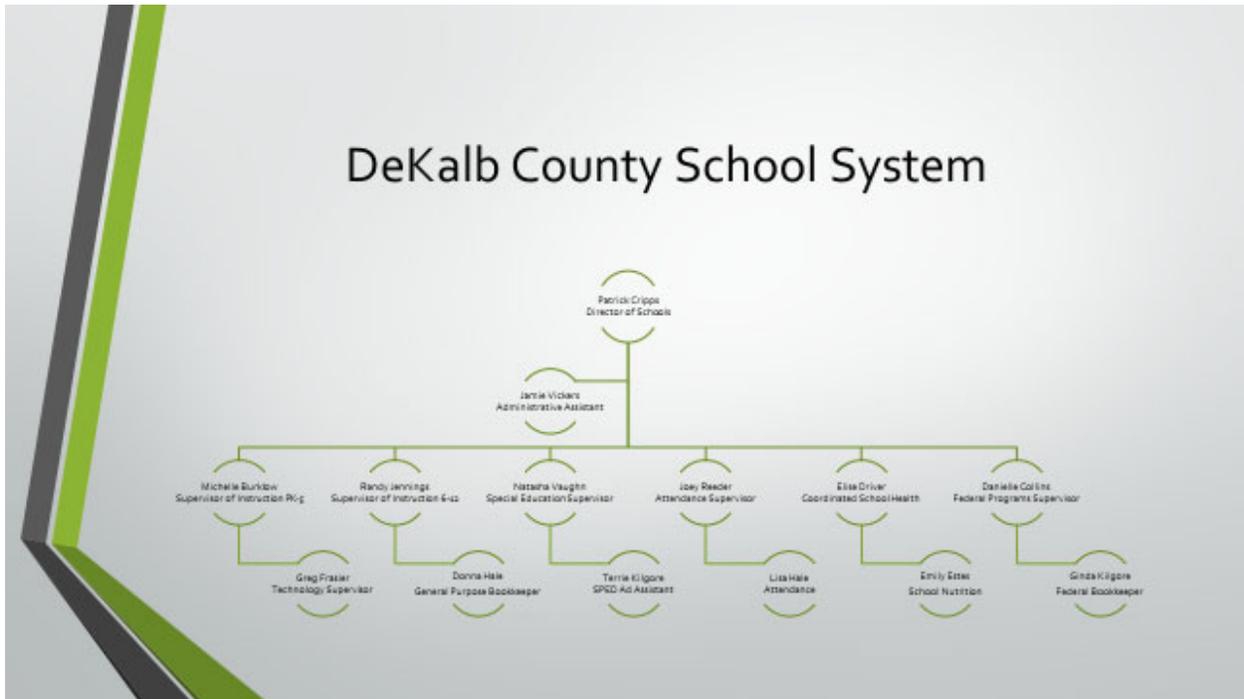
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## Future Changes

Although every effort will be made to update the handbook on a regular basis, the DeKalb County School District reserves the right to change this handbook and any procedures, benefits, and terms of employment without notice, except as may be required by contractual agreements and law. As a result, the online version of the handbook shall be the official version.

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## Central Office Organizational Chart



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## General Terms of Employment

### Equal Opportunity Employment

The DeKalb County School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The District does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, race, national origin, religion, sex, or genetic information, as required by law.

Questions concerning District compliance with state and federal equal opportunity laws can be directed to Director of Schools at the Central Office at 615-597-4084.

### Harassment/Discrimination

Any employee who believes that he/she, or any other employee, student, or visitor to the school or District, has been subjected to harassment or discrimination shall bring the matter to the attention of his/her principal/immediate supervisor. Concerns may also be brought to the Supervisor of Attendance or Federal Programs Supervisor per board policy. They may be reached by calling 615-597-4084.

Employees shall not be subject to any form of retaliation for reporting in good faith. For additional information concerning reporting and responding to alleged incidents, see board policy 5.501.

### Hiring

All professional personnel are required to sign a contract with the District.

A list of all District job openings is available at the Central Office and on the District website. For more information on hiring, refer to board policy 5.106.

### Criminal Background Check

All employees are required to undergo a background check, which includes being fingerprinted. The cost of the investigation will be paid by the employee and reimbursed upon hire.

For more information on background checks, refer to board policy 5.106.

### Health Certification/Medical Exam

Prior to beginning employment, all employees shall present a certificate showing a satisfactory health record. Employees may be required to submit to a physical examination by a physician.

Please see Policy 5.400.

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## Working Environment

### Asbestos

The DeKalb County Board of Education in compliance with AHERA Regulations has on file an Asbestos Management Plan located at DeKalb County Board of Education at 110 S. Public Square, Smithville, TN 37166. These documents are open to public inspection. Questions concerning asbestos should be directed to the Supervisor of the Maintenance Department, LEA Designated Person, 110 S. Public Square, Smithville, TN 37166 or by calling 615-597-4084.

### Lead in Drinking Water

DeKalb County Board of Education is committed to protecting DeKalb County Schools students' and staff's health. As required by Tennessee statute, T.C.A. § 49-2-133, all drinking water outlets in our facilities must be sampled for lead. DeKalb County Board of Education has scheduled the lead drinking water sampling for each school building every odd year.

## Evaluation Model

The District uses the TEAM evaluation model. For questions regarding this, please contact Supervisor of Instruction PreK-5 or Supervision of Instruction 6-12.

## Personnel Records

A comprehensive personnel file for each employee is maintained in the Central Office. These files contain basic personal information (e.g. name, address) and employment-related information such as copies of forms related to classroom observations.

Employees may inspect their personnel files by contacting Administrative Secretary at 615-597-4084.

## Salaries and Payroll

Compensation for all services rendered as an employee of the District shall be processed through standard payroll procedure.

Checks shall be issued according to a schedule approved annually by the Board. The salary schedule and differentiated pay plan are available on the District's website, and employees can obtain a copy through their immediate supervisor.

Overtime work shall be approved in advance by the Director of Schools/designee. Hourly employees required to work in excess of forty (40) hours per week will be paid or given compensatory time at the rate of one-and-a half (1 ½) times the regular rate for all overtime

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hours in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. See board policy 5.602 for additional information.

## Benefits and Leaves

For information on benefits and leaves, please contact Administrative Secretary.

### Insurance

The Board offers health, dental and vision insurance for all full-time employees.

### Salary Deductions

The District provides the following payroll deduction options:

1. Health Insurance
2. Dental Insurance
3. Vision Insurance

Other deductions may be made upon request per policy 2.803.

### Vacations

See board policy 5.310.

### Leave Policies

Employees shall inform their immediate supervisor of any planned or emergency absence as soon as possible. General information regarding the types of leave available is listed below. Please note that, for many types of leave, an advanced, written request is required. For additional information, refer to policies 5.300, 5.301, 5.302, 5.304, 5.305, 5.3051, 5.306, 5.307, 5.308, 5.309.

Absence from work that is not covered by an appropriate request for one of the leave options may lead to disciplinary consequences, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees on extended leave who plan to return the next school year shall notify the Director of Schools/designee in writing of their intention to return to work by 30 days prior to the date of return.

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## Personal Leave

Full-time professional employees are entitled to two (2) paid personal days each school year. Employees shall notify their immediate supervisor/the principal at least one (1) school day prior to the planned absence.

## Sick Leave

Employees earn one (1) day of sick leave for each month employed during the school year. These days accumulate for an unlimited number of days.

Sick leave shall be defined as: illness from natural causes or accident, quarantine, or illness or death of a member of the immediate family, including spouse, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law. For additional information, refer to policy 5.302.

## Sick Leave Bank

The purpose of the sick leave bank is to provide sick leave to employees who have suffered an unplanned personal illness, injury, disability, or quarantine and whose personal sick leave is exhausted.

An employee who is a member of the sick leave bank may request an allotment of days (for the employee's personal illness only). The need for these days shall be verified by a statement from a doctor.

## Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

Employees are eligible for up to twelve (12) workweeks of family and medical leave each school year, if they: (1) have been employed by the District for twelve (12) months; (2) have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) months; and (3) qualify for this leave based one of the reasons below:

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

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## Maternity/Paternity Leave

FMLA leave runs concurrently with leave provided under the Tennessee Maternity Act, which affords eligible employees leave for a period not to exceed four (4) months for the adoption, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing of a newborn child.

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

## Paid Parental Leave

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

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

For additional information, refer to policy 5.305.

## Extended Disability Leave

The Director of Schools/designee may require an employee to provide verification of a medical condition that will justify the need for disability leave.

## Educational Leave

See Policy 5.304.

## Emergency Leave

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Employees shall inform their immediate supervisor as soon as practicable of the need for emergency leave.

## Jury Leave

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

## Military Service Leave

Military leave shall be granted in accordance with state law. Employees are responsible for notifying their immediate supervisor. A copy of the orders for duty, including the dates of departure and return, shall be submitted when requesting leave.

## Unpaid Leave

Leave without pay may be granted upon written request.

## Employee Conduct

### Ethics

Employees shall adhere to the Teacher Code of Ethics to the extent applicable (i.e. certain provisions on teaching would not apply to custodial or maintenance staff).

The Teacher Code of Ethics requires educators to:

1. Abide by all applicable federal and state laws;
2. Not unreasonably restrain students from independent action in the pursuit of learning;
3. Provide students with professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner aligned with accepted best practices known to the educator;
4. Respect the constitutional rights of students;
5. Not unreasonably deny students access to varying points of view;
6. Not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to student progress;
7. Make reasonable effort to protect students from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety;

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8. Make reasonable effort to protect the emotional well-being of students;
9. Not intentionally expose students to embarrassment or disparagement;
10. Not on the basis of race; color; creed; disability; sex; national origin; marital status; political or religious beliefs; family, social, or cultural background; or sexual orientation unfairly:
  - a. Exclude students from participation in any program;
  - b. Deny benefits to the student; or
  - c. Grant any advantage to the student;
11. Not use the educator's professional relationship with students for private advantage;
12. Not disclose information about students obtained in the course of the educator's professional service unless disclosure of the information is permitted, serves a compelling professional purpose, or is required by law;
13. Not knowingly make false or malicious statements about students or colleagues;
14. Ensure interactions with students take place in transparent and appropriate settings;
15. Not engage in any sexually related behavior with students, whether verbal, written, physical, or electronic, with or without consent. Sexually related behavior includes, but is not limited to, behaviors such as making sexual jokes or sexual remarks; engaging in sexual kidding, sexual teasing, or sexual innuendo; pressuring the student for dates or sexual favors; engaging in inappropriate physical touching, groping, or grabbing; kissing; rape; threatening physical harm; and committing sexual assault;
16. Not furnish alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs to students;
17. Strive to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students when students are under the educator's supervision on school or District premises, during school activities, or in any private setting;
18. Refrain from the use of alcohol while on school or District premises or during a school activity at which students are present; and
19. Maintain a professional approach with students at all times.

An educator who has personal knowledge of a breach by another educator of the Teacher Code of Ethics shall report the breach to the educator's immediate supervisor or the Director of Schools within thirty (30) days of discovering the breach.

Professional employees shall also familiarize themselves with the consequences of misconduct and potential impacts on licensure per State Board of Education Regulation 0520-02-03-.09.

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All employees shall also adhere to policy 5.611 regarding ethics.

## Whistleblower Protection and Rights

Employees shall have whistleblower protections and rights under federal law and the district shall adhere to and enforce all such applicable protections. Employees shall not be discharged, demoted or otherwise discriminated against for disclosing evidence of the following related to a federal contract or grant:

1. Gross mismanagement;
2. Gross waste of federal funds;
3. Abuse of authority;
4. Substantial and specific danger to public health or safety;
5. Violation of law, rule or regulation

If an employee believes he/she has been subjected to retaliation, he/she may submit a complaint to the Inspector General of the federal agency that is responsible for the relevant federal contract or grant. The federal agency and the agency's Inspector General have the authority to investigate such complaints and provide the appropriate remedies.

## Absenteeism/Tardiness/Substitutes

Employees shall notify their immediate supervisor when they must be tardy or absent. If a substitute is required, teachers shall adhere to school procedures.

## Confidentiality

Employees should only have access to confidential student information for legitimate educational purposes. This includes when information is needed in order to:

1. Perform required administrative tasks;
2. Perform a supervisory or instructional task directly related to the student's education; and
3. Perform a service or benefit for the student or the student's family such as health care, counseling, student job placement, or student financial aid.

At times, employees may receive confidential information regarding students' or employees' medical, educational, or court records. Employees are required to keep student and personnel information confidential per federal and state law.

Employees are required to confirm with the principal/designee concerning any requests for releasing student records. Except as otherwise permitted by law, employees may only share confidential, personally identifiable student record information with the following:

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1. The student;
2. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s); and
3. Other District employees with a legitimate educational interest.

## Fundraising Activities

All school wide fundraising activities shall be approved by the Board. Requests shall be submitted through principals. Employees shall not engage in online fundraising for educational purposes on an individual basis or make any reference to non-school sponsored fundraisers, online or otherwise, that would lead another to believe such activity is an approved school fundraiser.

Per board policy, an employee may be authorized to raise and use funds for the following non-educational purposes if approved by the principal:

1. Bereavement support;
2. Award recognition;
3. Employee morale;
4. Banquets; or
5. Other situations at the principal's discretion.

These funds shall be derived from vending machine revenue, donations.

No student shall be compelled to participate in or meet any kind of quota in a fundraising activity.

For additional information, refer to 2.404 and 2.601.

## Political Activities

Employees have a right to express their views on any issue but shall, in each case, make clear that the view expressed is not the official view of the Board or District. Employees may, on their own time, campaign for or against any candidate or referendum but are prohibited from using District owned property to engage in political activity.

## Drug-Free/Alcohol-Free Schools

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Any employee who violates the Board's policies 1.803, 1.804 & 5.403 on alcohol and drugs in the workplace shall be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension, termination, and/or referral for prosecution

All employees shall report being charged with any criminal offense to their immediate supervisor within (72) hours of the offense. The supervisor shall report the offense to the Director of Schools immediately.

## Weapons

Except where expressly permitted by state law, possessing any weapon or dangerous instrument on school property is prohibited. Except for authorized law enforcement officials, carrying concealed weapons on school property is prohibited. Employees who violate this are subject to disciplinary action including termination.

Employees who know or believe that an employee is in unlawful possession of a weapon on school property shall immediately report this to the local police department and building administration.

## Tobacco Products

All uses of tobacco, electronic/battery operated devices, vapor products, and all other associated paraphernalia are prohibited in all of the District's buildings and in all vehicles that are owned, leased, or operated by the District.

## Use of School Facilities

Activities sponsored by approved student organizations may utilize school facilities without charge subject to approval by the principal. Use of facilities by community groups is permitted in accordance with policy 3.206.

## Use of School Property

Employees are responsible for the materials, equipment, and supplies assigned to them. In addition, employees are responsible for the reasonable preservation and protection of materials, equipment, and supplies not under their direct control. Employees shall not use any District property for personal gain.

## Responsible Use of Technology

The Board supports the right of employees to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes that it is incumbent upon employees to use this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner. Before any employee is allowed use of the District's internet or intranet access, the employee shall sign a written agreement that sets out the terms and conditions of such

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use. Any employee who accesses the District's computer system for any purpose agrees to be bound by the terms of that agreement, even if no signed written agreement is on file. For additional information, refer to policy 4.406 & 4.4061.

## Assaults and Threats of Violence

Employees shall report all threats (oral, written, or electronic) to their immediate supervisor.

## Child Abuse Reporting

If employees know or have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect, a report shall be filed immediately with the Department of Children's Services by calling the Child Abuse or Neglect Hotline, 1-877-237-0004. The report shall include, to the extent known by the reporter:

1. The name, address, telephone number, and age of the child;
2. The name, telephone number, and address of the parents or persons having custody of the child;
3. The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect; and
4. Any evidence to the cause or any other information that may relate to the cause or extent of the abuse or neglect.

The identity of the person reporting shall remain confidential except when the juvenile court determines otherwise.

Notice that a report was filed, and any other information relevant to the wellbeing of the child, shall be verbally provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) within twenty-four (24) hours of filing. This notice shall be made in coordination with DCS. Notice shall not be provided if there is reasonable cause to believe that the parent(s)/guardian(s) may be the perpetrator or in any way responsible for abuse.

## Complaints/Grievances

Employment complaints and grievances shall be submitted in accordance with policy 5.501.

Grievances related to evaluations shall be submitted in accordance with 5.109.

## Gifts

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

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Individual employees shall not give gifts to staff members who exercise administrative or supervisory jurisdiction over them.

Employees may collect money for group gifts, subject to the approval of the principal and in accordance with board policy.

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

Any donations to the District shall comply with policy 5.605.

## Solicitations

Employees shall not use their position for personal gain by soliciting students or fellow employees.

Employees shall not be responsible for the collection of any money or the distribution of any fundraising materials within the schools unless such activity has the Director of Schools' written approval.

Employees shall not provide a list of parent(s)/guardian(s), students, or employees for solicitation or other purposes without the prior approval of the Director of Schools.

## Outside Employment or Activities

Employees shall not perform any duties related to outside employment during regular working hours. For additional information, refer to policy 5.607.

## Dress and Appearance

Business casual is the expected attire, but staff are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes, even sneakers, as teachers are on their feet most of the day. Each school administrator may have a designated casual day.

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## School Calendar

See website

## Testing Dates

Dates will posted and updated on district website.

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## Contact Information

### DeKalb County Board of Education 615-597-4084

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Mr. Patrick Cripps                    | Director of Schools                  | 615-597-4084 | <a href="mailto:patrickcripps@dekalbschools.net">patrickcripps@dekalbschools.net</a>     |
| Mrs. Jamie Vickers                    | Secretary/Bookkeeper                 | 615-597-4084 | <a href="mailto:jamievickers@dekalbschools.net">jamievickers@dekalbschools.net</a>       |
| Central Office Fax                    |                                      | 615-597-6326 |  |
| Central Office Fax (1 <sup>st</sup> ) |                                      | 615-597-6328 |  |
| Mr. Randy Jennings                    | Supervisor of Instruction 6-12       |              | <a href="mailto:randyjennings@dekalbschools.net">randyjennings@dekalbschools.net</a>     |
| Mrs. Ginda Kilgore                    | Federal Projects Bookkeeper/Payroll  |              | <a href="mailto:gindakilgore@dekalbschools.net">gindakilgore@dekalbschools.net</a>       |
| Mrs. Donna Hale                       | GP Bookkeeper/Payroll<br>Bookkeeping |              | <a href="mailto:donnahale@dekalbschools.net">donnahale@dekalbschools.net</a>             |
| Mr. Joey Reeder                       | Attendance Supervisor                |              | <a href="mailto:joeyreeder@dekalbschools.net">joeyreeder@dekalbschools.net</a>           |
| Mrs. Melissa Pirtle                   | Food Service Bookkeeper/Payroll      |              | <a href="mailto:melissapirtle@dekalbschools.net">melissapirtle@dekalbschools.net</a>     |
| Mrs. Emily Estes                      | Food Service Supervisor              |              | <a href="mailto:emily_estes@dekalbschools.net">emily_estes@dekalbschools.net</a>         |
| Ms. Natasha Vaughn                    | Special Education Supervisor         |              | <a href="mailto:natasha_vaughn@dekalbschools.net">natasha_vaughn@dekalbschools.net</a>   |
| Mrs. Terri Kilgore                    | Special Education Secretary          |              | <a href="mailto:terrikilgore@dekalbschools.net">terrikilgore@dekalbschools.net</a>       |
| Mrs. Michelle Burklow                 | Supervisor of Instruction PK-5       |              | <a href="mailto:michelleburklow@dekalbschools.net">michelleburklow@dekalbschools.net</a> |
| Mr. Greg Frasier                      | Technology Director                  |              | <a href="mailto:gregfrasier@dekalbschools.net">gregfrasier@dekalbschools.net</a>         |
| Dr. Danielle Collins                  | Federal Programs                     |              | <a href="mailto:daniellecollins@dekalbschools.net">daniellecollins@dekalbschools.net</a> |
| Mrs. Elise Driver                     | Coordinated School Health            |              | <a href="mailto:elisedriver@dekalbschools.net">elisedriver@dekalbschools.net</a>         |
| Mrs. Lisa Hale                        | Attendance Clerk                     |              | <a href="mailto:lisahale@dekalbschools.net">lisahale@dekalbschools.net</a>               |
| Ms. Kirby Close                       | Coordinated School Health Assistant  |              | <a href="mailto:kirbyclose@dekalbschools.net">kirbyclose@dekalbschools.net</a>           |

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Resources Page

[www.dekalbschools.net](http://www.dekalbschools.net)

Board Policies  
Uniform Grant Guidance (Procedures)

# DeKalb County Schools

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## Acknowledgement Form

Please sign the form below and submit it to the principal's office.

As an employee of DeKalb County School District, it is my responsibility to read and review board policies, administrative procedures, as well as the Employee Handbook. The policies and procedures are posted on the website at [www.dekalbschools.net](http://www.dekalbschools.net).

My signature acknowledges that I am responsible for complying with all board policies and administrative procedures and that I have received a copy of the Employee Handbook.

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Signature of Employee

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Date