

PEACH COUNTY SCHOOLS

HANDBOOK

FOR

CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

AND

ADMINISTRATORS

2020-2021

Dr. Lionel Brown, Superintendent

Peach County Schools
1088 Tulip Drive
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030
(478)825-5933

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared to assist you during your employment with the Peach County School District. It will assist you in understanding the policies and regulations that apply to certified employees and to administrators.

The information in this handbook comes from Board policies and approved procedures of the Peach County Board of Education. It is prepared for informational purposes only and its contents shall not be interpreted as a contract between the Peach County Board of Education and any of its employees.

Please become familiar with this handbook. It is the responsibility of each employee to be aware of the policies and procedures which affect his/her employment. As with any handbook it is a summary of policies and any questions for clarification or understanding should be directed to your principal/supervisor. The Peach County School Board Policy Manual is available online at the Georgia School Boards Association and may be accessed through the home page of the Peach County Schools at www.peachschools.org.

CHANGES IN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Board policies and school district procedures are reviewed and changed from time to time as the need arises. The Peach County School District reserves the right to change any of its policies and procedures, including those printed in this handbook. Your principal/supervisor will distribute new policies which affect your employment. New Board policies become effective on the date determined by the Peach County Board of Education. Policies which are printed in this handbook may have been superseded by more recent policies.

If you are unsure of the current policy or procedure, you should check with your principal/supervisor. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep copies of and follow new policies of the Board of Education.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT

The School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sex in its employment practices, student programs and dealings with the public. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act and all accompanying regulations.

Any employee, student, applicant for employment, parent 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 Board Policy GAAA found in the Electronic Board Policy Manual which may be accessed through the Peach County Schools web site at www.peachschools.org. The Peach County Schools Board Policy Manual may also be accessed through the Georgia School Boards Association web site at www.gsba.com.

PEACH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
HANDBOOK FOR CERTIFIED PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATORS
2018-2019

Table of Contents

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators.....6-11

Leave and Absences

- Leave Request Forms 12
- Leave and Absences Policy 12-13
 - Sick Leave 12
 - Personal and Professional Leave 12-13
 - Observance of Religious Holidays 13
 - Jury Duty and Witness Leave..... 13
 - Military Leave 13
 - Bereavement Leave 13
- Extended Leave Procedures 14
- Federal Family and Medical Leave Act 14-18
- Professional Personnel Vacations..... 17
- Professional Leave 17-19
- Payroll Calendar for Pay and Leave 19
- Workers Compensation 19

Salaries, Deductions and Benefits

- Certified Personnel Pay 19
- Payday 20
- Insurance 20
- Cafeteria Plan 20
- Social Security (FICA) and Medicare 21
- Teacher Retirement 21
- Salary Deductions..... 21

Name and Address Changes..... 21

Personnel Records and Background Checks

- Personnel Files 22
- Criminal Background Check 22
- Personnel Records Policy 22-23

Certification

- Certification 23
- Changes to Certification 24
- Certificate Renewal..... 24

Certificated Personnel Responsibilities and Duties	
Professional Personnel Time Schedules Policy	24
Alteration of Work Hours	24
School Year.....	24
Daily Hours of Duty and Responsibilities	24
Absences of Regular Teachers.....	25
Clocking In and Out at the School/Work Place	25
Leaving School Campus during Regular Work Hours	25
Pre-Planning, Post-Planning and Work Days	25
Care of Classroom.....	25
Teacher Evaluations.....	25
Professional Learning	26
Professional Development Opportunities Policy	26-27
Personnel Relations and Conduct	
Teacher Conduct	27
Employee Dress Code Policy	27
Staff Conflict of Interest	27
Staff Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage	27-28
Employee Computer and Internet Use Policy	28
Employee Social Media Use	28-30
Drug-Free Workplace Policy	30-32
Employee Tobacco Use	32
Harassment Policy	32-33
Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct	33-34
Contracts and Employment	
Contracts and Employment (Certificated Personnel).....	34
Non-Renewal of Contract	34
Professional Staff Assignments and Transfer	35
Professional Personnel Resignation.....	35
Professional Personnel Lay-Off Policy.....	35-36
Volunteers in the School District.....	36
Complaints and Grievances, Certified Personnel.....	36-39
Handbook Receipt Acknowledgement.....	40

THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS
Effective January 1, 2018

Effective January 1, 2018 505- 6 -.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS (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 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 Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

(b) “Certificate” refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.

(c) “Child endangerment” occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.

(d) “Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission 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.

(e) “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 year of graduation.

(f) “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 Professional Standards Commission 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.

(g) “Revocation” is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educ 505-6-.01 Page 2

(m) “No Probable Cause” is a determination by the Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

(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 that would violate a state or federal law; 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). 505-6-.01
Page 3

(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: 505-6-.01 Page 4 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 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 all requested information on documents required by the Commission when

applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission; 2. failure to make a required report of a 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 violation of state or federal law 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.

(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 Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).

505-6-.01 Page 5 (b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

(5) Disciplinary Action (a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission 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 holder of a certificate:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01)
2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01)
3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources 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. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295)
5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate
6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16-13-111)
7. 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.

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. Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

The observance of this Standard by educators employed in the public schools of Peach County is mandatory and binding. Any violation of this standard may subject an educator to investigation and disciplinary action, including dismissal.

****Professional Standards Commission Contact Information:**

Mailing Address

Educator Ethics Division
Georgia Professional Standards Commission
Two Peachtree Street
Suite 6000
Atlanta, GA 30303

Hours of Operation

Ethics office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Telephone

(404) 232-2700 - Metro Atlanta
800) 537-5996 - Toll Free Outside Metro Atlanta Area
(404) 232-2720 - FAX Line

E-Mail

Individuals may contact the Ethics Division via e-mail: ethics@gapsc.com.

LEAVE AND ABSENCES

Leave Request Forms

Employees must submit all requests for leave on the "Application for Leave" form and submit the form to the Principal/Supervisor for approval.

LEAVE AND ABSENCES POLICY

This policy shall apply to all employees of the Board of Education. All employees are required to follow the work calendar established by the Board of Education and may take leave from work only in accordance with this policy or other leave policies enacted by the board of education. Unless otherwise provided by the board of education, principals and other supervisors are not authorized to rearrange the work calendars of employees.

Accrual of Sick Leave and Absence for Medical and Related Reasons

Each employee of the Board of Education shall be entitled to sick leave, with full pay, computed on the basis of one and one-fourth (1 1/4) working days for each completed month (20 school days of service). Employees are allowed to accumulate unlimited sick leave and may use the days for illness, death, and/or retirement. Sick leave shall not be granted for less than one-half (1/2) day effective July 1, 2009. Failure to comply with time requirements for submission of sick leave request shall result in a deduction of salary for the undocumented leave days.

The leave provided under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness in the employee's immediate family.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the HR Director 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. In the event that sick leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the HR Director shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member. If an employee is absent for five (5) consecutive days of sick leave, a physician's certificate must be furnished. The physician's statement shall contain the dates of absence, reason for absence, and other information deemed necessary by the school district. For the purposes of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, sisters, brothers, in-laws, grandparents, grandchildren, or other relatives living in the residence of the employee.

Personal and Professional Leave

Employees may take three (3) days of personal/professional leave if prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee's immediate supervisor and if the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation. A leave form must be filed and approved by the principal/supervisor prior to leave. Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent, personal and professional leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays. In addition, personal leave will not be granted during the first week of the student school year or during the last week of the student school year, unless the HR Director, in his or her discretion, determines that such leave should be granted due to an emergency or extenuating circumstances beyond the employee's control. The HR Director may refuse to allow an employee to take personal or professional leave if qualified substitutes are not available.

Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought but may be required to state whether the absence is for "personal" or "professional" reasons. Personal leave is a part of the accrued sick leave days not in addition.

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 Board shall be allowed leave with pay for the purposes of serving as a juror in any court or when subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of the individual's duties as a school system employee. Jury and/or witness leave shall not be deducted from an individual's accumulated personal, professional or sick leave. No employee utilizing jury and witness leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute to serve during his or her absence for such leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed for reasons arising out of their employment with the school system are allowed to keep the jury/witness pay they receive. Any employee serving on jury/witness duty shall be required to return to the work station upon their dismissal from duty during school days between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Military Leave

All employees of the Board of Education are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen days in any one federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military leave duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. Employees also are entitled to leave not exceeding thirty days in any one federal fiscal year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States armed forces. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the director 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.

Bereavement Leave

In the event of a death of a member of the immediate family, up to five days cumulative bereavement leave will be granted. Up to two successive days bereavement leave will be granted in the event of a death of other close relatives. In extenuating circumstances, the HR Director may grant additional days beyond these limits. All such bereavement leave will be charged against the employee's sick leave.

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 law, the provision of the FMLA, its regulations or other law, as the case may be, control.

Board Policy GARH

Extended Leave Procedures

Employees who are **absent from work for six (6) days or more** must complete request for extended leave forms, which may include but is not limited to Family Medical Leave forms, Benefits Continuance Agreement, Physician Certification forms. **The employee must contact the Human Resources Department at Central Office to obtain and complete the necessary forms.**

Federal Family & Medical Leave Act

It is the purpose of this policy to set out in summary form the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("the Act" or "FMLA") and its implementing regulations. The Board of Education ("Board") does not intend by this policy to create any additional rights to leave not provided by the Act; provided, however, the Board does wish to extend the rights of the Act to certain employees who have worked at least 12 months for the Board. The Board does intend to elect certain options as the Act authorizes. Any portion of this policy inconsistent or contrary to the Act is unintentional and shall not be given effect. As to the interpretation of this policy, the Board's employees should look to the Act itself and its regulations.

A. ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

Employees of the Board who have been employed by the Board for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave are eligible to take unpaid leave under the FMLA.

B. DEFINITIONS

"Active duty or call to active duty status" means a call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation pursuant to various sections of Title 10 of the United States Code as defined in 29 C.F.R. § 825.800.

"Contingency Operation" means a military operation designated by the Secretary of Defense as one in which Armed Forces members are or may be involved in military actions, operations, or hostilities against an enemy of the U.S. or an opposing military force, or a military operation that results in the call or order to, or retention on, active duty as defined in FMLA Regulation § 825.800.

"Covered military member," means the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status.

"Covered Service member" means a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty.

"Instructional employee" means an employee whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting.

"Next of Kin" of a covered service member means the nearest blood relative other than the covered service member's spouse, parent, son or daughter, in the following order of priority: blood relatives granted legal custody, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and

first cousins, unless the covered service member has specifically designated in writing another blood relative for purposes of FMLA caregiver leave.

"Outpatient Status," with respect to a covered service member, means the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to either a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient; or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients.

"Parent" means a biological, adoptive, step or foster mother or father or one who acted in place of a parent when the employee was a child. The term "parent" does not include parent "in law."

"Parent of covered service member" means a biological, adoptive, step or foster parent or any other individual who acted in place of a parent of the covered service member. The term does not include parents "in law."

"Serious Health Condition" means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care requiring an overnight stay in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider, all as further defined in the FMLA regulations.

"Serious Injury or Illness" means, an injury or illness incurred by a covered service member in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating.

"Son or daughter" means a biological, adopted or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee acts as a parent. The son or daughter must be under age 18 or, if the son or daughter is age 18 or older, he/she must be incapable of self-care due to a mental or physical disability at the time FMLA leave is to begin.

"Son or daughter of a covered service member" means a covered service member's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered service member acted in the place of a parent, and who is of any age.

"Spouse" means a husband or wife as defined or recognized under Georgia law.

C. AMOUNT AND TYPE OF LEAVE TAKEN

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

1. Birth of a son or daughter and to care for the newborn child;
2. Adoption or foster placement with the employee of a son or daughter and to care for the newly placed child;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent, if that person has a serious health condition;
4. Serious health condition of the employee that prevents the employee from performing his/her job functions;
5. Any qualifying exigency arising from the fact that the employee's family member (the covered military member) is on active duty or has been notified of an impending deployment in support of a contingency operation. 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
6. 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.

In the event of the birth, adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter, all leave must be completed within twelve months after the birth, adoption or foster placement.

Except as provided below, an employee may take up to a total of 12 weeks leave during any twelve-month period. 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. See 29 C.F.R. § 825.200(b)(4).

If both spouses work for the District and both are eligible for FMLA leave, they are authorized to take only a combined total of 12 weeks leave during any one 12 month period to care for a newborn or adopted child, a child placed with the employee for foster care, or a parent with a serious health condition. Both spouses are authorized to take leave for twelve (12) weeks to care

for a spouse or child with a serious health condition.

An eligible employee is eligible to take up to 26 weeks of military caregiver leave during a “single 12-month period.” The “single 12-month period” begins on the date the employee first takes military caregiver leave and ends 12 months after that date, regardless of the method used to determine the leave entitlement period for other FMLA reasons.

If both spouses work for the District and both are eligible for FMLA leave, they are authorized to take only a combined total of 26 weeks during the “single 12-month period” described above for military caregiver leave or a combination of military caregiver leave and leave taken for other FMLA reasons.

The District will require that any accrued paid leave (sick, personal, vacation, 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. Because leave pursuant to an employee’s disability benefit plan or workers’ compensation absence is not unpaid, the provision for substitution of accrued paid leave is not applicable in such cases.

D. INTERMITTENT OR REDUCED LEAVE

An employee may take leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule where it is medically necessary due to the serious health condition of a covered family member, the employee, or the serious injury or illness of a covered service member, or when necessary because of a qualifying exigency. The District will require a certification, in the form designated by the District, to document the necessity of such intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave.

E. NOTIFICATION OF LEAVE

If the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, an employee requesting leave must provide at least 30 days advance notice to the Department of Human Resources. If such advance notice is not possible, the employee must give notice as soon as practicable, which means as soon as both possible and practical, taking into account all of the facts and circumstances in the individual case. If an employee does not provide at least 30 days notice of foreseeable leave, he or she must explain why such notice was not practicable if so requested by the District. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, an employee must provide notice as soon as practicable, which generally should be according to the District’s usual and customary leave requirements. 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 any corresponding leave will not disrupt unduly the operations of the District.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the District to reasonably determine whether the FMLA may apply to the leave request. When an employee seeks leave due to an FMLA-qualifying reason for which the District has previously provided FMLA leave, the employee must specifically reference either the previous qualifying reason for leave or the need for FMLA leave.

F. BENEFITS AND RETURN TO WORK

Employees will be eligible to maintain health care benefits provided by the school district while on FMLA leave. The District will pay the employer's portion, if any, of such benefits. The employee will pay the same portion, if any, of such benefits as the employee paid before beginning the leave.

The District may recover any health care benefit premiums paid on behalf of an employee if the employee does not return to work after the leave period has expired, unless the employee did not return due to a serious health condition of the employee or the employee's spouse, parent or child, or a serious injury or illness of a covered service member or other circumstances beyond the employee's control. The District may require certification from the health care provider that a serious health condition of the employee or family member, or the covered service member’s serious injury or illness, prevented the employee from returning to work.

With the exception of paid vacation, personal, sick, or any other paid leave required to be substituted for unpaid leave under Section C above, the employee's absence during leave will not

alter benefits which the employee accrued before taking leave. Any accrued benefits will not be lost during the leave.

Upon return from leave, the employee is entitled to be reinstated to a position equivalent to the one the employee held when he/she left on FMLA leave, with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment. Upon proper notice, however, the District may deny reinstatement under this policy to an employee whose salary is in the highest 10% of the employees employed by the school district if such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the District's operation, as determined by the District.

G. REQUIRED CERTIFICATION AND REPORTING

The District requires that a request for leave due to a serious health condition of an employee or an employee's family member or a serious injury or illness of a covered service member be supported by certification by the appropriate health care provider of the eligible employee or family member on a form to be provided by the District. This certification for a serious health condition must include (1) the name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the healthcare provider and type of practice/specialization; (2) the approximate date on which the serious health condition commenced, and its probable duration; (3) a statement or description of appropriate medical facts regarding the patient's health condition for which FMLA leave is requested; (4) if the purpose of the leave is to care for a family member, a statement that the employee is needed to care for the family member and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the leave required for such care; (5) if the leave is due to the employee's own serious health condition, a statement that the employee is unable to perform his/her essential job functions, the nature of other work restrictions, and the likely duration of such inability; and (6) if intermittent or reduced schedule leave is requested, information sufficient to establish the medical necessity for the same and an estimate of the dates and duration of treatments and any periods of recovery. The employer may require that the eligible employee obtain subsequent recertification on a reasonable basis as requested by the District in accordance with the FMLA regulations.

The District, at its own expense, may obtain the opinion of a second health care provider of the District's choice, if the District should choose to do so. If a conflict exists between the opinion in the certification and the second opinion, the District may, at its own expense, obtain a third opinion from a health care provider upon which the District and the employee jointly agree. Such a third opinion as to the necessity for the leave is binding on both the District and the employee. Upon an employee's return to work after leave for the employee's own serious health condition, the District may require the employee to obtain certification from his/her health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

The District may require that a first request for leave because of a qualifying exigency arising from active duty or a call to active duty be supported by a copy of the covered service member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military. A certification form requesting the required information to support a request for exigency leave will be provided by the District upon request.

The District may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically to his/her principal or supervisor on the employee's status and intent to return to work.

H. SPECIAL PROVISIONS

When an instructional employee seeks intermittent leave or leave on a reduced schedule in connection with a family or personal serious health condition or to care for a covered service member that would constitute at least 20% of the total number of working days during which the leave would extend, the District may require the employee to elect to take leave in a block (not intermittently) for the entire period or to transfer to an available alternative position within the school system that is equivalent in pay, for which the employee is qualified, and which better accommodates the intermittent situation.

If an instructional employee begins leave more than five weeks before the end of a semester, the

District may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if

- (a) the leave will last at least three weeks; and
- (b) the employee would return to work during the three-week period before the end of the term.

If an instructional employee begins leave for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition during the five-week period before the end of the semester, the District may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if

- (a) the leave will last more than two weeks; and
- (b) the employee would return to work during the two-week period before the end of the term.

If an instructional employee begins leave for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition during the three-week period before the end of a semester, and the leave will last more than five working days, the District may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester.

Board Policy GBRIG

Professional Personnel Vacations

Twelve month employees shall earn one (1) day of vacation for each month for a total of 12 days per year. A twelve month employee who is employed for less than 12 months shall earn pro rated vacation days based on the number of months of employment. The employee shall be employed on the first working day of the month and shall be employed more than 50% of the working days of the month to earn a vacation day. Twelve month employees shall be permitted to accumulate up to a maximum of 20 (twenty) days as of June 30 of each year.

Annual vacation earned from July 1 to June 30 shall be taken between July 1 and June 30 of the contract year at a time approved by the Superintendent or appropriate designee.

The annual vacation leave schedule shall be arranged so that each school and department can maintain effective service levels. Leave may be taken only after approval by the Superintendent of Schools or appropriate designee.

Upon retirement or completion of service with the Peach County School District, all eligible employees will be paid for accrued annual vacation leave at their current daily rate of pay. Personnel who are separating from the school district will be allowed to include earned vacation in their specific date of termination.

Board Policy GBRK (revised 1/6/2009)

Professional Leave

All professional learning requests must be approved by your principal/supervisor.. All professional learning requests must be approved **prior** to the activity as a prerequisite to requesting expense reimbursement. Expenses incurred as a result of participation in an approved activity must be submitted to your principal/supervisor within one week (5 business days) of the completion of the activity.

Permission to serve on special committees must be approved by the Superintendent before accepting. The number of days expected to be away from the job to participate in committee or organization work must be weighed carefully.

Approval of the requests does not commit the district to payment of any expenses. The employee must follow reimbursement procedures to seek payment.

Payroll Calendar for Pay and Leave

The Payroll Calendar will be distributed annually by the Director of Finance. The payroll calendar will be e-mailed to all employees in July of each year and will be posted on the district website under the Finance Department area. Once the payroll calendar is distributed for the year, any changes will be communicated to all employees via e-mail as well as a revised payroll calendar being placed on the district website.

Workers Compensation

The Peach County Board of Education has Workers Compensation insurance to cover the cost of work-related injury or illness. Work-related accidents must be reported immediately to your principal or the designated Workers Comp personnel at the school. Employees reporting a work-related injury or illness must be seen by one of the medical providers listed on the panel of approved physicians for the Peach County Board of Education. Employees must report injuries in a timely manner to insure that they will be covered and the injury can be established as work-related.

SALARIES, DEDUCTIONS, AND BENEFITS

Certified Personnel Pay

Teachers and other certified personnel are paid on the Peach County Board of Education salary schedule. Teachers will receive a step raise if applicable. In addition the Peach County Board of Education provides an annual local supplement. Both will be pro-rated according to the number of days set by the Board of Education.

Teachers who have current, valid, **Fully Renewable** Georgia Certificates shall be paid according to the State Salary Schedule for their certificate level and their experience level. Teachers who have current, valid **Nonrenewable** Georgia Certificates shall be paid at the Provisional level (BT) on the State Salary Schedule. Teachers who hold valid, current **I (Intern)** certificates through the TAPP program shall be paid at the BT level on the State Salary Schedule.

In order to be paid at the above levels all teachers must have a current valid Georgia Certificate on file with the Peach County Board of Education Human Resources office no later than 60 days after the first working day of each school year as specified in the annual Contract for Employment.

Teachers who do not have a valid Georgia Certificate on file by 60 days after the first working day of the school year as specified in the Contract for Employment will have their pay reduced to that of Long-term Substitute Teacher pay. The Local Supplement is not included in Substitute Teacher Pay.

Payday

All employees of the Peach County Board of Education are paid once a month on the last business day of each calendar month. Exceptions may be made for months such as November and December due to holiday schedules.

Employees receive their pay checks via direct deposit. Direct Deposit notifications will be accessed through the E-forms link on the District website. Each employee will have a unique log in and password.

A new employee's first pay check may be a paper check while a "pre-note" is sent to their bank. Any employee that makes a change to their direct deposit bank account may receive a paper check for that month while a "pre-note" is sent to the new bank/account. A "pre-note" is sent for \$0.00 to ensure that there are no problems with the new bank/account receiving the file prior to actual funds being sent to the account.

Insurance

All employees of the Peach County School System are covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance

The following insurance programs are available through payroll deduction for permanent, full-time employees: life, health, disability, cancer, dental, and vision.

Free life insurance is provided to every permanent, full-time employee. An additional, optional amount may be purchased by the employee, according to established guides and rates. The proper forms must be completed and forwarded to the Human Resources department to establish eligibility. All insurance coverage begins the first day of the month following the completion of one full calendar month of service, subject to the described conditions in the plan.

Cafeteria Plan

Under a special, approved authorization from the IRS, the cafeteria plan for fringe benefits is available to all employees. If selected, the plan provides that deductions for the selected fringe benefits will be made from the monthly-annual salary before federal taxes, state taxes and Medicare are computed. The result is a significant savings each month which results in more take-home compensation. Each employee must provide written authorization for entry into this program.

Our "Cafeteria" Program gives you a "menu" from which to pick and choose among different optional benefit plans. You will find a variety of limits and coverages within these product lines:

1. Individual and Dependent Major Medical
2. Individual and Dependent Dental Insurance
3. Supplemental and Dependent Life Insurance
4. Individual and Dependent Vision Insurance
5. Cancer Supplement
6. Hospital Intensive Care Supplement
7. Disability Income Insurance

Social Security (FICA) and Medicare Tax

Certified personnel, administrators and clerical personnel are not covered by Social Security (FICA.) Those employees not covered by FICA and hired after March 31, 1986 will contribute 1.45% of their taxable salary for Medicare Tax. The deductions are matched by the Peach County Board of Education.

Teacher Retirement

Membership in the Georgia Teachers Retirement System is mandatory for all personnel in positions covered under the Georgia Teachers Retirement System. In meeting the requirement of the retirement system, a percent of the earned salary is deducted each month by the Board of Education. Teachers, Administrators, Supervisors, Paraprofessionals, Nurses, and Clerical personnel are members of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). The employee contribution rate is set by TRS.

Deferred Compensation Plan

The Peach County Board of Education offers a deferred compensation (before tax savings) plan through Lincoln Financial. Representatives for Lincoln Financial meet with employees throughout the year.

Salary Deductions

Automatic Deductions will be made for the following purposes:

1. Teacher Retirement
2. Medicare (and Social Security only for those in FICA covered positions)
3. Federal Income Tax
4. Health Insurance, when authorized
5. Teacher Association Dues, when authorized
6. Days of Leave in Excess of Authorized Leave
7. Georgia Income Tax
8. Credit Union, when authorized
9. Tax Shelter Annuity (when authorized)
10. Garnishments, tax levy, child support, etc., when so ordered by the court

Providing accurate state and federal tax withholding forms, retirement system membership number, and the social security number to the payroll office is a responsibility of the employee.

NAME AND ADDRESS CHANGES

Employees must complete an electronic demographic change form to report changes in address, phone and name changes. Name changes cannot be made without a copy of the new Social Security card displaying the new name. Human Resources will make the changes when the *electronic form* is received. Changes will not be made through emails or phone calls.

PERSONNEL RECORDS AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

Personnel Files

Permanent personnel files are kept in the Human Resources Office at Peach County Board of Education. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide the following information, which needs to be on file in the office at Peach County Board of Education:

1. Application
2. Reference Forms
3. Official College Transcripts
4. Experience Verification Forms from other Schools
5. Official Copy of Teaching Certificate
6. Copy of Praxis and/or GACE Score Reports
7. Employee's Withholding Certificate for Income Tax Deductions (W-4)
8. Georgia Withholding Certificate for Income Tax Deductions (G-4)
9. Copy of Social Security Card and Drivers License
10. Teacher Retirement Number or an application for number if a new teacher in this State Retirement System (Form 2-A)
11. Payroll Deduction Forms (Health, Life, Disability, etc.)
12. I-9 Form
13. Current Criminal Record Background Check (kept in confidential separate file)
14. Fingerprint Record (kept in confidential separate file)

If the need develops for any other information, the employee will be expected to furnish it immediately upon receipt of request, making sure that all forms are properly notarized. It is important that all information requested be filed with Human Resources by the deadline given.

Criminal Background Check

Fingerprinting/Criminal Records Check

All personnel, certified as well as non-certified, employed by the Board shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal record check. A certificated person may, however, be employed under a provisional or temporary contract for a maximum of 200 days to allow for the receipt of the criminal record check.

All certificated personnel whose employment is renewed in this school district after July 1, 2000, shall have a criminal record check made as required above upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission.

Board Policy GAK (1)

Personnel Records

All new employees of the school district and all volunteers participating in overnight field trips shall submit to records check for the purpose of determining whether such person has ever been convicted of a crime or has a criminal record.

The Superintendent shall require all such new employees and volunteers to execute the appropriate forms required by law and to submit to a fingerprint identification check in order to obtain the necessary criminal record information from the Georgia Crime Information Center.

Any criminal record information furnished by the GCIC or any other law enforcement agency shall be placed in a separate, confidential section of the employee's permanent records folder maintained pursuant to Rule GAK, and access to such information shall be limited to the Superintendent, the School Board Attorney and any other person designated by the Superintendent.

Each person employed for the first time to fill a certificated position with the Peach County Board

of Education shall be issued a temporary contract which shall expire on the date the criminal record check has been received by the school district and the Superintendent or designee has notified the employee in writing that the criminal record check has been received or after 200 calendar days, whichever shall first occur. If the criminal record check reflects that the employee has not been arrested, charged, pleaded guilty or no contest, or been convicted of any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation, the Superintendent shall have the authority without further authorization from the Board to sign on behalf of the Board a standard employment contract with the assignment of the employee as previously approved by the Board.

In the event the criminal record check reflects the employee has been charged with, pleaded guilty to or been convicted of an offense other than a minor traffic violation, the Superintendent shall bring the matter to the Board of Education as its next meeting or sooner, if warranted, for a decision. If the Superintendent elects, the employee may continue in the employment of the Peach County Board of Education pending final Board decision. In the course of carrying out the duty to investigate situations involving possible employee misconduct, the Superintendent, using discretion, may require any employee or any person serving in a volunteer capacity with the school district to submit to a criminal records check.

Board Policy GAK

CERTIFICATION

The teaching certificate is a most important document as relates to employment. State law mandates that each employee must continue to hold a current in-field certificate. State pay cannot be received for out-dated or out-of-field certification.

It is each employee's responsibility to know the status of his/her certification and to keep certification current. Applications for changes in certification are available in the Human Resources office. All appropriate information must be completed. The Peach County Board of Education will not accept responsibility for omissions regarding an individual's certificate. The Human Resources department will, however, assist in every possible manner.

For new teachers, a copy of the certificate must be received in the Human Resources department by the 10th of the month to assure full salary for that month. Salaries are retroactive to the certificate date once the certificate is received.

A copy of every teacher's certificate must be on file with Human Resources by 60 days from the first working day of each school year. This includes those renewing after summer school and all others. Otherwise, only substitute pay will be authorized. Employees should not neglect attending to this important task.

Changes to Certification:

Applications for changes to certification are available in Human Resources and at www.gapsc.com. Upgrades to certificates which will result in a salary increase should be requested through the Human Resources department in order to assure that there is not a delay in the salary increase. Employees requesting upgrades through the school district are exempt from the \$20 PSC fee. It is very important that all information be received in Human Resources

promptly so that it can be sent to the Professional Standards Commission electronically. This expedites the process and assures that the school district receives the proper notification from Professional Standards Commission when the change in certification is complete.

Certificate Renewal

All certificated employees of the Peach County School District must maintain valid Georgia certificates as stated in the **Professional Standards Commission (PSC) Rules for certification revised 7/1/2016**. For complete rules, please visit the PSC web site at www.gapsc.com.

In the month of January prior to the June in which the certificate expires the Human Resources Department will send Renewal Packets to employees whose certificates are expiring. Employees will return their packets to the Human Resources department for processing.

CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

Professional Personnel Time Schedules

Teachers are required to work an eight (8) hour day. The principal of each school shall have the authority to adjust the schedule of teacher(s) to fulfill the duty assignment (s) of the school.

The Superintendent upon the request of the principal(s) shall determine the official work hours.

The Superintendent shall inform the Board of alterations of official work hours.

Alteration of Work Hours

Employee(s) shall not schedule nor participate in a secondary activity which requires alteration of the regular work hours. Employees shall be required to report to duty for regular scheduled work hours unless on approved leave or school business.

Board Policy GBRB

School Year

The Board of Education sets the school calendar each year. The Principals and/or Supervisors will notify staff of the first and last work days for the school year as well as any other work days in accordance with the calendar adopted by the Board.

Daily Hours of Duty and Responsibilities

Principals and/or Supervisors will notify staff of working hours. It is expected that teachers devote their working time each school day in classroom work, planning, evaluation, and other activities common to the work of teachers. Teachers are expected to carry out their respective parts in general school activities and to participate in community life, activities, and affairs.

Teachers and other personnel are expected to report to work at the stated time. If an emergency occurs causing a delayed arrival, the principal or his/her designee must be called.

Absences of Regular Teacher

In the event that a teacher must be absent, the teacher shall notify the principal as soon as possible, and it is the responsibility of the principal to secure the services of a substitute teacher. Teachers shall not secure substitutes. The principal shall be responsible for securing services of substitutes from an approved list.

Clocking In And Out at the School/Work Place

All personnel in the Peach County School district must clock in and out at the school/work place. The Principal of each school will designate the procedure for doing this.

Leaving School Campus During Regular Work Hours

In the event a teacher or other certificated employee needs to leave campus during the regular workday, employee must notify and **receive approval** from the Principal or an Assistant Principal at the school. The employee must sign out and sign in upon return to the school.

In the event that an Administrator needs to leave the school campus, the Administrator must notify the Superintendent's secretary at the Central Office.

Pre-Planning, Post-Planning and Teacher Workdays

Certificated personnel are reminded that that these are professional workdays and it is not appropriate for employees' children to be on campus during these workdays.

Care of Classroom

Since students respond to attractive and clean surroundings, teachers must make an effort to keep classrooms clean, neat, and attractive. However, the custodians assigned to the building will do most of the work. Teaching students to be neat and to have proper respect for public school property is one of the duties of a teacher.

Teacher Evaluations

The Superintendent shall ensure that annual teacher and leader evaluations are in accordance with state law.

All certified educators employed by Georgia Local Units of Administration must receive annual performance evaluations. Beginning in academic year 2014-15, most classroom teachers in Georgia public school systems are evaluated on the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). School level leaders are evaluated using the Leader Keys Evaluation System (LKES).

This system has four possible performance ratings:

- Ineffective;
- Needs Development;
- Proficient;
- Exemplary.

For certification purposes, Ineffective and Needs Development TKES and LKES evaluations are considered unsatisfactory. Ineffective and Needs Development TKES and LKES summative scores are reported to the GaPSC. Educators who are not evaluated on TKES or LKES may be evaluated by a school, district, or agency-approved evaluation system. Unsatisfactory annual evaluations are automatically reported to the GaPSC.

Professional Learning:

The Peach County Board of Education recognizes the benefits to be derived from a quality professional learning program. The Board believes this to be a vital element in the overall school improvement process. As per State Rule 160-3-3-.10, professional learning units (PLUs) shall be

earned only in the following categories: (1) field of certification, (2) school/system/individual improvement plan, (3) annual personnel evaluation, and (4) state/federal requirements. Employees must gain **prior approval** of PLUs from the Professional Learning Advisory Committee.

Professional Development Opportunities

The Peach County Board of Education recognizes the benefits to be derived from a quality professional learning program. The Board believes this to be a vital element in the overall school improvement process, resulting in increased student achievement.

It is the policy of the Peach County Board of Education to develop and maintain a system-level Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. This plan shall address comprehensive professional learning as a major component. All professional learning opportunities will be aligned with this plan. In addition, the system will submit a new/updated Professional Learning Plan to the Georgia Department of Education for approval every three years.

Professional learning programs will be developed according to state criteria, will utilize the standards of the national Staff Development Council, and will address both individual and instructional program needs. Professional learning programs will be evaluated to determine success and effectiveness. Records of personnel participation will be maintained.

The Superintendent shall recommend to the Board a person to serve as Professional Learning Coordinator for the school district. The Superintendent, in conjunction with the Professional Learning Coordinator, will adopt administrative professional learning procedures, determine the number and appoint the members of a Professional Learning Advisory Council, and administer the comprehensive Professional Learning Plan.

The Professional Learning Advisory Council will assist the Professional Learning Coordinator in assessing needs, determining priorities and content of activities, and evaluating and modifying the Professional Learning Plan.

- As per State Rule 160-3-3-.10, professional learning units (PLUs) shall be earned by an individual only in the following four categories: (1) field of certification (2) school/system/individual improvement plan (3) annual personnel evaluation and (4) state/federal requirements. The approval of the Professional Learning Advisory Committee of the school district or its designee is required for a system employee to participate in a PLU activity for the purpose of the renewal of a Georgia professional certificate or to meet the requirements for a paraprofessional certification. One professional learning unit of credit is based on ten (10) contact hours of formal instruction or its equivalent and on verification that the intent of the formal instruction has been implemented on the job or by mastery verification. No renewal credit (coursework) is required to renew certificates that expire June 30, 2016 & June 30, 2017.

Stipends for professional learning activities may be awarded only if there is evidence that the competencies that will be gained during the professional learning activity are aligned with an individual plan or a school or system improvement plan. There must be evidence that the competencies gained have been implemented in the classroom/work site.

The School System administrators shall develop a comprehensive budget to support the Professional Learning Plan considering all possible sources of funding.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop the appropriate procedures to implement this policy.
Board Policy GAD

PERSONNEL RELATIONS AND CONDUCT

Teacher Conduct

Teachers will conduct themselves at all times as professionals. Unseemly conduct and unbecoming language in the presence of students and fellow workers will not be tolerated.

Employee Dress Code

The Board of Education recognizes that public school educators are professionals who should command the respect of students and parents alike as other professionals are able to do. The board believes that when professional educators dress in a professional manner consistent with other professions, parents, students, and members of the public will hold them in greater esteem and more frequently regard them as professional educators whose opinions are worthy of respect. The board also believes that professional dress by its instructional staff enables teachers to command greater respect from students and, as a result, ensure a learning environment more conducive to education.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Board of Education that all teachers, school administrators, clerical staff, and members of the instructional staff, including paraprofessionals assigned to the classroom, shall dress in a professional manner and style in accordance with dress of other professionals within this community or as the activity of the day requires. Attire for special occasions and special school functions may be designated by the school administration. The superintendent or school principals are responsible for implementing this policy and may disseminate additional regulations, procedures or directives as necessary to enforce the policy.

Board Policy GBRL

Staff Conflict of Interest

Nepotism:

In the employment and assignment of personnel, the Superintendent shall not recommend and the Board will not approve the employment or transfer of any person which would result in one relative having direct supervisory responsibility over another relative.

Relative includes spouse, child, grandchild, great-grandchild, parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, brother, sister, nephew, niece, aunt or uncle of the employee in question, and all of the same relatives of the employee's spouse.

These relationships include those arising from half-blood, adoption, or marriage. Persons who are common-law married or who are living together in a meretricious relationship are also subject to this policy.

Board Policy GAG

Staff Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage

Teachers and paraprofessionals should refrain from using personal cell phones and/or electronic

devices during classroom instruction time. Personal cell phones and/or electronic devices should be turned off or silenced and set to go to voice mail during this time. Teachers wishing to communicate with parents via their personal cell phones and/or electronic devices should do so before or after school or during their planning time. Administrators who have been issued cell phones and/or electronic devices by the school district should keep these cell phones and/or electronic devices “on” at all times for administrative purposes and should silence them as appropriate.

All employees are reminded that pictures of children may not be used without written permission from parents. This includes cell phone cameras. Employees should not take pictures of students unless they have received clearance from the principal and a written letter of release from each parent.

Employee Computer and Internet Use Policy

All computers, Internet access and the e-mail system are the sole property of the Peach County School District (the "School District") and are provided for the purpose of fulfilling School District goals and are for School District business only. Computers are provided to users to enhance productivity and to provide access to information relevant to the goals of the district. The complete Employee Computer and Internet Use Policy (IFBGC) is in the Peach County Board of Education Policy Manual.

All certificated personnel shall have on file in the Human Resources department at the Central Office a signed “Employee Computer and Internet Use Policy Agreement” statement. In this statement the employee understands that he/she has a responsibility to report any violations of the policy. The employee also understands that the school district reserves the right to monitor and disclose e-mail and Internet records, with or without employee notice, and that monitoring may occur during or after working hours. The complete Employee Computer and Internet Use Policy (IFBGC) is in the Electronic School Board Policy Manual online at www.peachschools.org.

Employee Social Media Guidelines

Peach County Schools recognizes that many of our staff, students, parents, and community members are active social media users. As a school district, we incorporate 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 Peach County Schools, and that respects the relationship among employees, students, parents, and community members.

For the purposes of these guidelines, social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking and media sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, Tumblr, Instagram, SnapChat, and YouTube. It also includes blogs, comments on web sites, discussion forums, responses to media stories and any other activity involving connecting or communicating with others. 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 Peach County Schools.

Your Personal Responsibility

Peach County Schools encourage responsible participation in social networking sites, subject to existing policies, including, but not limited to, those concerning non-discrimination, anti-harassment, antibullying, and copyright/fair use. When you identify yourself as a PCBOE employee you are connected with your colleagues, students,

parents, and the community. All employees are expected to serve as positive representative for our schools and to remember you are a role model 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 Peach 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 way possible. 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 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 Peach County Schools, or would call your professional reputation into question.
- Social Media can be a useful communication tool, Peach County employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Content includes personal comments, links, photographs, audio or video, and content created by other users that you choose to share or re-post. Remember, what you publish will be public for a long time; protect your privacy.
- Once something is posted, you cannot take it back. In most instances, deleting content will not make it disappear. Deleted content can still show up in online searches. Or, with the click of a button, other users can take a screen shot, re-post, or share your content with others. Even if you share your content with a very limited number of people, nothing prohibits your contacts from sharing the information you post.
- 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. Your social networking site is an extension of your personality and professional reputation. All photographs should be posted with the assumption that they might be shared publicly.
- 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 Peach County Schools.

- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration you apply offline.
- 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 Peach County Schools, except with prior consent from the appropriate supervisor. In instances where there could be confusion, you must add a disclaimer stating that views and content are exclusively your own and not representative of Peach County Schools.
- Employees should not make any derogatory statements about colleagues or students or other comments that would reflect poorly on your professional reputation or the reputation of Peach County Schools. You are ultimately responsible for your comments and Peach County Schools recommends that you thoughtfully consider your rights and responsibilities prior to posting.
- Do not post photos or videos that contain identifying information concerning any students on personal sites. Do not post identifying information of co-workers without their permission. For district-sanctioned sites, such as school Facebook pages, do not post items of students who have opted out, as per district media policy, but you may post items of public events of students and staff who have not opted out, as long as it's not derogatory in nature.
- 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.
- Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others.
- 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 Peach County Schools without express prior consent from the superintendent or designee.
- Any content posted by an employee will be subject to all District policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines. The District is free to view and monitor an employee's website or web log at any time without consent or previous approval. Where applicable, employees may be asked to disclose to the District the existence of and to provide the District with access to an employee's website, web log or other personal social media network as part of an employment selection, review, promotion, or disciplinary process.

Drug-Free Workplace

The Board of Education declares that the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of

controlled substances, marijuana and other dangerous drugs in an unlawful manner or being at work under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, marijuana or other dangerous drugs is a serious threat to the public health, safety and welfare. With this in mind, the Board declares that its work force must be absolutely free of any person who would knowingly manufacture, distribute, sell or possess a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug in an unlawful manner. This prohibition specifically includes, but is not limited to, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol in the employee's workplace. This prohibition also includes, but is not limited to, an employee being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on duty.

Any employee who is convicted for the first time, under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be subject to disciplinary action. At a minimum, such an employee shall be suspended for a period of not less than two months and shall be required to complete, at his or her own expense, a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the board. At a maximum, such an employee may be terminated from his employment with the school system. Any employee who is convicted for a second or subsequent time under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be terminated from his or her employment and shall be ineligible for employment for a period of five years from the most recent date of conviction.

If, prior to an arrest for an offense involving a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug, an employee notifies the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee that the employee illegally uses a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug and is receiving or agrees to receive treatment under a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the Board, the employee shall be entitled to maintain his or her employment for up to one year as long as the employee follows the treatment plan. During this period, the employee shall not be separated from employment solely on the basis of the employee's drug dependence, but the employee's work activities may be restructured if practicable to protect persons or property. No statement made by an employee to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee in order to comply with this code section shall be admissible in any civil, administrative or criminal proceeding as evidence against the public employee. The rights granted by this policy shall be available to an employee only once during a five year period and are intended to be and shall be interpreted as being the same as those minimum rights granted pursuant to the Georgia Drug-Free Work Force Act and any subsequent amendments thereof.

As a condition of employment, each employee must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the Board within five days after any arrest on any drug-related criminal charge and further notify the board within five days of any conviction of a drug-related offense. A copy of this policy shall be disseminated to all employees either directly or through employee handbooks. The Board of Education shall not consider for employment any applicant who has been convicted for the first time of any drug offense as described above for a three month period from the date of conviction nor shall the Board of Education consider any applicant for employment who has been convicted for the second time of any drug offense as described above for a five year period from the most recent date of conviction.

For purposes of this policy, "conviction" refers to any final conviction in a court of competent

jurisdiction, specifically including acceptance of a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or any plea entered under the First Offenders Act of Georgia or any comparable state or federal legislation. No certified employee or employee with a contract for a definite term shall be subject to suspension or termination pursuant to this policy except in compliance with the provisions of the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia, Official Code of Georgia Annotated §§ 20-2-940 through 947. This policy is not intended and shall not be interpreted as prohibiting the school system from taking appropriate disciplinary action against any employee where there exists evidence that an employee uses, distributes or sells illegal drugs even though the employee has not been convicted of any criminal offense or where there exists evidence that an employee is under the influence of alcohol while on duty, except that the school system may not use the statement of any employee to the superintendent requesting treatment as described in this policy. The School District shall provide such staff development as required by state or federal law to inform employees of the dangers of drug abuse, the availability of employee assistance and drug counseling and treatment and the terms of this policy.

Board Policy GAMA

Employee Tobacco Use

In accordance with the "Georgia Smoke Free Air Act of 2005", smoking shall be prohibited at any time in any school building or property owned or leased by the school district, or at any time in any school-owned vehicle, including any school buses. In addition, this prohibition includes the use of other tobacco products by employees at all times, including when such employees are directly instructing or supervising students. Direct supervision includes coaching, band directing, acting as a sponsor or advisor of a club or similar school organization and other instructional roles. Employees shall not store or possess tobacco or tobacco-related products on their person or in their belongings in such a manner that such products are visible to students.

School district employees who violate this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension with or without pay or termination

Board Policy GAN

Harassment

It is the policy of this school district to prohibit any act of harassment of students or employees by other students or employees based upon race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age or disability at all times and during all occasions while at school, in the workplace or at any school event or activity. Any such act by a student or employee shall result in prompt and appropriate discipline, including the possible termination of employment or suspension or expulsion of the student.

Sexual harassment may include conduct or speech which entails unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, taunts, threats, comments of a vulgar or demeaning nature, demands or physical contact which creates a hostile environment for a student or employee. There may be other speech or conduct which employees or students experience as inappropriate or illegal harassment which should also be reported; harassment can take many forms and it is not possible to itemize every aspect of the harassment forbidden by this policy.

Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent or other individual who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the school district as prohibited by this policy should promptly report the same to the principal of their school or to the appropriate coordinator designated in policy GAAA/JAA, who will

implement the board's discriminatory complaints procedures as specified in that policy. Students may also report harassment or discrimination to their school counselor or any administrator. Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. If at any point in the investigation of reported sexual harassment of a student, the coordinator or designee determines that the reported harassment should more properly be termed abuse, the reported incident or situation shall be referred pursuant to the established protocol for child abuse investigation.

It is the duty of all employees to promptly report harassment forbidden by this policy. All supervisors will instruct their subordinates as to the content of this policy and, through appropriate staff development, enlighten employees as to the varied forms or expression of prohibited harassment. The principals of all schools shall ensure that students and parents are informed through student handbooks and verbally that such harassment is strictly forbidden, how it is to be reported and the consequences for violating this policy.

Board Policy GAEB

**Professional Standards Commission:
Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct**

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

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

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

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Listed below are definitions for "sexual abuse" and "sexual misconduct:"

"Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5.

"Sexual misconduct" includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Educator sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

1. Made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
2. Showed or displayed sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.
3. Wrote sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
4. Spread sexual rumors (i.e. said a student was gay or a lesbian).
5. Spied on students as they dressed, showered or used the restroom at school.
6. Flashed or "mooned" students.
7. Touched, excessively hugged, or grabbed students in a sexual way.
8. Forced a student to kiss him/her or do something else of a sexual nature.
9. Talked or asked about a student's developing body, sexuality, dating habits, *etc.*
10. Talked repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
11. Made fun of your body parts.
12. Called students sexual names.

CONTRACTS AND EMPLOYMENT

Contracts and Employment (Certificated Personnel)

Certificated personnel shall be re-employed for the next school year prior to May 15th. Administrative personnel shall be recommended by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall recommend certificated personnel for employment by the Board of Education. Upon approval of the Board certificated personnel shall receive a contract of employment.

Certificated personnel shall have 10 days to notify district of acceptance or rejection of contract. Failure to notify the district within 10 days shall be considered a rejection of the offer. The School District reserves the right at all times to effect a transfer of an employee to any other school and/or to any other position. The Superintendent, in his/her sole discretion, is authorized to make such transfer of employment.

Contracts and Employment (New Certificated Personnel)

Certificated personnel assigned to a school shall be selected by the principal. Recommendation of new certificated personnel to the Board for employment shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall provide written notification of the offer of employment following action by the Board. Person(s) offered employment by the Board shall provide written notification of acceptance or rejection of the offer of employment within 10 days. Failure to notify district within 10 days shall be considered a rejection of the offer of employment.

Non-Renewal of Contract

If the intention is to not renew the contract of a teacher or other certificated professional employee, the Superintendent shall notify the employee in writing of such intention and all such non-renewals shall be conducted in accordance with the State of Georgia law.

Professional Staff Assignments and Transfer

The basic consideration in the assignment of professional personnel is the well-being of the instructional program. The appropriateness of the assignment will have a significant impact on the morale of the professional staff and the effectiveness of the total educational program.

Assignments to the school will be made by the Superintendent and assignments within the schools will be made by the principal.

Professional Personnel Resignation

Employment contracts issued pursuant O.C.G.A. § 20-2-0211 between the Board of Education ("Board") and certain certificated employees are for a specific term. An employee who accepts a contract and/or has accepted a contract of employment for a specific term may not resign from the contract without breaching his/her contract unless there is a mutual agreement between the employee and the Board for the acceptance of the employee's resignation. The State Board of Education may revoke the employee's certification for breach of contract if the employee resigns without receiving consent from the Board.

Employees should tender their resignations at the earliest possible date to promote continuity of instruction.

Employees seeking to resign from their employment while under contract must submit written notification to the Superintendent of Schools ("Superintendent"). Such resignation must be in writing, signed and dated. The resignation should also include the following:

1. Employee name and identification number;
2. Current contact information, including but not limited to, address, telephone number and e-mail address;
3. School or department assigned;
4. Position held;
5. Reason for resignation; and
6. Forwarding contact information, if different from above.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to accept or reject, on behalf of the Board, a resignation from employment by an employee. An employee cannot rescind an offer of resignation after filing the resignation with the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall notify the employee whether the resignation is accepted or rejected. The Superintendent shall notify the Board of the action whether the resignation was accepted or rejected at the Board's next regular meeting.

Board Policy GBO

Professional Personnel Lay-Off

An important function of the School District is to employ personnel and manage resources within the limitations defined by the funding sources available to the school system.

The Peach County Board of Education ("Board"), recognizes the critical importance of having adequate numbers of personnel to accomplish the missions of the school system. Concurrent with the Board's responsibility is the right of the Board to institute a reduction in certificated staff positions under certain circumstances. A central goal of any reduction in force plan will be to retain the most qualified personnel in each position category affected. The Superintendent and Board reserve the right take into consideration the individual qualifications of the employees and the instructional requirements of the students.

The Superintendent of the Peach County School District ("Superintendent") is the Executive Officer of the Board. The Superintendent has the authority and right to transfer or re-assign any

school administrator, teacher or other certificated personnel of any Peach County School to any other office or position within the Peach County School System, as well as the power to demote any Peach County school administrator, teacher or other certificated personnel except to the extent specifically forbidden by law.

In accordance with the foregoing powers, the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to abolish or consolidate job positions, to reduce the length of the work-year and/or salary of certificated personnel (to “downgrade”), or to reduce the number of employees when seeking to cope effectively with program changes or financial exigency.

Board Policy GBKA, Section I

The entire Professional Personnel Lay-Off Policy GBKA may be accessed in full through the Electronic School Board Policy Manual on the school district web site at www.peachschools.org.

VOLUNTEERS IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

All volunteers in the Peach County School System who are participating in overnight field trips shall submit to a records check for the purpose of determining whether such person has ever been convicted of a crime or has a criminal record (Code GAK). The Superintendent shall require all such volunteers to execute the appropriate forms required by law and to submit to a fingerprint identification check in order to obtain the necessary criminal record information from the Georgia Crime Information Center. Teachers and other personnel who have volunteers participating in overnight field trips must inform the volunteers of the policy requiring records check. The volunteers should contact the Human Resources department at Central Office to schedule the fingerprinting and to complete record check forms. Record checks must be cleared prior to the overnight field trip.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES, CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES

Section 1. Purpose: Informal Resolution Preferred.

It is the purpose of this policy to implement the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of 1992, O.C.G.A. 20-2—989.5 et seq.

In accordance with the foregoing, it is the policy of the Peach County Board of Education that certified personnel shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible.

The Peach County Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible.

This policy and procedure is available where efforts of (c) above do not succeed or, where for any other reason, the certificated employee desires to pursue this procedure.

Section 2. Definitions.

“Level One Administrator” means the principal of a school with respect to teachers and other certificated personnel assigned to that school. With respect to the certified Administrators supervised by the Superintendent, the “Level One Administrator” shall be the Superintendent. In any case not covered by this paragraph, the “Level One Administrator” shall be the supervisory certificated person designated by the Board or in the absence thereof, by the Superintendent.

“Central Office Administrator” means the local school system Superintendent.

“Complaint” means any claim or grievance by a certificated employee of this school district which is filed pursuant to this policy and which comes within the scope of the policy.

“Notification” means delivery in person to the party entitled to notification, or deposit in the United States Mail, certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the party notified.

Section 3. Scope of Complaint: Exclusions.

Scope. Unless excluded by paragraph (b) hereof, this complaint and grievance procedure is applicable to any claim by any professional employee certificated by the Professional Standards Commission who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of the Peach County School District or with which the District is required to comply.

Exclusions. This procedure shall not apply to:

Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluation and professional development plans pursuant to Code Section 20-2-210;

Job performance;

Termination, nonrenewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee, as set forth in Code Section 20—2—940;

The revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee, as set forth in Code Section 20-2-984.5;

A certified employee who chooses to appeal under Code Section 20-2-1160, shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

Section 4. Hearing Rights; Evidence: Representation: Decisions:Records.

Hearing: Evidence. The Complainant shall be entitled to an opportunity to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses at each level, but the Complainant may not present additional evidence at the Second or Third Hearing Levels unless notice of the Complainant’s intention and the evidence to be presented are submitted in writing five (5) days prior to the hearing to the Administrator who will preside at such level, and in the case of the Peach County Board of Education, to the Superintendent. When hearing an appeal from a prior level, the Peach County Board of Education shall hear and decide all appeals de novo.

Representation. The Complainant and the Administrator against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is appealed shall be entitled to the presence of an individual, including an attorney, to assist in the presentation of the complaint and the response thereto, at the Central Office Administrator and at the Peach County Board of Education level. The presence of any individual other than the Complainant and the Administrator at Level One is prohibited, except witnesses who present testimony or documents.

Hearing Officer. The Peach County Board of Education may appoint a member of the State Bar to serve as law officer who shall rule on all issues of law and other objections, hut such attorney shall not assist in the presentation of the case for either party.

Overall Hearing Time Schedules. The overall time frame from the initiation of the complaint until rendition of the decision by the Peach County Board of Education and notification thereof to the Complainant shall not exceed sixty (60) days.

Automatic Referral to Next Level. Any complaint not processed by the Administrator or the local unit of administration within the time frame required by this policy shall be forwarded to the next level for determination.

Records. Accurate records of the proceedings at each level shall be kept; the proceedings shall be recorded by mechanical means; all evidence shall be preserved and made available to the parties at all times; and all costs and fees shall be borne by the party incurring them unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties; except that the cost of preparing and preserving the record of the proceedings shall be borne by the Peach County Board of Education; provided however, the cost of transcribing the transcript of evidence and proceedings before the Peach County Board of Education shall be borne by the party requesting same, and all costs of the record on appeal to the superior courts and appellate courts shall be paid by the party required to do so by the laws relating thereto.

Decisions. Each decision shall be made in writing and dated, and shall contain findings of fact and reasons for the particular decision reached.

Notice. The decision at each level shall be delivered to the Complainant by a person designated by the Superintendent, either by (1) being hand delivered or (2) being deposited in the U.S. Mail (certified mail, return receipt requested, or statutory overnight delivery). Notice to the Complainant shall be deemed to have been made on the date of the hand delivery or on the date of deposit in the U.S. Mail by certified mail, return receipt requested or statutory overnight delivery to the address stated in the complaint or, if not contained in the complaint, to the last known address of the Complainant on file with the Peach County Board of Education.

Section 5. First Level: Presentation: Time: Contents.

The Complaint shall be presented in writing to the Level One Administrator within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complain is based. The complaint shall include the following:

The mailing address of the Complainant to which all notices and other documents may be mailed;
The intent of the Complainant to utilize this complaint procedure, clearly stated;

A reference or description of the statute, policy, rule, contract provisions or regulation that is alleged to have been violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied; A brief statement of the facts reasonably calculated to show how such statute, policy, rule or regulation was violated or misapplied, and how it substantially affects the employment relationship of the Complainant; and
A statement of the relief desired.

The Superintendent shall prepare forms for use in accordance with the foregoing requirements.

Section 6. First Level Hearing and Decision.

The Level One Administrator shall record the date of filing on the complaint, and shall give notice to the Complainant of the time and place of the hearing, either by mail or hand delivery. When notice is given by mail, it shall be sent by first class mail to the address set forth in the complaint. If no address was included in the complaint, then the notice shall be sent to the last known address of the Complainant on file with the Peach County Board of Education. The Level One Administrator shall conduct a hearing on the complaint and render a decision thereon within ten (10) days of the filing of the complaint. The decision shall be dated and a copy shall be sent to the complainant as provided in section 4 above.

Section 7. Second Level: Appeal From First Level to Central Office Administrator.

A Complainant dissatisfied with the decisions of the first level shall be entitled to appeal to the Central Office Administrator by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the Complainant is notified of the Level One decision. The Central Office Administrator shall record the date of the filing on the appeal and shall notify the Complainant in writing of the time and place of the hearing by mail or hand delivery. The Level Two Administrator shall obtain copies of all minutes, transcripts, documents and other records relating to the complaint and shall conduct a hearing and render a decision within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the filing of the appeal, or the hearing may be conducted by any designated representative of the Level Two Administrator who shall promptly submit his or her recommendations and findings to the Level Two Administrator for final decision. The decision shall be rendered and served on the Complainant and his or her attorney in accordance with Section 4 (h).

Section 8. Third Level: Appeal to the Board of Education.

A Complainant or Level One Administrator dissatisfied with the decision of the Central Office Administrator may appeal to the Peach County Board of Education by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the decision as provided in Section 4. The Superintendent shall record the date of filing on the appeal, and shall promptly give notice to the Complainant in writing of the time and place of the hearing by mail or by hand delivery. The Complainant and the Administrators against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is being appealed shall, be entitled to appear before the Peach County Board of Education and be heard. The Peach County Board of Education may direct that a pre—hearing conference be held prior to the hearing to identify issues and facilitate presentation. The Peach County Board of Education shall conduct a hearing and render its decision in writing within twenty (20) calendar days after the hearing, and perfect service thereof on the Complainant and his/her attorney all in accordance with section 4(h).

Section 9. Appeals to the State Board. Appeals from the decision of the Peach County Board of Education to the State Board of Education shall be governed by the State Board Rule (BCAEA) governing appeals and O.C.G.A. 20-2-1160.

Section 10. Reprisals Prohibited. No certificated personnel shall be subjected to reprisals as a result of filing any complaint under this policy. Any reprisals may be referred to the Professional Standards Commission.

Section 11. Collective Bargaining Disclaimer. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to permit or foster collective bargaining.

Section 12. Repeals. All policies and parts of policies in conflict with this policy are herewith repealed.

PEACH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
2019-2020

HANDBOOK
FOR
CERTIFIED PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATORS

RECEIPT

THIS HANDBOOK CONTAINS A PORTION OF THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WHICH APPLY TO MY EMPLOYMENT WITH THE PEACH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT. I AGREE TO READ THE HANDBOOK AND FOLLOW IT DURING MY EMPLOYMENT. I FURTHER UNDERSTAND THAT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS MAY CHANGE AND THAT MY SUPERVISOR WILL COMMUNICATE THESE CHANGES TO ME ON THEIR EFFECTIVE DATE.

I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THE PEACH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HANDBOOK FOR CERTIFIED PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATORS

Employee Signature

Date

Printed Employee Name

Employee's School