



Employee Handbook



**Cartersville City Schools
Cartersville, Georgia**

**Version 7.4
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FORWARD

The Cartersville City Schools Board of Education values the contribution of its employees toward the purpose of accomplishing the mission and goals of the school system. The Board acknowledges that education is a people business and, as such, much of what the school system accomplishes is based on the quality of the personnel employed by the system. Each position provided for by the Board is considered valuable to the success of the school system and exists to benefit the children and community we serve.

This handbook is designed as a guide to you, an employee of the Cartersville City Schools. The handbook serves to communicate for understanding our school system policies, procedures and protocols as much as possible to employees and other interested parties. As with any organization, we have rules and regulations which employees are expected to observe in order to maintain a safe, efficient, pleasant and productive environment for all. These are simple, “common sense” rules which are designed to preserve honesty, safety and good relations between employees and our customers.

The information contained in this handbook is not all-inclusive, and an employee may be subject to discipline for any other circumstance which is not listed. Further, rules may be changed or added to from time to time.

The school system, in its discretion and subject to Georgia law, may terminate an employee upon the first infraction and without prior notice of any rule or other improper conduct, or may choose to place the employee on probation or issue other discipline as the circumstances may dictate. The complete Board policies and Operating Procedures are available at the Central Office and online at the system’s website, www.cartersvilleschools.org. Questions about policy and procedures should be addressed to your immediate supervisor, the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations, or the Superintendent.

It is intended that the basic information in this handbook apply to all employees within the organization. However, it must be recognized that certain policies and procedures, because of either legal or practical considerations, would not be appropriate for application to some personnel. Furthermore, due to the nature and job expectations of certain positions, practices must be appropriately applied to the various jobs within the school system.

Employees are NOT independent contractors. Each serves to carry out the intent, purposes, policies and procedures of the School Board under the direction of the superintendent and his/her administrative staff. The School Board in turn is responsible and accountable to the Cartersville community, parents, and students. Any subversion, sabotage, or undermining of the School Board or superintendent may be considered insubordination and result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Staff members represent the school system, its schools, and its purposes.

Nothing in this handbook should be taken as an implied or explicit contract of employment. Furthermore, no language in this handbook should be construed as creating a term of employment for any specific length of time.

It is the responsibility of the employee to keep up with the latest and revised versions of the handbook which will be posted on the school system website. Announcements, via the system’s email, will be made when newer versions of the handbook are available.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1	Professional Conduct <i>p. 4 – 16</i>
Section 2	Employment <i>p. 17 – 24</i>
Section 3	Salary and Benefits <i>p. 25-27</i>
Section 4	Absences & Leave <i>p. 28-36</i>
Section 5	Use of Technology <i>p. 37-41</i>
Section 6	Public Relations & Communications <i>p. 42-43</i>
Section 7	Certification <i>p. 44-45</i>
Section 8	Curriculum & Instruction <i>p. 46-51</i>
Section 9	Professional Growth <i>p. 52</i>
Section 10	Students <i>p. 53-55</i>
Section 11	Complaints & Grievances <i>p. 56-57</i>
Section 12	References <i>p. 58</i>
Central Office Directory	<i>p.59</i>

Section 1 – Professional Conduct

CODE OF ETHICS

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) governs the conduct of all professionals employed or utilized by the school system. The Code of Ethics defines the professional behavior of all educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The PSC has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. This is what makes us “professional.” The code protects the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, ensures the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the educational profession, and defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction.

The Code of Ethics is specifically applicable to all certified employees including teachers, service personnel, paraprofessionals, and administrators but also has implications of expectation for non-certified employees as well.

Definitions

Certificate refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the PSC.

Educator is a teacher, school or system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate, license or permit issued by the PSC and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. “Educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

Student is any individual enrolled in the state’s public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual between under the age of 18. The enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.

Complaint is any written and signed statement from the Board, state board, or one or more individual residents filed with the PSC alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A “complaint” is deemed a request to investigate. The PSC does not investigate anonymous complaints.

Breach of Contract occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the GaPSC.

Standards

Standard 1: Legal Compliance - An educator should 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 including the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided by law; or any other sexual offense; 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.

Standard 2: Conduct with Students - An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students both in and out of 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 or soliciting any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. engaging or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student;
5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic or physical relationship with a student; and;
6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student under the educator’s supervision or control (including but not limited to the educator’s residence) to consume alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs.

Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs - An educator should 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 premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
2. being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages. 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.); and
3. failing to monitor and/or prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students are under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or other private setting).

Standard 4: Honesty - An educator should 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.

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 requests for compensation based on fraudulent, purchased or plagiarized degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts;
5. using school property without the approval of the board of education or authorized designee; and
6. using school system property for personal gain.

Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct - An educator should 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 to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the 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 Board or Superintendent; 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 Board or Superintendent. These types of activities must also be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association (GHSA).

Standard 7: Confidential Information - An educator should comply with state and federal laws and state and local Board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
2. sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
3. violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating 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.

Standard 8: Required Reports - An educator should 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 when applying for or renewing any certificate with the PSC;
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 as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

Standard 9: Professional Conduct - An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the teaching 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/her employment position; or a behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

Standard 10: Testing - An educator shall administer state and locally 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.

Reporting

Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards of the Code of Ethics as soon as possible but no later than 90 days from the date the educator became aware of the alleged breach unless the law requires reporting sooner. Complaints to the PSC must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant.

PROFESSIONALISM

Duties and Responsibilities

All personnel assigned to a school are responsible for the following as directed by the principal/supervisor:

- a. Performing all school duties and assignments faithfully and to the best of their ability;
- b. Fulfilling designated individual responsibilities;
- c. Working cooperatively with all school and system personnel;
- d. Working at designated tasks at an assigned place during the school day;
- e. Working with extra school activities as assigned by the principal/supervisor or their designee.

Staff-Student Relationships [see Policy JP – Staff-Student Relations]

It is mandatory that each member of the staff accept in good faith and with the highest professional resolve, each student assigned to his/her classroom or subject. Furthermore, it shall be obligatory that the teacher accept each child at whatever level of progress or achievement he/she has attained, and that the teacher make every dedicated effort to enhance the educational progress and well-being of the child.

Specific student assignments to classrooms are an administrative function and shall be done in the best

educational interest of the child. All personnel are to maintain a professional, ethical relationship with students and refrain from improper fraternization or undue familiarity with students. Dating or any improper relationship between school system personnel and students is strictly prohibited.

Staff members should avoid “texting” students directly except either in group texts or when another employee is included or copied on the text.

Dress and Appearance

Employees of the Cartersville Board of Education are expected to maintain a high standard of professional conduct. Teacher dress and personal appearance while attending the Cartersville City Schools, and while representing the schools or system in connected activities, should be such as to reflect dignity and pride in the schools. Employees are expected to dress in an appropriate and professional manner as dictated by job duties and responsibilities. Discretion in choice of wearing apparel and proper grooming helps to promote an instructional atmosphere conducive to the educational environment.

For safety reasons, employees are not to wear non-slip footwear that is not secure about the heel of the foot while in or on school or system premises including but not limited to flip flops, shower shoes, unsecure sandals.

Principals/supervisors or their designee shall have the authority to make a professional judgment as to the appropriateness of dress of an employee while caring out their responsibilities. Principals/supervisors may periodically designate spirit, casual or similar days on which the dress code may be modified. Employees may be required to wear uniforms, protective clothing, or any type of protective device.

Conflicts of Interest

Staff members may not use their positions to influence students or patrons of the Cartersville City Schools for personal gain. Selling items or providing services to students, parents or community members as a result of the influence one has in the role of educator is prohibited.

A staff member shall not hold direct supervisory responsibility over a relative. Relatives are defined in this policy as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, or grandchild of the employee or the employee’s spouse, and the spouse, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, brother or sister of the employee, or any relative living in the immediate household of the employee.

H A R A S S M E N T

[see Policy GAEB—Harassment]

It is the policy of the Cartersville School Board that its employees shall be able to work in an environment free from harassment, including sexual harassment, and all forms of discrimination.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- 1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of an individual’s employment;
- 2) submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- 3) such conduct has the purpose or deliberate effect of substantially interfering with an employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Direct or implied requests by a supervisor for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment are sexual

harassment. In addition to these examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work place environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers may also be sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all circumstances that may be sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which, if unwelcome, may be considered sexual harassment under this policy.

- Unwelcome sexual advances – whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body; comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Continuing to ask an employee to socialize on or off-duty when that person has indicated that he/she is not interested;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive comments;
- Continuing to communicate sexually suggestive notes or letters if it is known or should be known that the person does not welcome such behavior;
- Retaliation of any kind for having filed, supported, or cooperated in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment;
- Off-duty conduct which falls within the above definition and affects the work environment;
- Derogatory or provoking remarks about or related to an employee's sex or sexual orientation.

Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions. Any employee who feels that he/she has been subjected to any form of sexual harassment may have his/her concerns addressed through the Employee Complaint Procedure [see Policy GAE—Complaints and Grievances].

Claims of intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment or similar accusations must meet the legal threshold for a finding in support of the claim. These types of claims must show an alteration of the terms, conditions, or reasonable expectations of a positive working environment. Furthermore, there must be a behavior, action or communication that is found to be discriminatory in nature as required under provision of law.

MONIES AND EQUIPMENT

Handling Funds [see Policies DIA – Accounting & Reporting System; DJE – Purchasing; DJED (OP) – Bids, Proposals & Quotations; DO – School Properties Disposal; DK – Student Activity Funds; DJED-R (OP) – Bids, Proposals & Quotations Procedures]

From time to time, an employee may have in his/her possession funds belonging to students, the school, or support organization. Employees shall not leave funds or valuables unsecured such as in a desk drawer or in any place where theft or loss may occur. The security of funds is the employee's responsibility. It is important that receipts be given for money collected for the employee's protection as well as for good business practice.

1. Funds collected from students and from other sources for student activities shall be expended for the intended purpose(s), including school-related incidental expenses incurred by school personnel.
2. School personnel shall have itemized receipts for any purchases to support purchase orders, requisitions, or contracts. School and system funds are paid only on invoiced amounts.
3. School personnel shall not require the collection of funds from students for expenditures that are included in the school system's budget.
4. School personnel shall maintain a clear audit trail from receipt of the funds to the disbursement of the funds.
5. Receipts are required for any cash amount collected of \$5.00 or more. If a numbered ticket is given, a receipt is not necessary. The numerical sequence (beginning and ending number) of tickets should reconcile back to the cash received.

6. Receipt forms are not necessary for checks. The cancelled check becomes the receipt. If a student or parent wants a receipt, the school may issue one, however.
7. School employees should use pre-numbered school forms or receipt books issued by the school.
8. Approved volunteers, such as PTC Officers and other designated individuals may receive collections and issue receipts under the supervision of a school employee at the direction of the principal. However, volunteers are not bonded and the school is subject to any financial loss caused by the mishandling of funds handled by volunteers.
9. The employee receiving monies should complete the form or receipt book to accurately record the cash received, and to substantiate all bank deposits.
10. Cash Receipt Forms should be completed in pen.
11. Under no circumstances should the receipt amount or signature be altered on the Cash Receipt Form. If either of these occurs in the preparation of the form, mark the form as “VOID” and complete a new form. All voided forms should be retained for audit purposes.
12. At the end of each day all cash and checks shall be turned into the bookkeeper. If the bookkeeper is unavailable, monies should be given to the school administrator in charge. Under no circumstances should monies be kept by the individual employee.
13. Money collected for different purposes must be kept separate and identified separately to the bookkeeper. The bookkeeper should count the money in front of the person turning it in and issue a receipt for the cash amount.
14. If the cash amount collected is less than \$5.00 per individual, a type of locked box system with a slot (or something similar) should be utilized. This is best accounting practice and employees should not handle cash without receipting. Students should be encouraged to have exact change and they will actually place the money in the box. The box is then to be opened by the bookkeeper. The person turning in the funds will count the money and the bookkeeper will issue a receipt.
15. Cash collected less than \$5.00 can be noted using a roster as a receipting document when needed. The roster should be marked as to the person that has paid and a copy then given to the bookkeeper with the cash. The amount of money received should reconcile with the number paid.
16. All payment of bills will be made through the school or system office.
17. All equipment and supplies determined no longer usable by the school must be officially surplus by the Board of Education and designated for surplus sale or disposal.
18. All receipts, invoices and packing slips must be turned in to the bookkeeper or finance department immediately. Packing slips and invoices must be reconciled with purchase orders. In the case where no packing slip is available or can be located, a person other than the one who placed the order should check and sign for receipt of the items.
19. Employees or representatives of the school system cannot accept gifts or donations on behalf of a school or program without approval of the Board.
20. All school and organization accounts/purchases are subject to audit.

Purchase Orders Required [see Policy DJE - Purchasing]

Purchase orders must be secured by an employee before ordering, securing or encumbering school or system funds. Any orders or encumbrances obtained without a purchase order are the sole responsibility of the person placing the order or having the authority to instruct others to do so. Postage and/or shipping costs should be included on the purchase order requisition. Purchase orders go out within 48 hours after final approval.

Bids and Quotes [see Policy and Operating Procedure DJE – Bids, Proposals & Quotations]

Written, sealed bids are required for all purchases of goods and services made for any purpose providing such purchase is equal to or in excess of \$25,000.00. All purchases greater than or equal \$15,000.00 and less than \$24,999.00 shall be made only after 3 written quotes for the item(s) are obtained by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Quotes must be submitted to the school administrator for school level purchases, and to the Director of Finance for system level purchases. If, after exhausting all available avenues 3 bids/quotes are not available, the Superintendent may recommend the purchase based upon available vendors who meet the

specifications/requirements for the item(s). There shall be a clear audit trail at all points of any financial transaction involving funds from a student or the school to the vendor.

Purchases may not be divided into smaller units in an effort to circumvent any provision of purchasing policy, procedures or requirements

Items or services listed on state contracts or bids from another local, state, or federal agency may be utilized without being subject to the provisions of Board policy and procedures related to purchasing where it is deemed by the Superintendent to be in the spirit of policy and the most effective and/or efficient use of funds.

Purchasing from local vendors (within Bartow County) shall be favored whenever the following factors are equal between local and non-local vendors: a) quality & suitability of product, b) pricing, c) conformance to specifications, d) convenience & timing of delivery, e) reputation & past service to the school system. To exclude any vendor from award of a bid based upon reputation or past service, the school/department must have written documentation submitted in a timely manner and relevant in terms of recency and the type of item(s) being considered.

All athletic and band uniforms, including practice and/or warm-up clothing shall be bid when new uniform sets are needed. When replacement uniforms or portions of uniforms are needed on a limited basis to fill in missing or damaged items, and the intent is to match existing uniforms, staff may utilize previous awarded vendors without going through a bid process. Typical and necessary athletic equipment and supplies shall be bid out using specifications developed by staff and the athletic director. Such equipment shall include, but not be limited to, headgear, shoulder pads, bats, protective gear and equipment, balls, bags, mats, etc. Athletic shoes/cleats are exempt from bidding because of sizing issues, style changes, and individual needs. However, purchases of these shoes shall require three written quotes with at least one solicited local vendor when available. Emergency purchases for replacing broken, damaged, or missing items can be made with approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee upon the recommendation of the principal or athletic director.

Solicitations

The soliciting of contributions and or sales, the advertisement of products, or the endorsement of one product over another by school personnel in their relations with students is prohibited by the Board unless annual prior approval is obtained from the Board.

Fund Raising [see Policy DK – Student Activity Funds]

All fund-raising activities on behalf of the Cartersville City Schools, its schools, or its support organizations, must be approved prior to the activity and before any items are purchased. Teachers, coaches and sponsors of clubs and organizations must submit a fund-raising request on the approved system form and have prior approval of the principal. In all cases, the use of students in door-to-door fund raising activities is prohibited.

Use of System Purchasing Card

When issued or using a system purchasing (credit) card, the employee agrees to the following:

1. To review all receipts before leaving the place of transaction to ensure no sales tax is included. If sales tax is charged the employee will be financially responsible.
2. To turn in proper documentation (receipts, requisition, travel voucher, etc.) ASAP, no later than five (5) business days from the transaction date.
3. To report a lost or stolen card to the Finance Department and VISA immediately.
4. To be responsible for any and all charges made on the account under the employee's name.
5. Not to allow anyone else to use the card without express authority of the Superintendent or his/her designee.
6. Not to charge any food, drink, or any items of a personal nature.

7. Not to use the card for fuel purchase. Bus drivers may use the card for fuel purchases only if approved in advance.
8. When used for official travel, only charges for lodging expenses (room and parking) and a rental car (including gasoline) are approved. All other items (food, drinks, etc.) must be paid by the employee.
9. Understand that use of a system purchasing card is a privilege which can be denied immediately and misuse can result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

Relationships with Vendors

Personnel shall not extend favoritism to any particular vendor or sales representative. Each order placed shall be on the basis of quality, price, and delivery, with past service and vendor reputation being factors if all other considerations are equal. No employee shall endorse any product of any type or kind in such a manner as will identify him/her in any way as an employee of the school system.

The highest ethics should be followed by all personnel in regard to the giving and receiving of gifts and gratuities. No employee shall directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gifts, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, under circumstances and of such value that it could be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him or her in the performance of official duties. Gifts from suppliers to employees should not be accepted and should be returned unless they are mere tokens or advertising giveaways of little monetary value inscribed with the supplier's name.

No employee shall purchase or contract to purchase either verbally or in writing any goods or services in any form not prescribed in policy. Any employee who violates the provisions of policy or its procedures may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination or nonrenewal.

Reimbursements: Prior approval should be obtained before purchasing anything for the school for which you plan to be reimbursed. The school system does not reimburse for sales tax. An itemized receipt is required for reimbursement and the receipt should only contain those items for reimbursement. Employees should make a separate purchase for personal items. All requests for reimbursements shall be made no later than thirty (30) days after the expenditure but no later than June 30 for each fiscal year.

Travel Reimbursements: Prior approval for system/school travel is required. Reimbursement for eligible travel expenses shall be made on the approved form with all required supporting documentation. The school system does not pay for any travel upgrades; e.g., flying first or business class, etc. Requests for travel reimbursement must be made as soon as possible, but not later than 30 days from the travel dates. Reimbursement request must be on the approved form and received at the central office by the 5th to be paid on the 15th and by the 20th to be paid on the last day of the month. Reimbursement is by direct deposit.

Generally, hotel expenses are only reimbursable when staying more than fifty (50) miles from the employee's primary work place or residence, whichever is closer to the event or activity. Also, the system/school does not pay for or reimburse over the amount charged at the conference rate(s), when applicable.

Accounts Payable

System bills are paid on the 15th and the last day of the month. Employees should refrain from promising to vendors or individuals other payment arrangements.

Returned Checks

All checks returned to the school or school system for insufficient funds will be automatically turned over to an outside agency for collection of the obligated amount plus a collection fee (currently \$35.00).

Cafeteria Charging

Cartersville School Nutrition offers the option of charging meals to adults as a courtesy on a monthly basis. This is a privilege, not a requirement. Charges may run for a period of one calendar month. An employee must pay his/her balance in full by the second day of the calendar month after payday in order to continue to be able to charge meals. Employees may also pay for cafeteria meals in advance.

Gifts to the School/System

The Board reserves the right to reject any donation which the Board deems inappropriate, establishes an unfair inequity, obligates the Board to immediate or ongoing costs, or for any other good and sufficient cause. Employees or representatives of the school system cannot accept a donation or gifts on behalf of a school or program without approval of the Board.

Technology Purchases

All technology purchases, including but not limited to, printers, scanners, iPads, iPods, laptops, readers, readers, computers, whiteboards, etc., must have prior written (email or signature) of the technology department before the purchase and subsequent implementation. This procedure includes any device bought by a staff member who is seeking reimbursement.

Use of School Equipment

School and school district equipment is primarily for the education of students. However, with prior approval by proper authority, employees may obtain permission to use certain school and/or school district equipment for personal or non-school sponsored purposes under the following conditions.

1. The equipment is used during non-school hours.
2. The equipment is used by employees on their own time.
3. Equipment use shall in no way restrict the use of the equipment for the education of students.
4. The equipment is not used for illegal, immoral or commercial purposes.
5. Prior approval is obtained from proper authority.
6. If the equipment is to be removed from the facility, approval must be obtained from the Principal or Superintendent in writing with specific times establish for the equipment's removal and return.
7. Employees who use school or school district property for personal or non-school use shall hold the school and school system free and without harm from any loss or damage liability or expense that may arise as a result of the loan or use of the equipment.
8. In the event that equipment loss or damage is incurred by the school or school district, the Superintendent shall cause to be determined the extent of the loss or damage and bill the borrower for damages or loss. Such costs may be deducted from the employee's wages.
9. Consumable supplies must be provided by the employee at no cost to the school or school district.

Grants

Employees of the school system seeking to apply for grants and grant funding should seek approval from their immediate supervisor who in turn must seek approval from the Superintendent or his/her designee. Employees must not obligate the school or school system in matters related to grants without express permission.

Gifts and Classroom Adoptions

Any monies, equipment or supplies given through/to a particular staff member belong to the school/district. Equipment donated or bought with these types of funds must be inventoried like any other purchase. These items remain in that school, although the principal does have the option of moving the materials to other locations in the building. Any technology related devices purchased with personal or donated funds must be the type and configuration like those approved and in use within the

district before connecting and given access to the system network. These types of devices will not be supported by the district unless fully donated to the school/system permanently and added to the system inventory.

School System Vehicles

School system vehicles shall not be used for personal use. Individuals identified by the Superintendent may be authorized to drive a system vehicle to and from their home each day.

Reporting of Fraud

To ensure that the reporting of suspicion of fraudulent activity, the Cartersville School Board ensures employees, constituents and providers shall have confidential channels to report suspicious activity. Fraud is a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary funds.

1. Anyone suspecting fraud concerning federal, state or local programs should report their concerns to the Superintendent or his/her designee.
2. Any employee of the school system who receives a report of suspected fraudulent activity shall report this information within the next business day to the Superintendent or his/her designee. Employees have the responsibility to report suspected fraud immediately. All reports can be made in confidence.
3. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall conduct or investigate employees, providers, contractors, or vendors as necessary and appropriate.

Tutoring for Pay

Teachers employed by the Board have an obligation to help students achieve academically to the best of their ability. In order to avoid possible conflicts of interest, teachers shall not receive pay for privately tutoring students who are enrolled in their classes or activity. This restriction does not apply under the following circumstances:

1. Summer months when teachers are not under contract.
2. Programs approved by the Board which compensate teacher for after-hours instructional activity.
3. Out-of-school hours tutoring in areas of enrichment which cannot reasonably be provided during the regularly scheduled day.

Teachers tutoring for pay will be charged a fee for the use of school system facilities, if used. The fee that teachers will be charged for using school facilities for tutoring will be 5% of the gross income the teacher receives for tutoring. During the school year, teachers tutoring for pay must secure prior approval from their principal using the form provided by the district and make prior arrangements for payment of the facility use fee.

Athletic coaches must not accept any payment or other remuneration for tutoring or coaching individual students who are eligible to participate in their particular sport/activity at their level of participation (i.e., high school, middle school).

Accidents and Injuries

All accidents and injuries occurring on any school campus, system provided transportation, or at any school-sponsored activity must be reported immediately to the school nurse. If a school nurse is not readily available, the report should be made to the school or system administration. This procedure pertains to accidents/injuries of students, staff, or visitors.

DRUG – FREE WORKPLACE

[Policy GAMA-Drug-Free Workplace]

The Board is concerned with the well-being of all employees and recognizes that a drug-free workplace encourages employee productivity, promotes the accomplishment of the Board's mission and goals, and enhances a positive educational environment for students. In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Board declares that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale, possession or use of alcohol, marijuana, controlled substances, and other dangerous drugs (including but not limited to narcotic drugs, stimulants, depressants or hallucinogenic drugs) or being at work under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, marijuana or other dangerous drugs is a serious threat to public health, safety and welfare. With this in mind, the Board declares that its work force shall be free of any person who would knowingly manufacture, distribute, sell or possess a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug. This prohibition specifically includes the location of the employee's workplace. Furthermore, this prohibition also includes, but is not limited to, an employee being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on duty or carrying out the duties of employment in the workplace or at any school activity on or off school property.

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 in the state of Georgia and approved by the Board. At a maximum, such an employee may be terminated from his/her 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 the offenses included in this policy shall be terminated from his or her employment and shall be ineligible for employment with the school district for a period of five years from the most recent date of conviction.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply. A *controlled substance* is defined as those drugs or substances listed in Schedules I through V of the federal Controlled Substance Act, including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, heroin, opiates and amphetamines. Not included are substances used in accordance with a valid prescription. A *dangerous drug* is defined as any drug, other than a drug listed in any schedule of Article 2 of O.C.G.A. Title 16, Chapter 13, which may be dispensed only upon prescription. The *work place* is defined as a geographic location at which an employee performs work pursuant to his/her employment with the Cartersville School Board including travel when in travel status. A *conviction* refers to any 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. A criminal drug statute is defined as a federal or non-federal criminal statute involving the manufacture, distribution, sale, use or possession of any controlled substance.

If, prior to an arrest for an offense involving a controlled substance, marijuana or 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/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. 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.

This policy is not intended and shall not be interpreted as prohibiting the system from taking appropriate disciplinary action against an 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 statements of any employee to the Superintendent requesting treatment as described in this policy.

Any employee who tests positive on a drug test associated with an injury or accident on the job for any controlled substance, marijuana, or other dangerous drug as defined in this policy, is subject to the conditions and consequences of this policy and may be disciplined accordingly up to and including termination of employment.

Employees suspected of being under the influence of any drug, including alcohol, may not be allowed to remain in the workplace. Employees under the influence of valid prescription or over-the-counter medications may not be allowed to remain in the workplace if in the judgment of the immediate supervisor such permission is a concern of public health, safety or welfare to students, other staff members, or to the employee. If, in the judgment of the supervisor, allowing the employee to remain at the workplace jeopardizes the positive climate in the workplace, then the employee may be required to leave. If a supervisor has knowledge or suspects an employee of being under such influence, he/she may request the employee to leave the workplace, provide alternative transportation to remove the employee, and/or contact the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Superintendent or his/her designee may also contact appropriate authorities if there is a suspicion of a drug-related criminal offense.

As a condition of employment, compliance with the standards of conduct outlined in this policy is mandatory and employees shall notify the Superintendent or his/her designee within five (5) days of any arrest on any drug-related criminal charge and further notify the Superintendent or his/her designee within five (5) days of any conviction of a drug-related offense.

T O B A C C O U S E

[see Policy GAN—Tobacco Free Environment]

In accordance with the “Georgia Smoke Free Air Act,” the Board prohibits tobacco use of and/or display of tobacco products. This prohibition includes the use of tobacco products by employees at all times, including when such employees are directly instructing or supervising students, whether directly or indirectly. No student, staff member, school visitor, or volunteer is permitted to possess or use any tobacco product at any time, including non-school hours, 24 hours per day, and seven days a week:

- In any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by the Board or school;
- On any school grounds or property, including athletic fields and parking lots owned, leased, rented, utilized or chartered by the Board of school;
- At any school-sponsored or school-related event on campus or off campus.

The following regulations are in effect for the Cartersville City Schools:

A. Rules and Regulations--

1. The administration shall take into consideration a job applicant’s desire and capability of performing his/her duties without use of tobacco products while on duty.
2. Employees are prohibited from using or displaying tobacco products in front of or in the presence of students while the employee is on duty during the normal school day, while on duty at any school or system-sponsored function, or while on school grounds.
3. Tobacco product use is banned from all school system facilities, grounds and system vehicles.

B. Actions to be taken if violations occur--

1. If an employee initially violates this policy, the employee’s supervisor shall give the employee a warning and remind the employee of this policy. The supervisor shall record a written account of the incident and give a copy to the individual as well as place one in the individual’s file at the local level.

2. Upon a second violation of this policy, the supervisor shall provide the employee with a written reprimand stating the date, time and place of said violation and shall warn the employee that further violations shall constitute acts of insubordination.

Upon a third violation of this policy, the supervisor shall report the incident to the Superintendent who, in turn, shall issue a letter of reprimand in the employee's personnel file.

Upon a fourth violation of this policy, the employee will receive three days of suspension without pay plus proper documentation in the employee's personnel file.

Upon a fifth violation of this policy, the employee will be indefinitely suspended without pay and dismissal procedures will be initiated.

Visitor, Volunteers, and Contracted Services Personnel Rights and Responsibilities--

1. All use of tobacco products shall end prior to entering a school campus or school event.

2. If a violation occurs, a verbal reminder of the Board's policy shall be given. Volunteers or contracted service personnel guilty of a second violation shall be advised that their services will not be accepted as long as they are unwilling to adhere to the policy.

3. In dealing with visitors on school property, supervisors shall remind them of the Board's policy in a tactful and courteous manner and ask them to refrain from using tobacco and/or tobacco products during their visit.

Section 2 – Employment

Equal Opportunity [see Policy GAAA – *Equal Opportunity Employment*]

The Board is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in relation to race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, age, handicap, or sex. This policy will prevail in all matters concerning employees, (employment, retention and advancement), students, parents, the general citizenry, educational programs and services, and persons with whom the Board does business.

In keeping with the Board's commitment and the requirement of applicable State and federal law, the Board and staff will strive to remove any vestige of discrimination in employment, assignment and promotion of personnel; in educational services and opportunities offered students, in location and use of facilities; in educational materials; and in all business transactions conducted by the Board.

Title IX Compliance

It shall be the policy of the Board that no person (student or employee) shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity or in recruitment for employment, and related benefits. The Board designates the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations as responsible for coordination of efforts to assure compliance with Title IX mandates with regard of employed personnel. The Board further assigns the responsibility for coordination of efforts to comply with requirements of Title IX with regard to students to the Athletic Director.

Section 504 Compliance

The Board recognizes its responsibility, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, to provide a public education to those students enrolled in an education program in the school system or entitled to an education within the school system. The Board appoints the Director of Special Programs to serve as the coordinator for Section 504 to assure compliance to the law.

Employment Status

The following terms are used to describe the classification of employees and their employment status:

Exempt. Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable state law and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements. Examples: teachers and administrators, certain support staff.

Non-exempt. Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA and state exemption tests. Examples: paraprofessionals, clerks, most secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, custodians, maintenance personnel, etc.

Full-time. Employees scheduled to work 30 hours or more per week. Employees working 20 or more hours per week are eligible for benefits.

Part-time. Employees scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week. Those employees working fewer than 20 hours per week are ineligible for benefits.

Certified. Most employees who are required to have a certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission or other comparable licensing organization.

Classified. Employees who are not required to have a certificate or license to practice their trade in the state, except that paraprofessionals are considered classified employees. Classified employees are "at-will" employees and as such may be terminated from their position at any time by the school system.

Fingerprinting

It is the intent of the Cartersville City Board of Education to comply with all regulations as stipulated in Georgia legislation regarding Fingerprinting and Criminal Records Check for Educators. Expenses for such required fingerprinting are the responsibility of the employee. All new hires, certified and classified, will undergo fingerprinting and a criminal record check through NCIC and GCIC. All employees must have a background check every five years thereafter.

Contracts

Each certified employee who has been approved for employment in a teaching or leadership position shall be offered a legal and binding contract for the employment period. Recommendations are made by the principal/supervisor to the Superintendent and by the Superintendent to the Board of Education. Contract renewal from year to year depends upon job availability and a recommendation for re-employment by the principal/supervisor and the Superintendent. Full-time hires only become benefit eligible after official approval of the Board.

Contracts for new employees are temporary and are not considered binding until clearance is received from the required fingerprinting and criminal records check, release from any previous contract, and verification of appropriate certification.

A certificated employee who violates his/her contract with a school system may have his/her certificate suspended or revoked by the PSC. As a Georgia Charter System, employees do not earn “tenure” in Cartersville City Schools and the rules of Fair Dismissal Act are not applicable.

Employees are to be paid a salary equal, at least, to the amount applicable to the position held based on the existing applicable work calendars and salary schedules. Salaries and any benefits are subject to the budgeting process, including any amendments to the budget enacted during the term of any contract. The annual salary shall be subject to adjustment on a pro rata basis for the number of days the employee does not work during the annual pay period due to employment after the start of the contract year, resignation or termination of employment prior to the completion of all scheduled work days, any absences from duty during which the employee does not qualify for salary payment, or adjustment in official work schedules by the District.

Contract Periods

The system fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the succeeding year. The teacher work year begins with the first day of pre-planning and ends per the work year calendar established or amended by the Board of Education. The first pay period is at the end of September and the last pay period is at the end of August of the succeeding year. New teachers, not coming from another Georgia school system that pays in August, will have their pay extended out over a 13-month pay period for the first year of employment. This will give the employee a payroll disbursement at the end of August.

Resignations

Certificated personnel who, for any reason, intend to resign or who intend to retire are encouraged to indicate their plans to their supervisor as early as possible. Resignations become effective at the end of the school year in which they are submitted. Resignations requested to become effective earlier than at the end of school year require a release from contract by the Board and must be considered on an individual basis. Resignations are to be submitted in writing to the supervisor, Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations or Superintendent.

Employees are required to return all Board of Education property, employee badges, and keys to their supervisor prior to the effective date of resignation. The Board may withhold the employee’s final paycheck if such property is not returned in proper condition by the effective date of a resignation. Further, access to all computer systems shall be terminated no later than the date of resignation. Exceptions to computer access may be considered on an individual basis. Such requests shall be made to the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations.

Classified employees are considered “at-will” employees and as such may be terminated at any time from their employment with the school system. Any classified employee is requested to give at least a two-week notice if they intend to resign from their position.

Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is expected and required of all employees. Employees are responsible for reporting their absence in accordance with school procedures in a timely fashion. Employees may not leave their work locations prior to the end of the work day without specific permission of their supervisor or designee. Employees are responsible for following procedures for attendance related functions including, but not limited to, sign in/sign out, requesting substitutes, leave requests, and notification of absences/tardiness.

Extended Year & Day Contracts

Extended year contracts shall be issued for work assigned and performed during a specified period of time beyond the approved work year calendar. The approved number of days for an extended year contract must be worked during the fiscal year for which the contract was awarded. Monthly and yearly documentation of extended salary time and program responsibilities will be maintained and reported as required. All extended year contracts are contingent upon available funding and need. There shall be no tenure or contract rights created in extended days or extended years.

An extended day contract shall be provided for certain approved, certified employees who provide additional support services related to instructional, curricular activities which extend beyond the regular approved school day. Extended day services are contracted for yearly or by semester based solely at the discretion of the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall have the final determination as to an individual's eligibility. Documentation of extended salary time and responsibilities will be maintained at the school site and shall be reported as required.

Contract amendments are used for obligating the system and the employee for extended assignments such as extra-curricular activities and compensated responsibilities. This is an amendment of the employee's contract and requires the fulfillment of those responsibilities. Such amendments shall be in writing.

Transfers

Employees may request a transfer to another school and/or position for which they are certified and qualified. Such requests are generally received during the time the system issues Intent Forms annually (January – February) prior to recommendations for employment renewal, but any request for a transfer shall be submitted in writing by March 1. All transfers must be approved by the receiving principal/supervisor, the sending principal/supervisor, any Director as appropriate (i.e., Special Programs), and either the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations or Superintendent. A request for transfer does not obligate the system to transfer an employee.

The Superintendent has the authority to transfer an employee at any time to any position for which the employee is qualified and/or certified at any job site in the system.

Reductions in Force [see Policy GBKA – Reduction in Force]

From time to time, the Board may need to have a reduction in force of certified and/or classified personnel. The best interest of the school system will be the determining factor as to the reduction and as to those persons to be terminated or reassigned. This shall be within the sole discretion of the Superintendent and the Board. The procedure used for classified or certified personnel will be as set by the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, as needed.

Requirement to Notify

Employees are required to notify the Superintendent or his/her designee at any time they may be arrested or charged with any criminal act. An arrest, charge or conviction may or may not impact employment status with the school system, but failure to notify represents a potential violation of employment conditions and/or the Code of Ethics.

Work Hours

All full-time employees are expected to observe a workday of eight (8) hours or a workweek of forty (40) hours unless otherwise contracted or specifically employed. The principal or appropriate supervisor will establish the workday schedule. Employees are expected to remain on school grounds during the workday unless otherwise specifically approved by the principal/supervisor or his/her designee. Employees must request and notify their supervisor if they must leave work early for any reason.

Specific duties to be performed by teachers include teaching, preparation for teaching, staff meetings, conferences with students and parents, professional learning activities, individual and collaborative planning, appropriate supervision, and related school activities in the community, and extra-class responsibilities, whether or not these fall into the hours during which the teacher is required to be on duty at his/her school.

From time to time, the supervisor may need to change individual work schedules to meet school or system needs. Notice of any change should be given as far in advance as possible.

Overtime *[[see Policy GCRD – Overtime Pay]*

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provisions governing overtime work applies to “non-exempt” personnel. Non-exempt personnel may only work up to forty (40) hours per week unless specific approval is obtained from the appropriate supervisor to exceed this amount. Non-exempt employees who have been specifically approved to work beyond the 40 hours must receive overtime compensation at a rate of one and one-half times their regular hourly wage or a blended rate if working two different jobs for the system. Cartersville uses a Sunday to Saturday “work week” for the purposes of FLSA.

Non-exempt employees may receive “compensatory time” in lieu of overtime pay when an agreement is arrived at between the employer and employee **before** the performance of the overtime work. It is expected in the system that no more than 24 hours approved compensatory time accrue at any one time. It is also expected that compensatory time be taken within the **pay period** that it is earned. Compensatory time is traded at the rate of 1.5:1. When an employee with accumulated compensatory time requests to use his/her accrued time, the employer must honor the request given at least 24-hour notice. Compensatory time is generally not allowed during designated critical days.

Salaried workers who do not perform executive, administrative, or professional duties as defined by FLSA are not eligible for exemption to the overtime rule. Generally, certified personnel are exempt from overtime status and are not eligible to earn overtime pay.

Non-school Employment

The Board expects all personnel to regard their employment with the school system as their first employment obligation. Should outside employment be accepted by an employee, it must be employment which takes neither time nor energy from the employee’s school system position. Employees are advised that positions in the school system require a certain level of energy, stamina, time and commitment. It is expected that all employees provide a level of vigor to their job which benefits students and the schools appropriately and helps carry out the functions, programs and purposes of the school.

Each principal shall have direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel assigned to his/her staff. Employees may not leave their assignment with the school system or report late because of non-school employment.

In no case shall an employee be allowed to sell instructional materials, reference materials, or other instructional supplies during the regular school term or within the Cartersville City School System at any time.

Emergency Closing of Schools

Under emergency situations created by extreme weather or other conditions, it may become necessary to close schools. The Superintendent or designated representative will make the decision to close schools or to adjust schedules. The decision will be made as early as possible and will be announced on as many local media sources as possible. Additionally, the school system may utilize an automated messaging service to notify staff and students of any changes. It is important for all employees to keep the school system up-to-date with valid phone numbers and contact information. Employees usually must make up any days missed from the closing of school because of contract requirements.

Workplace Inspection

The Cartersville City School System reserves the right to search any person entering on its property or offsite while performing services or carrying out responsibilities of the school system, and to search property, equipment, and storage areas, including but not limited to, clothing, personal effects, vehicles, buildings, rooms, facilities, offices, parking lots, desks, cabinets, briefcases, lunches and toolboxes. Any items an employee does not wish inspected should not be brought to work.

Workplace Décor and Usage

Food should not be eaten in the workplace outside of specifically designated areas. Those areas should not be instructional areas or program offices. This is a health and cleanliness issue. Additionally, the school system has contracted with an outside company to provide custodial services and the contract specifically prohibits food outside of these designated areas.

Computers, equipment and furniture are not to be moved from one location to another (even within the same building) without the express permission and specific approval by an authorized supervisor. All technology equipment to be moved must be approved by the Technology Department and according to their protocol.

Electrical Appliances

The school system has implemented an Energy Management Program in order to be good stewards of public funds. The policies set forth in this plan prohibit the use of microwaves, coffee makers, hotplates, fans, refrigerators, lamps, etc., in instructional areas. Microwaves, refrigerators and coffee makers are allowed in system-designated areas such as teacher's lounges and teacher workrooms.

Children at the Workplace

As public servants, employees must be cognizant of their full obligation and responsibility to the constraints of the job position. It is neither professionally responsible nor fiscally prudent for an employee to have his/her own child at the workplace while carrying out the requirements of the job. Children who should be and must be supervised add unnecessary liability to the school system and to the employee. Further, it is professionally unacceptable for an employee's child to attend faculty and staff meetings where the business of the school is being conducted. This policy refers to teacher workdays as well as student school days.

Health Examinations

The Board has the authority to require a health exam of an applicant or employee, as provided by law, to provide reasonable evidence that the employee is free from communicable disease and has the physical ability to fulfill the requirements of the position. Any employee whose condition of health is thought to be unfavorable to the welfare of students or other employees may be required at any time, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, to submit to a health examination by a physician or surgeon. The expense of such a required exam shall be borne by the Board. The report of such exam shall be made available to the Superintendent and shall include a statement by the examining physician as to any physical or mental condition noted likely to prevent the person examined from performing all duties and responsibilities of the position, or a statement that no such condition exists. All employees are urged to have complete annual health examinations for safeguarding of their health.

“Free Speech”

When a public employee, including all school personnel, makes a statement (verbal or written in any format or medium) pursuant to their official duties, the employee is not speaking as a citizen for First Amendment purposes. Therefore, there is no First Amendment protection. Educators who use social media, including Facebook, Twitter or similar services are responsible for their conduct and must recognize the likelihood that any posting will be viewed by students, parents, other staff members and the community. Thus, any posting that contains content that reflects unprofessional or unethical conduct may be evidence that would support disciplinary or remedial action.

Personal Safety

Staff members are advised to use wise care and judgment regarding their personal safety at all times while on school grounds and in school buildings. Employees should not stand in chairs, on tables, on stools, in or on desks, on counter tops, etc. Proper use of all equipment should be observed especially with items such as ladders, step stools, all electrical devices, and power and hand tools.

ID Badges

All employees are to wear their system-issued ID badges during work hours. This is for the safety and security of our students, staff, and schools. There may be a fee charged for anyone who loses or damages their ID and needs a replacement. ID badges are made and issued at the central office.

Surveillance

Having carefully weighed and balanced the rights of privacy of students and staff against a duty to maintain order, discipline, and a safe learning environment, the Cartersville City School System and its schools may employ the use of surveillance equipment on school property and in school vehicles (video, audio, picture, phone, etc.). Such use shall be subject to other policies of the system including policies concerning the confidentiality of student and personnel records. Surveillance shall be used to promote order, safety, and security of students, staff and property.

Job Vacancies

When a vacancy or anticipated vacancy is recognized, the system posts the position on the system website and for certified positions at www.teachgeorgia.org. Current employees who are interested in a vacancy and feel they are qualified and can perform the essential job functions shall give written notice (email is acceptable) to the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations of the desire to be considered for the position. There is no guarantee, explicit or implicit, that the current employee will get the job or receive an interview. A current employee's interest will receive equal consideration as that of an outside system applicant.

At-Will Employment

Georgia recognizes at-will employment. Classified staff are hired “at-will” and the employment can be terminated at the will of either party, for any reason or for no reason at all. Certificated staff issued a Cartersville Board of Education approved Contract do not have at-will employment.

Name, Address and Phone Changes

Each employee has the responsibility to keep the Payroll Office informed of his/her current mailing address and telephone number. To change a name on personnel records, it is necessary for the employee to bring a copy of the new social security card showing the new name to the Payroll Office. At the same time, the employee must complete a name change application to change the name on the employee's certificate.

Personnel Records [*see Policy GAK – Personnel Records*]

The personnel file on each employee shall contain all documents required by law and all other items necessary for the administration of personnel employed by the school system, excluding medical records relating to the American Disabilities Act, Family & Medical Leave Act, and Workers' Compensation. Personnel records of employees are confidential. Official open records requests will release only what is required by law.

There is only one official "Personnel Record" for an employee and it is kept and maintained at the Central Office. Only the Superintendent can direct what items may go into the personnel record of any employee. An employee or former employee may examine the contents of their personnel record by contacting the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations who is the chief personnel officer for the school system.

Personnel information requested by governmental agencies, school systems, public colleges and public universities may be provided within the parameters of this policy. Employee name, employment dates, position title, duty station, record of performance, and salary or wage data may be disclosed to businesses at the request of the employee. Personnel records shall be produced upon receipt of appropriate court orders or subpoena. All personnel records are kept in accordance with the records retention schedule for all resigned or retired employees, including such essential information as appropriate. Employees will be expected to promptly furnish all information required by the administration. Failure to do so promptly may result in withholding of salary.

A personnel record shall be maintained for each employee in the school system and shall contain information usually expected in good personnel administration such as application, recommendations, education credentials, transcripts, correspondence, pertinent data concerning the employee, anecdotal notes, and evaluation reports. Such records shall be considered confidential and shall be accessible only to authorized personnel as allowed. Personnel records may be kept electronically.

All personnel records (except for third party reports or recommendations) shall be available for inspection by the employee and others as provided by law.

In order to protect confidentiality rights of employees, administrators, and teachers, no employee shall release any document, documents or information which would not be construed to be an open record pursuant to Georgia law. The following personal information shall not be disclosed unless otherwise excepted by law or the written consent of the subject has been obtained: home address, home telephone number, social security number, insurance information, medical information, mother's birth name, day and month of birth, credit card or debit card numbers, bank account information and financial data or information, or health or medical information. When responding to requests for allowable information, the above items shall be redacted from the materials provided.

Furthermore, the school system shall abide by all laws and regulations pertaining to the use, misuse and/or violations concerning the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) and Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Network, materials, records and information obtained thereof. The provisions shall apply to all employees, non-paid employees, and vendors/contractors with access, to include physical and logical access, to GCIC materials, records and information. All employees, non-paid employees, and vendors/contractors are required to follow the policies, rules and procedures set forth by GCIC, GCIC Council Rules, CJIS Security Policy, and the laws of the State of Georgia.

The following disciplinary action will be taken for general working errors involving violations determined to be accidental errors or errors made due to the need of Security Awareness training. The severity of the error will be evaluated by the Superintendent or his/her designee. This is a general guideline and its use will be determined by the agency head or designee.

- 1st offense (for less severe errors) - Verbal Warning and additional training, if needed
- 2nd offense (determined by the severity of error) Written reprimand and additional training
- 3rd offense – Written reprimand, possible suspension or termination and additional training
- 4th offense – Employment termination

For deliberate violations and/or misuse of GCIC/NCIC or information obtained thereof, other disciplinary measures may be taken up to and including termination and possible criminal prosecution.

Full Disclosure Requirement

The employee shall notify the principal of the school or his/her director when the employee is working for or representing a company/organization or as an individual or in partnership offering and/or doing business with any school for products or services with any school or department in the district.

Annual Evaluations

Each system employee shall be evaluated annually using an instrument appropriate for the job position.

All teachers, principals and assistant principals will be evaluated in accordance with state law O.C.G.A. 20-2-210, all applicable rules of the State Board of Education, and the Implementation Handbook for TKES or LKES (Teacher or Leader Keys Effectiveness System) according to the job position.

An annual evaluation of “Unsatisfactory” or “Ineffective” must be reported to the PSC by the system and the educator may not move up on the pay scale if eligible otherwise. Two “Unsatisfactory” or “Ineffective” evaluations during a five-year period may result in a loss of the teacher’s certificate or denial by the PSC to renew a certificate.

An appeal process [*see Policy GBIA*] is available to full-time teachers who have accepted a contract for the fourth or subsequent consecutive year. A qualifying teacher may appeal summative performance ratings of “Unsatisfactory” or “Ineffective” based upon procedural deficiencies on the part of the district in conducting the evaluation. No more than five (5) work days after the summative evaluation conference, the teacher shall provide written notice of appeal to the responsible evaluator detailing the factual basis for the appeal. This appeal may be hand-delivered or sent by electronic mail. The principal responsible for the teacher shall be the first level of review and shall respond in writing within five (5) working days of the appeal. If the teacher is dissatisfied with the principal’s response, an appeal may be filed with five (5) business days with the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations. This person or a qualified third-party administrator from outside the district may be appointed by the Superintendent shall review the appeal. A written response shall be provided to the teacher of this level two decision within five (5) business days. This level two decision shall be final.

Additionally, the Board believes that a program for evaluating classified personnel is an integral component in the process of improving the quality of support and administrative services. All classified personnel shall have their performance evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or administrator. All such performance evaluation records shall be part of the personnel evaluation file and shall be confidential.

Section 3 – Salary & Benefits

S A L A R Y

Salary Schedules

Experience and training are used to determine the correct placement on the current schedule. Placement on the Cartersville pay schedule is determined by actual number years of allowable experience per Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-2-.05. One hundred twenty (120) days successful full-time employment days or more equals one year as relates to movement on the salary schedule. For classified personnel, the Board uses a salary schedule based upon successful related experience and job position.

Salary is paid monthly on the last work day of the month per a schedule established by Payroll. It is the employee's responsibility to check the accuracy of their contract and/or salary sheet and report to Payroll any discrepancies or questions. Failure to report such to the Board of Education within the contract year will constitute a waiver of any claim or request for salary adjustment on the part of the employee.

Generally, employees who have retired and returned to work in positions less than full time are not eligible for benefits such as insurance. These employees are not eligible for credited experience on the salary schedule. Non-instructional personnel in these positions do not earn sick leave. At the approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee, an employee in this status may make up work time if the work is made up within the next weekly pay period. Otherwise, leave is without pay.

Salary Addendum

Addenda to salaries for extra-curricular and extra duty assignments shall be executed as soon as possible during school year for those employees assuming these responsibilities. The addendum serves as a contract for carrying out the specified responsibilities for the given school year. There is no promise or guarantee of a particular extra-curricular or extra duty assignment from year to year. Additionally, the principal and/or athletic director has the authority to revoke such an assignment when it is believed to be in the best interest of students or the program. If such a revocation occurs or if the employee is released from the responsibility, appropriate salary adjustments will be made. Compensation for these assignments is generally divided out over the course of the entire contract period. Teachers of physical education may be required under contract to coach/sponsor at last one extra-curricular activity to be determined by the principal or athletic director.

Direct Deposit

The school system requires direct bank deposit of payroll for all employees. Employees have their payroll checks deposited directly into a bank or credit union account of their choosing. The employee may sign up for direct deposit through the Payroll Office. There is no charge for this service. If an employee closes their bank account and does not notify the payroll office, the system will have up to five (5) business days after notification to replace the payroll check. If an employee on direct deposit does not complete the employment year, their direct deposit will be turned off before their last check. The last check will be mailed to the last known address the school system has on file; or in some cases may be picked up at the Payroll Office after the monthly release of checks.

Garnishments

Salaries of employees of the school system shall be subject to garnishments as covered by laws regulating garnishments. However, employees are expected to handle their financial obligations properly and not get into a situation where creditors take garnishment action.

Contacting Payroll

Non-emergency inquiries to payroll should initially be made via system email. Emails should be answered within 24 hours. Please request an appointment if you need to meet with someone regarding payroll/benefits.

B E N E F I T S

Social Security & Medicare

All employees of the Cartersville Board of Education are covered by Social Security and Medicare. Deductions for this purpose are made from the gross salary at the required current federal rate. These deductions are matched by the Cartersville Board of Education.

Open Enrollment

The open enrollment period to sign up for voluntary benefits is established by the state of Georgia for the Open Enrollment period for state health insurance (generally, mid-October to mid-November). Proper membership forms or online application must be completed and sent to Payroll by established deadlines in order to maintain eligibility. Otherwise, changes in insurance are allowed only within a limited period of time based on a change in family status or qualifying event. Contact Payroll for additional information.

Teachers Retirement System (TRS) of Georgia

Individuals employed one-half time or more as a teacher, administrator, paraprofessional, clerk, or secretary are required to become members of Teachers Retirement System (TRS) as a condition of employment.

Members must contribute the required rate (*currently 6% - FY19*) of earnable compensation as a payroll deduction to TRS. The Cartersville Board of Education matches this contribution (*currently 20.90% - FY19*).

TRS members must complete at least ten (10) years of service in Georgia public schools to be vested and eligible to receive TRS benefits. Full retirement is at 30 years. With full retirement, employees are eligible for retirement at 60% of the average of their two highest salary years. Each additional complete year of service constitutes an addition of 2% in TRS earnings up to 80% total. Unused earned sick leave, above 60 days, can also be used as credit toward service for retirement.

Tax Sheltered Annuities

Tax Sheltered Annuities (TSA) are available to all employees. VALIC –The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company is the TSA offered through the school system.

Cafeteria Plan and Flexible Spending Accounts

The Board may participate in a federally sponsored “cafeteria plan” for fringe benefits for all employees. The plan provides that deductions for certain selected benefits made from the monthly salary before federal taxes, state taxes, and social security are computed. The result is a savings to the employee which results in more take-home compensation each month. This is a benefit worthy of the employee’s consideration. Each employee must provide written authorization for entry into this program.

Flexible Spending Accounts also enable employees to pay certain non-reimbursed health, dental, and vision expenses and dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars. Employees can set aside designated amounts and file claims for reimbursement. The proper membership forms must be completed and submitted to the benefits office to establish eligibility.

Children of Out-of-District Employees

Students of nonresident (living outside the city limits of Cartersville) employees may attend the Cartersville City Schools tuition free as long as the individual student meets the criteria established for all other out-of-district students in Board Policy JBCB-Nonresident Students. These criteria include: 1) good academic performance; 2) good attendance including punctuality; 3) good behavior and clear discipline record; and 4) appropriate support and cooperation from the student and parent/guardian with the school system. Out-of-district students cannot ride system school buses to and from school.

Insurance

Employees who are scheduled to work 20 hours or more per week are eligible for benefits. Some plans are funded entirely or in part by the Board and others are available to employees via payroll deduction. 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 insurance plan. Generally, insurance selections and changes are made during the open enrollment period (mid-October to mid-November) for a January 1 effective date.

Health Insurance is offered by the Cartersville Board of Education through the State Health Benefit Plan. Several health insurance options are available. The Board contributes an amount as required for each employee's monthly state health premium.

Dental Insurance is available for the employee, employee and spouse, employee and children, or the entire family. Variable plans allow you to determine the level of benefit that best suits your family.

Life Insurance is also available for the employee and their dependents. The Board provides at no cost to the employee group term life insurance in the amount of \$50,000. Additional optional life insurance may be purchased on the employee up to \$200,000. Spouse and dependent life insurance may also be purchased.

Professional Liability Insurance The Cartersville Board of Education carries a professional liability insurance policy (\$1,000,000 limit) on all employees at no cost to the employee.

Disability Insurance is available to protect income on a short-term or long-term basis.

Long-term disability coverage is offered by the Board to replace 60% of salary after 90 days of disability.

Short-term disability coverage is offered at a cost to provide a maximum of 60% of salary for up to 12 weeks after 14 days of disability absence.

Accident Insurance may be available to supplement basic health insurance benefits to help pay for miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses related to an accident.

Cancer Insurance may be available to supplement basic health insurance benefits to help pay for miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses for cancer related treatment.

Vision Insurance is available to supplement basic health insurance benefits to help pay for miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses for eye and vision care.

Workers' Compensation Insurance Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment during the normal workday and work year. Injured employees must notify the school nurse or administrator immediately and complete appropriate forms in a timely manner. If the event happens afterschool, the employee should still notify their supervisor immediately. The injured employee must go to one of the physicians approved by the Workers Comp Insurance Company for treatment. A list of approved physicians is posted in each school system facility. The school system works proactively to help an injured employee stay or return to productive and safe work as soon as possible. Such return may include, but not be limited to, work duty accommodations, alternative tasks, temporary re-assignment, job modifications.

Third-Party Employees

Temporary employees are not eligible for Board provided or optional benefits such as insurance, except Workers' Compensation.

Section 4 – Absences and Leave

[see Policy GBRH – Leave-Certified Personnel; Policy GCRG – Leave-Classified Personnel]

Attendance and punctuality are essential functions of every position in the school system!

Employees are expected to maintain regular and punctual attendance. Unnecessary absences are to be avoided. Supervisors are expected to monitor employees' attendance and punctuality and take appropriate action when problems or negative patterns occur. Leave is permitted only as specified in this policy and subsequent procedures. Absences that do not comply with this policy are prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. All leave requests, documents, and records shall be submitted in a timely manner and following system and school procedures. It is understandable that the need for unforeseen leave occurs, however all employees are expected to communicate and request allowable leave by the earliest known date regardless of the type of leave.

Falsification of leave or improper use of leave may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including reporting to the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and/or termination of employment.

Definition of Unauthorized Leave

Unauthorized leave is defined as non-performance of those duties and responsibilities assigned by the school system and its representatives including all duties and responsibilities as defined by statutes, rules, and regulations of the State Board of Education, policies of the Board, and administrative regulations of this school system. Such unauthorized leave may include, but is not limited to, refusal to provide service; unauthorized use of disability, personal, professional, family, vacation, or other board provided leave; non-attendance at required meetings; and failure to provide supervisory functions at school-sponsored activities. An employee is deemed to be on unauthorized leave at such time and on such occasions as the employee may absent himself/herself from required duties.

Authorized Unpaid Leave

An employee who does not have sufficient accumulated paid sick leave or vacation to cover medical absences may request unpaid medical leave. If granted, unpaid medical leave shall not exceed one contract year or assignment period. Such leave may be granted only when said leave is not covered under existing policies governing leaves and absences and in the opinion of the Superintendent or his/her designee does not interfere with the effective operation of the school system. All available leave must be exhausted before unpaid leave will be authorized. Medical certification may be required for illness or disability leave.

Verification of Leave

Employees anticipating an absence from duty which requires pre-approval must submit the request on the prescribed "Application for Leave" form and in a timely manner as required by system regulations. All required documentation and follow up reports are the responsibility of the employee and are necessary for the absence to be qualified as "Authorized Leave." The Superintendent or the supervisor of the employee may require a physician's or other verification as to an employee's claimed reason for any absence. Medical certification may be required for illness or disability leave.

Employment During Leave

Employees on approved leave may not accept employment or work for other employers during the period of that leave.

Bereavement Leave

In the event of a death in the immediate family of an employee, leave will be charged against the employee's accumulated sick leave. Up to five (5) days sick leave may be used for absence due to death of an employee's

spouse, child, father, mother, grandparents, in-law equivalents of the foregoing, or any relatives living in the residence of the employee. Additional days may be requested from the Superintendent under extenuating circumstances.

Sick Leave

Allowable sick leave is governed by Georgia Department of Education and the Professional Standards Commission (PSC). Sick leave may be granted for the following allowable causes:

- Personal illness or injury
- Illness in the immediate family
- Death in immediate family
- Exposure to a contagious disease
- Birth of a child

For the purpose of determining eligibility for sick leave, "immediate family" shall be interpreted to mean father, mother, husband, wife, child, step-child, brother, sister, or a relative living in the household of the employee.

Full-time professional personnel are eligible for paid sick leave at the rate of one and one-fourth (1 ¼) days for each contract or employment month completed. Sick leave shall accrue to a maximum of one hundred twenty (120) days. Regular part-time employees working less than 50% are entitled to paid sick leave in proportion to the amount of time worked if they serve in roles specifying their attendance being dictated by a set schedule working with students (for example, classroom teachers). Sick leave does not accumulate from year to year for part time employees.

The system advances anticipated sick leave to certified employees at the beginning of the school year. This advancement cannot exceed the number of days which can be earned in one fiscal year. The employee must work at least one-half of the work days in a pay period in order to earn the leave for that month. Necessary adjustments in salary shall be made during the contract year if advanced leave is permitted and the employee does not fulfill his/her contract obligations.

A doctor's certificate may be required by the Superintendent or his/her designee whenever deemed necessary. Additional certification may be required from a physician selected by the school system. An employee returning from sick leave may be required to provide a doctor's statement as to whether the employee is able to perform assigned job duties and the need for any accommodations requested by the employee.

An employee who is absent because of illness for more than three (3) consecutive days must inform the principal or his/her designee, or the employee's supervisor, and the approximate date the employee will be able to resume his/her duties. Upon three (3) consecutive days of absence the school system can apply Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requirements to the employee's absence commencing on the first date of absence. *[see Policy GDRHG – Family Medical Leave]*

Teachers new to the school system may transfer up to a maximum of forty-five (45) days of unused sick leave from another Georgia public school system as allowed by Georgia law. Verification of accumulated leave from the previous employer is required.

Accumulated and used sick leave is posted on the employee's monthly payroll and should be reviewed regularly by the employee for accuracy. The school system does not pay for unused sick leave; however, unused sick leave can be used as service days toward a person's retirement with the Georgia Teacher Retirement System. Unused sick leave may be used toward service for retirement purposes.

Misrepresentation of sick leave for personal or other use is a strict violation of Board policy, state law, and the Professional Code of Ethics. Such action would be subject to severe consequences up to and including termination and referral to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

Field Trips

Employees supervising field trips for students under their direct supervision and responsibility are not required to request leave or complete leave forms. Employees acting as chaperones and/or accompanying field trips if their own children are on the trip may not be granted professional or sick leave for such a trip. Personal leave or vacation leave may be granted, if applicable.

Maternity Leave

The district considers pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, and recovery there from as temporary disabilities for all job-related purposes. A pregnant employee may continue in active employment as late into her pregnancy as she desires provided she is able to perform properly the required functions of her job. Final determination of ability to perform properly shall be made by the Board. An employee wishing to work to the date of physical disability shall be entitled to the use of all accumulated sick leave credited to her not to exceed the doctor's estimated length of physical disability. [see Policy GDRHG--Family Medical Leave]

For the birth of a child, an employee may use up to six (6) calendar weeks for natural delivery or eight (8) weeks for Cesarean delivery following the actual birth date. Any "bonding time" beyond the 6-week period following birth (8 weeks for a Cesarean) is not eligible for sick leave application. However, leave for "bonding time" may be subject to eligible Family Medical Leave. The 6-week or 8-week period referenced for sick leave begins the date of delivery regardless of summer or holiday periods.

Paid Parental Leave

A state law establishing paid parental leave for eligible state employees took effect on July 1, 2024. It is taken in conjunction with FMLA. Employees who qualify receive 240 hours of paid leave after the birth of their child, adoption, or foster care placement. [see Policy GDRHG--Family Medical Leave]

Personal Leave

A maximum of three (3) days personal leave may be granted to each employee annually. The intent of such leave is for the employee to be able to take care of their personal business that cannot be done at another time, or for what might be considered a "once in a lifetime" or rare opportunity. It is not to be for a vacation or break from work. Such leave may be used provided prior approval of the employee's absence is given by the Superintendent or his/her authorized representative. Such leave shall be deducted from the employee's accumulated sick leave.

Critical Days

Except during the times listed below, employees are not required to disclose the specific reason for taking personal leave other than to specify that the absence is personal. Except in extreme emergencies or situations, personal leave does not have to be granted at the following times, considered to be critical days:

- (a) the work day immediately prior to or after a school holiday/break or vacation;
- (b) the first student day of the school year and the following four working days thereafter;
- (c) the last student day of the school year and the preceding four working days thereof;
- (d) pre-planning, conference, in-service, professional learning and post-planning days;
- (e) other days identified by the Superintendent or by the immediate supervisor as critical.

Requests for Personal Leave during designated critical days will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In making the determination of allowance of application of personal leave during designated critical days, the Superintendent or his/her authorized representative shall consider all factors, including but not limited to,

- (a) the instructional and psychological impact on students under the employee's tutelage;
- (b) the potential impact the employee's absence may have on the school or department's operation, both short term and long term;
- (c) the number of days of the request;
- (d) the reason of the request;
- (e) prior use of personal leave during designated critical days;
- (f) the timing of the request in relation to the day(s) requested; and
- (g) other absences real and anticipated for the days requested.

The Superintendent's, or his/her representative's, decision about Personal Leave requested during designated critical days is final. The Superintendent shall have the authority to deny all requests for leave under this policy at any time the actual or anticipated employee absences on a given date reaches 10% of the total teaching staff at the school. Additionally, the Superintendent may designate other days in the school year as critical due to changes in the school calendar brought on by events such as inclement weather and other emergencies. If Personal Leave is not approved for the requested day(s), the employee may take Leave Without Pay. A "Request for Personal Leave Special Approval form" is available on the district website.

Professional Leave

An employee may be granted paid or unpaid professional leave to engage in activities associated with professional organizations and professional learning related to the employee's position in the school system. Professional leave requires approval in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor. If unpaid professional leave is granted, the employee may elect to use available personal or vacation leave for the absence.

Paid leave may be granted when an employee must be away from normal responsibilities in order to participate in activities directly related to student needs or assigned by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Such leave may include, but is not limited to, professional learning, committee assignments, accreditation meetings, coaching or sponsoring extracurricular and competition teams, or other official school business.

Requests for professional leave should be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor at least ten (10) working days prior to the requested leave date(s). In order to be reimbursed for expenses incurred while on professional leave, the employee must have prior approval for the reimbursement and submit the request on as per system/school procedures. All reimbursement requests must be submitted along with any required documentation by June 30 for each fiscal year.

Jury Duty or Witness Leave

All school system employees shall be allowed a leave of absence without loss of pay and without deduction of any amounts otherwise received as compensation for service as an employee for the purpose of attending judicial proceedings in response to a subpoena, summons for jury duty, or other court order or process which requires the attendance of the employee at the judicial proceeding. Judicial proceedings not required by a subpoena or summons are not allowed under provisions of this sections, but may be subject to personal leave. The employee must notify his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible after the employee has been served with the summons for jury duty or subpoena to appear in a judicial proceeding.

Employees who serve as jurors shall not have the jury leave deducted from sick or personal leave. Employees who qualify for this leave may retain any juror or witness compensation.

Blood Donations

Each employee of the school system shall be allowed a leave of absence of not more than eight (8) hours in each calendar year without loss of pay for the purpose of donating blood. This absence shall be computed at two (2) hours per donation, up to four (4) times per year.

Voting

Each employee shall, upon reasonable notice to his/her immediate supervisor, be permitted to take any necessary time off from his/her employment to vote in any municipal, county, state, or federal primary, special or general election for which such employee is qualified and registered to vote on the day on which such primary or election is held; provided, however, that such necessary time off shall not exceed two (2) hours. The employer may specify the hours during which the employee may absent himself/herself as provided in this policy.

Religious Holidays

Employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. Reasonable accommodations to the religious needs of employees shall be made in view of the overarching needs and purpose of the school system. In the event an employee needs additional days for recognized religious observance, the Superintendent has the authority to grant unpaid leave as long as it does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of the employee's job.

Hybrid Days

Hybrid Work is a flexible approach that allows employees to balance their time between working in a specific building and working remotely on specified days. Hybrid Days were given to provide teachers with the flexibility to work from home or school on certain days during pre- and post-planning to prepare for or close out the year. Teachers should be able to alternate between working remotely and in their building on these specified days without a dip in production.

Vacation Leave *[see Policy GBRH & GCRG]*

Paid vacation leave applies for all 240-day employees. Service requirements for benefits of vacation refer to continuous service with the Cartersville City Schools.

Annual vacation leave for full-time certified personnel shall be earned on a monthly basis at a rate of 5/6 days per month for a total of ten (10) days per year for the first five (5) years of completed service with the school system. Certificated twelve-month employees with 6 or more years of completed service shall earn vacation leave at a rate of 1.25 days per month for a total of fifteen (15) days annually. Certificated twelve-month employees who began full-time service with the district before 6/1/21 and have fifteen (15) or more years completed service qualify for twenty (20) days' vacation per year.

Annual vacation leave for full-time classified employees shall be earned on a monthly basis at a rate of 5/12 days per month for a total of five (5) days per year for the first year of completed service with the school system. Classified twelve-month employees with 2-9 years of completed service shall earn vacation leave at a rate of 5/6 days per month for a total of ten (10) days annually. Classified twelve-month employees with ten (10) or more years completed service shall earn vacation leave at the rate of 1.25 days per month for up to fifteen (15) days vacation per year. Classified twelve-month employees who began service with the district before 6/1/21 and who have fifteen (15) or more years completed service qualify for twenty (20) days vacation per year.

Partial year service will result in prorated vacation leave for only the initial year (July 1 – June 30) of employment.

The vacation leave period is July 1 – June 30. Vacation leave may not be accrued and any unused vacation leave not taken on or before June 30 shall be forfeited. All earned vacation leave will be posted on July 1. The school system does not purchase unused vacation leave.

Former employees re-employed in the school system do not retain their years of completed service for vacation purposes. Former employees, re-employed, start at year zero for vacation leave. For progression on the vacation leave experience rule, calculation of earned vacation leave does not begin until the employee receives his or her first twelve-month contract (240 or more days). Contracts of shorter duration are not considered in the progression formula.

School system observed holidays are not considered vacation leave. If the work year is shortened because of required furlough or non-work days because of budget cuts or reduction in funding, employees shall not have their earned vacation leave reduced. Twelve-month personnel are required to report to work during system holidays when required by the Superintendent.

All vacation leave is subject to approval by the immediate supervisor. Normally, for school-based personnel, vacation leave is not allowed during the two weeks prior to the beginning of school; preplanning days, post-planning days, the first five (5) student days of the school year, the last five (5) student days of the school year, or other critical days as identified by the Superintendent or immediate supervisor. Requests for two or more consecutive weeks of vacation must be submitted as far in advance as possible for approval.

Military Leave

Employees shall be granted leave while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty as defined in Georgia law and while going to and returning from such duty. Paid leave may be taken for this purpose for a period not to exceed eighteen (18) days in any one fiscal year and not exceeding eighteen (18) days in any one continuous period of absence. An employee on granted continuous military leave for active duty service extending beyond the eighteen days shall be paid the difference between his/her monthly salary and that paid by the military branch if such military pay is less than the employee would earn from the school system. Appropriate documentation from the employee (military pay stubs, etc.) is required for all pay periods. Such differentiated pay shall be made for up to twelve months as long as the employee remains on active ordered duty. At the end of such duty, employees shall have the right to reinstatement to the position, or substantially equivalent position as held prior to the leave. A request for military leave must be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor and the appropriate personnel administrator promptly upon receipt of orders. A copy of the employee's official military or National Guard orders must accompany the request.

Family Medical Leave *[see Policy GDRHG – Family Medical Leave]*

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides covered employees with up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for certain qualifying absences. As to the interpretation of this policy, employees should look to the act itself and its regulations.

Eligible Employees of the school system who have been employed by the Cartersville Board of Education for at least 12 months prior to requesting leave **and** who have worked at least 1250 hours during the 12 months immediately prior to the leave, are eligible to take 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the provisions of the FMLA per year for one or more of the following reasons:

- (1) birth and care of a newborn child;
- (2) adoption or foster placement of a child under the age 18 with the employee;
- (3) to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent if that person has a serious health condition; or
- (4) serious health condition of the employee that prevents the employee from performing his/her job functions.

In the instance of birth, adoption and foster placement, all leave must be completed within 12 months after the birth, adoption or foster placement.

A "serious health condition" qualifying for FMLA leave is, very generally:

- Any period of incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; or
- A period of incapacity for three or more calendar days that also involves a visit to a health care provider and a regimen of continuing treatment; or
- Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care; or
- Any period of incapacity due to a chronic serious health condition such as asthma, diabetes, or epilepsy; or
- Any period of incapacity that is permanent or long-term due to a condition for which treatment may not be effective such as Alzheimer's Syndrome, stroke, terminal diseases, cancer, AIDS; or

- Any absences to receive multiple treatments by a health care provider for a condition that would likely result in incapacity for three or more days if left untreated such as chemotherapy, physical therapy, or dialysis.

Except as provided below, an employee may take 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 12 weeks of leave entitlement may occur. That is, each time an employee takes FMLA leave, the remaining leave entitlement would be the balance of the 12 weeks which has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months.

In cases where both spouses are employed by the Board 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 to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition for 12 weeks.

The Board requires that any accumulated paid leave be used for all or part of the otherwise unpaid FMLA leave. An employee is not eligible for unpaid leave under this policy until any applicable paid leave provided to the employee under other Board policies has been taken.

Accrued personal leave or vacation leave shall be used for: (1) the birth of a child; or (2) the care of a child during the first year after birth; or (3) the adoption or foster placement of a child with the employee during the first year.

Accrued sick leave, personal leave or vacation leave shall be used for:

- the serious illness of an employee’s spouse, child, or parent, or
- the employee’s own illness

Employees shall submit an application for FMLA leave for any leave covered in this policy. Except where circumstances are such that reasonable advance planning is not possible, an employee must provide written notice to their immediate supervisor at least 30 days in advance of the date when leave is to begin. Such request for leave shall be made on the forms provided by the system. If such advance notice is not possible, the employee must give notice as soon as practicable, ordinarily within one or two working days of learning of the need for leave. When planning medical treatment, the employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment, subject to the approval of the health care provider, so that any corresponding leave will not disrupt the operations of the school district unduly.

Under the Act, an employee is entitled to be restored either to their former position or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay and other terms and conditions of employment. If the employee gives notice of their intention not to return to work for the school system, then the system’s obligations to reinstate the employee and maintain their health insurance, subject to COBRA, cease immediately.

If an employee fails to return to work after the leave period has expired, the Board may recover the health care benefits premiums paid on behalf of the employee during the leave period, unless the employee did not return due to a serious health condition of the employee or the employee’s spouse, parent or child, or other circumstances beyond the employee’s control. The Board may require certification from the health care provider that a serious health condition of the employee or family member prevented the employee from returning to work.

Furthermore, if an employee fails to return to work after exhausting his/her available FMLA leave, the school system is entitled to treat continuing absences as it would any other unauthorized absence.

The school system is not required to place an employee in a “light duty” position if he/she is incapable of resuming his/her job duties at the conclusion of authorized leave.

Requesting Leave/Substitutes

Staff members submit all leave requests through the platform/procedures provided by the school system. Staff members eligible for a substitute shall request the replacement through the automated system. Teachers are not to secure a substitute that is not on the approved list within the system. Staff members may also be required to complete hardcopy paperwork for certain leave requests for documentation purposes.

Inclement Weather

When school closing occurs before students arrive, information about school closing will be sent to local media sources at the earliest possible time. Additionally, the system will endeavor to send out a phone message via the automated telephone service used by the system. When school closing occurs while school is in session, announcements will be made as quickly as possible about specific plans. Unless otherwise instructed by the employee's supervisor, employees must remain at their assigned duties until the safe dismissal of students is accomplished.

Communicable Disease *[see Policy GANA – Communicable Disease]*

Employees who are determined to be infected with AIDS or other communicable disease shall be placed on sick leave with pay for a maximum of two weeks, during which time the Superintendent shall make a determination whether the infected employee can perform the essential functions of the job. The Superintendent shall take into account the nature, duration, and severity of the risk as noted in (a) through (d) below. If the infected employee can perform the essential functions of the job, then no further inquiry or action shall be taken, but the performance of the infected employee shall be reviewed at reasonable intervals to assure that the essential functions of the job are carried out.

If the Superintendent believes that the infected employee may not be able to perform the essential functions of the job taking into account items (a) through (d) noted below, then the Superintendent shall so notify the employee of that determination and shall further notify the employee that an evaluation will be made as to whether the employee is otherwise qualified to perform the essential functions of the job in spite of the infection. This determination is to be made by a team composed of the Superintendent or his/her representative, the infected employee, a public health official, the employee's physician, a physician selected by the Superintendent, and another person selected by the Superintendent knowledgeable of the requirements of the job. No legal representative of either the Superintendent or the infected employee shall be present. The team shall determine whether the infected employee is otherwise qualified to perform the essential functions of the job in spite of infection with AIDS or other communicable disease.

This determination shall include findings or knowledge about:

- (a) the nature of the risk (how the disease is transmitted),
- (b) the duration of the risk (how long the carrier is infectious),
- (c) the severity of the risk (what is the potential for harm to third parties), and
- (d) the probability the disease will be transmitted and will cause varying degrees of harm.

In making the findings in (a) through (d) above, the team should normally defer to the reasonable medical judgments of public health officials, but also consider medical judgments of private physicians consulted by the team.

When it is determined that the employee is not able to perform the essential functions of the job, the team must further consider whether any reasonable accommodations by the school system would enable the employee to perform those functions. Accommodation is not reasonable if it either imposes undue financial and administrative burdens on the school system or requires a fundamental alteration in the nature of the job.

If an employee is determined by the process outlined above not to be otherwise qualified even with reasonable accommodations, the Superintendent shall take appropriate steps to terminate the employment of an infected

employee. The procedural requirements of the Fair Dismissal Act shall be observed in all cases in which the protections of the Act are applicable. Any infected employee desiring to separate voluntarily from employment shall be permitted to do so.

Procedures for Handling Bodily Fluids

All employees of the school system shall exercise care in handling body fluids, regardless of whether infected persons are in attendance. Soiled surfaces shall be promptly cleaned with disinfectants, such as household bleach (diluted one part bleach to 10 parts water). Disposable towels or tissues shall be used whenever possible, and all cleaning equipment shall be disinfected after use. Those who are cleaning should avoid exposure to open skin lesions or mucous membranes to any body fluids.

Workers Comp

If an employee suffers an on the job injury, no matter how minor, they must immediately notify their supervisor and/or their school nurse, failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. If an employee suffers an on the job injury after hours, they should contact their supervisor immediately. Employees should report any injury no matter how minor, even if it only requires first aid. If emergency treatment is not necessary, employees must select the services from a physician on our panel. If an employee chooses to seek medical treatment from a physician not on our panel, they may do so, however, they will be responsible for those medical expenses. If an employee unjustifiably refuses to submit to an alcohol and/or drug test following an on-the-job injury, there shall be a presumption that the accident and injury were caused by alcohol and/or drugs. If the presumption is not overcome by other evidence, any claim for workers' compensation benefits will be denied. If positive results of an alcohol and/or drug test may result in the denial of workers' compensation benefits and the termination of employment. Cartersville City Schools may change the names of the physicians on the Panel of Physicians. It is the employee's responsibilities to turn in or submit their doctors return to work or release paperwork to their nurse, prior to returning to work.

Section 5 – Use of Technology

[see Policy IFBG – Acceptable Use of Technology]

Responsible behavior by individuals given access to system technology and equipment is essential and mandated by the Board. In addition to the policy requirements included below, Georgia law, O.C.G.A. §16-9-90 (Georgia Computer Systems Protection Act) provides definitions, criminal liability and penalties for crimes related to computer theft, computer trespass, computer invasion of privacy, computer forgery, and computer password disclosure. Commission of a computer crime under law carries the possible penalty of a fine not exceeding \$50,000 and/or incarceration for a period not to exceed one year. Property laws covering theft, vandalism, destruction and copyright also apply to computing resources. The Cartersville City School District also complies with the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Technology resources include, but are not limited to, servers, switches, wireless access points, portable and desktop computers/devices, electronic devices used to access system data, peripherals, networks, software, data, labs, computer-related supplies, computer programs, stand-alone and web-based applications, and the Internet.

General Technology Policies

1. Abuse of technology resources; interference with operations including bandwidth consumption; interference with the work of other users; violation of confidentiality, copyrights, or license agreements; and intentional wasting of technology resources is prohibited.
2. Actions which attempt to circumvent prescribed channels of obtaining technology privileges, access or resources are prohibited.
3. Changing wiring, connections, or placement of technology resources is prohibited.
4. Modifying any system configuration, startup files, or applications, without the explicit permission of the Technology Department is prohibited.
5. Students and staff members shall immediately inform the lab supervisor, Instructional Technology Specialist, Media Clerk, System Media Specialist, or the Technology Department of improperly working equipment, program or software.
6. Using system technology resources for commercial purposes or personal gain is prohibited.
7. Students and staff may not use or download privately owned computer software on system technology resources.
8. Under no circumstance shall students or staff exhibit, disseminate or transmit obscene materials, including but not limited to, pornography.
9. When Internet access or the system network is allowed via personal devices, students and staff shall adhere to the intent and requirements of this policy as well as any other rules, regulations, procedures or directions established by the system or school related to their use.
10. Students and staff may not copy software from system technology for personal use.
11. Students and staff may not create or cause to create unauthorized accounts for themselves or others, or share or allow to be shared personally identifiable information.
12. Unauthorized disclosure, use and/or dissemination of personally identifiable information on any student or staff member is prohibited.

Internet User Requirements

Internet access is made available to students and staff for appropriate educational use. Internet users are personally responsible for and expected to restrict access to only those materials and resources that have justified educational value in the PK-12 setting. This responsibility requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of technology resources. If a user violates any of these provisions, access to the Internet may be terminated and future access jeopardized and disciplinary measures may be imputed up to and including termination of employment.

Use of System/School Owned Devices

Employees who are issued or use any system/school device such as an iPad, laptop, etc., are encouraged to secure appropriate insurance on that individual device. This insurance may be arranged by the employee with the vendor suggested by the school system. Employees may be held accountable and financially responsible for any damage to a device or its replacement costs if the cause is determined to be negligence or abuse. Employees must not attempt self-repairs or arrange for repairs or replacement of devices on their own except in the case of insurance suggested through the district.

Internet - Terms and Conditions

- 1) The purpose of Internet is to support legitimate research and education. Access is provided to resources as well as the opportunity for collaborative work. Internet use must be consistent with the objectives of the school system. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, illegal material, or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities, product advertisement or political lobbying prohibited.
- 2) The use of Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in a termination of those privileges. The school administration and Technology Department will deem what is inappropriate use.
- 3) Accepted rules of network etiquette are required. This includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a) Abusive, harassing, obscene, or threatening messages to or about others will not be tolerated.
 - b) Appropriate language is required; do not use profanity or vulgarities.
 - c) Illegal activities are strictly forbidden. Communications relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to proper authorities.
 - d) All communications and information accessible via the network should be respected as belonging to the school system.
- 4) The district makes no warranties, whether expressed or implied, for the Internet service it provides. The district is not responsible for any damages suffered by users. Use of information obtained is at the users' risk. The district denies responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its Internet services.
- 5) Users are individually liable for any incurred costs or obligations when accessing commercial services via the Internet.
- 6) If any security problem is identified, the user must immediately notify the lab supervisor/teacher, Instructional Technology Specialist, Media Clerk, administrator, or Technology Department.
- 7) Teachers cannot assume the responsibility for monitoring every document or site to which a student may gain access. However, appropriate supervision and monitoring is expected.
- 8) Attempts, whether successful or not, to access unauthorized areas of the district's information or the Internet, including "hacking," is prohibited.
- 9) Users are expected to immediately inform their supervisor if any inappropriate action such as an improper advance or request is encountered from a local or remote user.
- 10) The school system shall implement appropriate and necessary safety measures to protect students and staff from inappropriate use and communications on the Internet. Such security measures shall include but not be limited to the use of filtering devices, thereby blocking entry to inappropriate areas which may be considered harmful. Although such filtering devices are useful and work well, it shall not be assumed that they are 100% infallible. Students and staff must accept responsibility for their use of the Internet.

Disabling of filtering may be allowed for authorized use for bona fide research or other lawful and educational purposes.

- 11) Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is any attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or intentionally interfering with the Internet or network service, including uploading or creating a virus or malware.

Moving / Transferring Equipment

Computers and computer equipment are not to be moved from one location to another without the express permission and consent of the Technology Department.

Software

Employees may not install any software on the school system's technical resources without express prior permission from the Director of Technology. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and integrity of the system's technology and prevent computer viruses, as well as meet our obligation under applicable software licenses and copyright laws. Additionally, employees may not copy software from system technology for personal use.

Staff E-mail

Staff are encouraged and expected to use email in conducting routine business where it is appropriate. Staff should and are expected to check and respond to email routinely during the course of the business day. When using email for correspondence (including correspondence with other staff), professional and ethical language is expected. Professionalism is expected at all times in regards to tone, content, humor, and correct grammar/spelling. Additionally,

- 1) Staff may not access another user's email account to view or send messages unless explicitly authorized.
- 2) All emails are the property of the Cartersville City School District. Individual emails may be monitored by authorized personnel.
- 3) System email is designed for professional, job-related use. Employees are encouraged to have and use a personal email account for personal use.
- 4) Messages that could be considered discriminatory based on race, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability or express political or religious beliefs are prohibited.
- 5) Sending "chain mail" messages is an unacceptable use of the systems. Email is not private communications since others may be able to access and read it. Messages composed, transmitted or received on system equipment or network are considered public documents and as such may be subject to Open Records requests or discovery during litigation. Staff should not put something in an email they would not want to put on paper or otherwise communicate.
- 6) Staff should ensure that the confidentiality of material transmitted will not be compromised and consider other methods of communication for sensitive or protected information.
- 7) If an email message contains personal opinions that might be mistaken as system or school policy, a disclaimer ("the opinions expressed here are my own and do not reflect official policy of the Cartersville City Schools") should be added to the message.
- 8) Users should periodically review messages and trash emails that are no longer needed. The school system archives composed, sent or received emails for up to two years and one day.
- 9) System email may not be used to solicit, advertise, or promote businesses that the staff member has or is associated with, or any business product or service.

Bringing Your Own Device (BYOD)

In cases where the system allows staff members to bring their personal devices and allows access to the system network, employees shall adhere to all rules, regulations, procedures, and guidelines regarding such access. Violation of this privilege may result in consequences as though the device belongs to the system.

Damages

Any reimbursement determined owed to the system by an employ because of loss or damage to a device or equipment owned by the district or its schools may be made directly or taken out of payroll for repair or replacement.

Enforcement

Violating any of the guidelines above may result in:

1. Restricted access to or temporary/permanent loss of technology resources.
2. Disciplinary or legal action including, but not limited to, employment discipline, suspension, termination, and/or criminal prosecution under appropriate state and federal laws. Violations of state law will be reported to proper law enforcement authorities.
3. Cartersville City Schools' internal procedures for enforcement of its policies are independent of possible prosecution under the law.
4. Users who damage hardware or software shall be responsible for the replacement cost.

Third-Party Streaming and Access

Third-party streaming accounts agreements (such as Disney+, Netflix, Hulu, Sling, Amazon Prime, etc.) overrule copyright exemptions. These companies have NOT made provisions for educational screenings of its content. While classroom use would be non-commercial, it would NOT be considered personal use. Streaming content in a classroom setting would be a direct violation of licensing terms. When you steam, the provider can identify you by your user account and the employer by its IP address. A provider may choose to prosecute for violation of their terms of service and will have all the information to impose a fine on you. Any content recommended for purchase to show in the classroom can be submitted for consideration.

Code of Ethics and Social Media

Educators are to demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards which preserve the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students. This may include conduct or behavior related to inappropriate information posted online. School officials have the authority to ask for online access to personal social media belonging to an employee if there is a belief or suspicion that the Code of Ethics has been violated. Refusal to grant access may be considered insubordination.

All staff members are strongly cautioned about their use and participation in any and all social networking sites including, but not limited to, *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Twitter*, etc. The Internet is a wonderful resource, but unfortunately it can also be used as a tool for inappropriate behavior and communication. If you allow pictures and comments to be posted about you or about others, those things are then known to the world and it is impossible to retract them once they are in the public mind. Certainly, educators are cautioned about their use of these sites because of the potential liability issues involving students. Something that might seem like a good idea to say or do on the Internet today may not seem like a good idea later on.

Inappropriate information posted online especially in social media may be considered a violation of the Code of Ethics. School officials have the authority to ask for online access to personal social media belonging to an employee if there is a belief or suspicion that the Code of Ethics has been violated. Refusal to grant access may be considered insubordination.

Staff members who use social media are responsible for their conduct and must recognize the likelihood that any posting will be viewed by students, parents, other staff members, and the community. Thus, any posting that contains content that reflects unprofessional or unethical conduct may be evidence that would support disciplinary or remedial action. Similarly, the educator is responsible if the content of any posting results in a loss of effectiveness in performing the duties of the job. Sexually provocative postings, postings related to

alcohol or drug use or that otherwise suggest conduct inconsistent with the Code of Ethics or norms of the profession should be avoided. Students should not be invited to be “friends” or access educator’s private social media sites.

School clubs and organizations using social media may do so to advertise, communicate, and promote events and membership. However, the school sponsor or employee of the organization is responsible for the content placed on these sources.

All staff should assume they are being recorded, including on social media, and that words, actions and behaviors are going to be broadcast publicly!

Section 6 – Public Relations & Communications

Community

The Cartersville Board of Education believes that the establishment of good will toward the schools is the mutual responsibility of every employee. Cartersville City taxpayers support the schools and have a right to know what is going on in our schools. If community members understand why certain things are done, they are much more likely to help solve many problems. Every person should be generous in explaining the principles behind what he or she is doing.

The Board accepts the premise that “Good teaching is good public relations.” A majority of the public forms its judgment of schools from what it hears from the children attending them. The teacher’s attitude toward children and their parents helps to determine the attitude of the community toward the schools and toward the teachers.

Employees are expected to adhere to the following in order to promote good public relations:

1. Be proud and loyal to the profession and its members; give your criticisms to only those people who can improve conditions.
2. Participate in the life of the community and its worthwhile organizations.
3. Use community people as resource persons in your classes as appropriate.
4. Summarize the day’s work with students just before they leave your class.
5. Make use of community resources to help in the instructional process.
6. Speak positively about what is going on at school publicly and privately.
7. Become a member of professional organizations and participate in professional growth.
8. Hone your teaching craft to the best of your ability. Your job is important in the lives of our community members.

Professional disagreements will occur and open discussion with other thoughtful professional is a valuable component of school improvement. Those disagreements, however, should take place in context, confidence and in a professional manner. Professionalism dictates that disagreements and criticisms are not to be taken to the public or shared outside the confines of the school system and only with those involved or those who have a bearing on a resolution in the matter.

Media Contacts

During or after a crisis situation, the school system designates the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations as the official spokespersons for the media. These offices may utilize the Director of Community Relations position to help disseminate information to the public and staff. All other employees should direct questions and inquiries from all media sources to either of these appointed spokespersons unless specifically directed by one of them to share information with the media.

Telephone Use

Cartersville City Schools’ telephones are designated for school business purposes in serving the interests of our customers and in the course of school operations. On occasion, personal calls may be necessary, but there is an expectation that these calls not be excessive and that they be limited to essential business and emergencies and that cannot be taken care of at any other time.

In this day of the availability of cell phones, employees are urged to use their own personal cell phone to conduct personal business. However, only in the most extreme circumstances should an employee be on a cell phone or system phone when assigned to provide instructional or supervisory responsibilities. Additionally, employees should not use cell phones while driving on campus when students might be present.

Personal long distance calls on system phones are prohibited.

Parent Relations

A good relationship between teacher and parent is just as important as a good relationship between teacher and student. Promotion of good relationships between parent and teacher includes, but is not limited to:

1. Being patient and courteous. Understanding that the parent's child is the most important thing to them just as your own children are to you.
2. Recognizing and considering the parent's concerns and issues.
3. Cooperating with and encouraging parents' positive efforts.
4. Taking time to discuss problems fully with parents and offering reasonable solutions.
5. Being big enough to admit a mistake.
6. Listening to parents.
7. Calling parents with "good news."
8. Contacting parents immediately when there is a negative change in the student's grades, attitude, behavior or attendance.

Parents should not be surprised about low or failing grades. Do not rely on progress reports and report cards to be the only communication you have with parents. When there is a problem or a change in a student's performance, contact the parent immediately. This will save you a lot of time later and potentially head off future problems. Although there are established times to send home grade reports, our student information system allows the teacher to send home a report at any time. Parents (grades 3-12) have electronic access to their student's grades at any time.

It is critically important that each teacher keep his/her electronic gradebook up-to-date. Teachers are expected to have the gradebook up-to-date by 9:00 a.m. Tuesday morning of each week during the school year with all available grades. Don't assume, however, that all parents have access to a computer to regularly check on grades.

Parents may request conferences with any of their children's teachers at any time. Parents of students in grades 6-12 who fail a course for the grading period (9 weeks for middle school; semester for high school) must have been notified of the student's below-passing performance at least once during the grading period.

Grade information and academic performance is strictly confidential. Grades of students should never be discussed with or made available to anyone other than the student and the student's parents or guardians.

Automated Phone Messaging

The school system uses a voice messaging service to communicate with parents and the staff about important happenings in the school or system. The system/school can contact every parent via a telephone message simultaneously within about 5 minutes. Additionally, staff members may be contacted via this means about important announcements such as school closings and emergency situations. It is important that the school have on file a current and valid phone number for each staff member.

It is possible with the principal's authority for a particular group of students (ex., basketball team, FBLA club, chorus, etc.) to be set up to receive the messages pertaining to that group. Only authorized personnel are set up to send out a message. However, sponsors and teachers can write up a message and have an authorized user send out the message. See your principal/supervisor for more information.

Copyright

Employees are prohibited from unlawfully copying or distributing copyrighted material, including software, database files, documents, articles, or other information regardless of the source. This also includes information downloaded from the Internet. Absence of a copyright mark does not mean that the material is not copyright protected. Failure to observe copyright laws may result in disciplinary action. Any question about copyright issues should be directed to the school media specialist.

Section 7 – Certification

Certificate Responsibility

The certificate is a most important document as relates to employment. Professional employees must possess a valid, in-field Georgia certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). **It is each employee's responsibility to know the status of his/her certification and to keep current all provisions including requirements to renew the certificate. Certification is the responsibility of the employee.** Important aspects in this responsibility are: in-field provisions, expiration date, requirements for renewal, and procedure for renewal. The system must have on file the most recent, valid certificate from each certificated employee.

The school system, through the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations, will assist teachers with certification questions and issues. The school system reserves the right not to recommend a teacher for certification renewal and is under no obligation to request any certification waiver from PSC rules or requirements.

Failure to keep a current certificate may be grounds for termination or non-renewal of contract. Employees must take appropriate and necessary steps to have the appropriate/required certificate as soon as possible. Failure to secure the appropriate/required certificate may constitute grounds for non-renewal or termination.

Certificated employees are expected to have an online account with PSC at <https://mypsc.gapsc.org> where you can obtain a copy of your certificate and other pertinent documents and certification information.

In agreement with a contract of employment with the Board, all certified staff must obtain appropriate/required certification, where applicable. Additionally, paraprofessionals must meet the “highly qualified” requirements by having completed at least two years (60 semester hours) of college; possessing a college degree; or passing an approved paraprofessional test.

Required Qualifications

Federal law requires that all instructional paraprofessionals meet certain standards or preparation. To meet those requirements in Georgia, paraprofessionals must 1) have an Associate's Degree or higher from an accredited college or university recognized by the Professional Standards Commission, OR 2) have 60 or more semester hours from an accredited and PSC recognized college or university, OR 3) passed a PSC approved paraprofessional assessment and a High School Diploma or GED. The system must have **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS** from the college/university showing the hours earned.

Questions about qualification requirements and status may be directed to the Assistant Superintendent.

Paraprofessional Certification & Qualifications

GaPSC requires us to upload the attached **Initial Certificate** and **License Application** and **Verification of Lawful Presence** when we apply for the parapro license and/or to renew an expired license.

Minimum Qualifications: Meet **one** of the following requirements:

1. Hold an Associate's degree or higher in any subject from a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution.
2. Have completed two (2) years of college coursework (sixty [60] semester hours) above the remedial level with a grade of “C” or better at a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution.

3. Have passed the GACE Paraprofessional Assessment and hold a minimum of a high school diploma or GED equivalent.

-If you meet the qualifications for (1) Hold an Associate's degree or higher you will need to request an **official transcript** to be emailed to Denise Brown at dbrown@cartersvilleschools.org.

-If you meet the qualifications for (2) Have completed two years of college coursework, 60 semester hours, with a grade of "C" or better, you will need to request an official transcript from the college(s) to be emailed to Denise Brown at dbrown@cartersvilleschools.org.

-If you meet the qualifications for (3) you will need to email Denise Brown a copy of your high school diploma or GED as well as take the GACE Paraprofessional test. If you cannot locate your diploma, please request a high school transcript or GED to be emailed to Denise Brown.

If the transcripts cannot be emailed, it can be mailed to Cartersville City Schools, PO Box 3310, Cartersville, GA 30120 Attn Denise Brown.

GACE Parapro Signup [Registration: GACE Paraprofessional Assessment for Test Takers \(ets.org\)](https://ets.org/gace-paraprofessional-assessment-for-test-takers)

Section 8 – Curriculum & Instruction

Controversial Issues [see Policy IKBB Divisive Concepts]

DEFINITIONS

1. **'Divisive concepts'** means any of the following concepts, including views espousing such concepts:
 - A. One race is inherently superior to another race;
 - B. The United States of America is fundamentally racist;
 - C. An individual, by virtue of his or her race, is inherently or consciously racist or oppressive toward individuals of other races;
 - D. An individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race;
 - E. An individual's moral character is inherently determined by his or her race;
 - F. An individual, solely by virtue of his or her race, bears individual responsibility for actions committed in the past by other individuals of the same race;
 - G. An individual, solely by virtue of his or her race, should feel anguish, guilt, or any other form of psychological distress;
 - H. Performance-based advancement or the recognition and appreciation of character traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or have been advocated for by individuals of a particular race to oppress individuals of another race; or
 - I. Any other form of race scapegoating or race stereotyping.
2. **'Espousing personal political beliefs'** means an individual, while performing official duties as part of his or her employment or engagement with a school or local school system, intentionally encouraging or attempting to persuade or indoctrinate a student, school community member, or other school personnel to agree with or advocate for such individual's personal beliefs concerning divisive concepts.
3. **'Race scapegoating'** means assigning fault or blame to a race, or to an individual of a particular race because of his or her race. Such term includes, but is not limited to, any claim that an individual of a particular race, consciously and by virtue of his or her race, is inherently racist or is inherently inclined to oppress individuals of other races.
4. **'Race stereotyping'** means ascribing character traits, values, moral or ethical codes, status, or beliefs to an individual because of his or her race.

REQUIREMENTS

1. The Board of Education, the Superintendent, and each school shall prohibit employees from discriminating against students and other employees based on race.
2. The Board of Education, the Superintendent, and each school shall ensure that curricula and training programs encourage employees and students to practice tolerance and mutual respect and to refrain from judging others based on race.
3. Nothing in this policy shall be construed or applied to:
 - A. Inhibit or violate the rights protected by the Constitutions of Georgia and the United States of America or undermine intellectual freedom and free expression;
 - B. Infringe upon the intellectual vitality of students and employees;
 - C. Prohibit the Board, system or a school from promoting concepts such as tolerance, mutual respect, cultural sensitivity, or cultural competency; provided, however, that such efforts do not conflict with the requirements of

this policy and applicable laws;

D. Prohibit a school administrator, teacher, other school personnel, or an individual facilitating a training program from responding in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs to questions regarding specific divisive concepts raised by students, school community members, or participants in a training program;

E. Prohibit the discussion of divisive concepts, as part of a larger course of instruction, in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs;

F. Prohibit the full and rigorous implementation of curricula, or elements of a curriculum, that are required as part of advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or dual enrollment coursework; provided, however, that such implementation is done in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs;

G. Prohibit the use of curricula that addresses the topics of slavery, racial oppression, racial segregation, or racial discrimination, including topics relating to the enactment and enforcement of laws resulting in racial oppression, segregation, and discrimination in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs;

H. Create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by any party against the District, Board or the schools, departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, agents, or any other personnel affiliated with the District or the Board.

4. The Board of Education hereby adopts this complaint resolution policy to address complaints alleging violations of this policy.

A. A response will be provided to a complaint made by:

i. The parent of a student enrolled at the school where the alleged violation occurred;

ii. A student who has reached the age of majority or is a lawfully emancipated minor and who is enrolled at the school where the alleged violation occurred; or

iii. An individual employed as a school administrator, teacher, or other school personnel at the school where the alleged violation occurred;

B. The complaint shall first be submitted in writing to the principal of the school where the alleged violation occurred;

C. The complaint shall provide a reasonably detailed description of the alleged violation;

D.

i. Within five school days of receiving such written complaint, the school principal or a school system designee will review the complaint and take reasonable steps to investigate the allegations in the complaint;

ii. Within ten school days of receiving the complaint, unless another schedule is mutually agreed to by the complainant and the school principal or the school system designee, the school principal or such designee will confer with the complainant and inform the complainant whether a violation occurred, in whole or in part, and, if such a violation was found to have occurred, what remedial steps have been or will be taken; provided, however, that the confidentiality of student or personnel information shall not be violated; and

iii. Following such conference, within three school days of a request by the complainant, the school principal or school system designee will provide to the complainant a written summary of the findings of the investigation and a statement of remedial measures, if any; provided, however, that such written response shall not disclose any confidential student or personnel information.

E. The determinations shall be reviewed by the Superintendent or his or her designee within ten school days of receiving a written request for such review by the complainant addressed to the Superintendent, provided, however, that confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review;

F. In reviewing the decision, the Superintendent shall review the original complaint filed by the complainant, any communication between the complainant and the principal or designee from the time the complaint is filed until the time of the review that is related to the complaint, and any statement in writing submitted to the Superintendent in connection with the review by either the complainant or the principal or designee by a date set by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall have the right, but not the obligation, to hear from the complainant and the principal or designee or to request further information from either.

G. The Superintendent's decision following the review provided for in subparagraph (E) shall be subject to review by the Board of Education as provided in Code Section 20-2-1160; provided, however, that confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review;

H. When the Board has made a decision, it shall be binding on the parties; provided, however, that the parties shall be notified in writing of the decision and of their right to appeal the decision to the State Board of Education and of the procedures and requirements for such an appeal as set forth in Georgia law.

I. Any individual described in (4)(A) above, shall have the right at any time, including prior to filing a complaint, to request, in writing, from the Superintendent or the school principal nonconfidential records which he or she reasonably believes may substantiate a complaint under this policy. Such records shall be produced for inspection within a reasonable amount of time not to exceed three school days of receipt of the request. If some, but not all, of the records are available within three school days, the records that are available shall be made available, and the requester shall be provided a description of the records which are unavailable and a timeline for when those records will be available. These records shall be provided as soon as practicable, but in no case later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the request.

J. If a parent's request described in subsection (I) is denied or the records not produced within thirty (30) days, the parent may appeal the denial or failure to the Board which must place the appeal on the agenda for the next public meeting. If it is too late for such appeal to appear on the next meeting's agenda, the appeal must be included on the agenda for the subsequent meeting.

Grading [*also see Policy IHA – Grading System*]

Numeric grades will be used in all classes, grades 6-12. A combination of number and letter grades may be used in grades Kindergarten through five. Additionally, schools may utilize standards-based reporting methods for communicating student progress.

Where letter grades are used, the following conversion scale shall apply when necessary:

A	=	90	-	100
B	=	80	-	89
C	=	70	-	79
F	=	Below		70

Grades should reflect the knowledge, skill, and performance level of the student in a particular class or subject. Students are expected to follow directions for turning in assignments, follow classroom protocols, and time requirements in assignments. However, the grade on an assignment should be weighted on the content achievement level and/or skill performance and not the protocol about turning in the assignment.

Homework

The term “homework” refers to an assignment to be prepared during a period of supervised study in class or outside class or which requires individual work in the classroom, public library, media center, or home. The overarching purposes of homework are to:

1. improve the learning process,
2. to aide in the mastery of skills,
3. to teach self-discipline and self-motivation regarding responsibility and effort; and/or
4. to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Homework is a learning activity which should increase in complexity and amount with the maturity of the student. With increased maturity, learning should become more of an independent activity. This should be established through consistent assignments which encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others.

Homework should have a valid educational purpose and should pertain to the objectives of the unit under study or the course being taken. Homework should not merely be “busywork.” Teachers should endeavor to make meaningful assignments. The purposes should always be clearly understood by both the teacher and the student.

Teachers are expected to:

1. Set clear and rigorous standards for the quality of work for all students.
2. Create an effective system for communicating homework guidelines for students and parents.
3. Coordinate projects so that all students have access to research and resource materials.
4. Design quality homework which is authentic and tied to mastery of student performance standards.
5. Allow for varied learning styles and abilities.
6. Provide specific direction and instruction in the completion of homework activities.
7. Communicate expectations, timelines and requirements for homework activities.
8. Provide students the opportunity to ask questions to clarify assignments.
9. Evaluate group projects based upon individual student participation and group process as well as final product.
10. Be sensitive to the overall school experience in regards to the assignment of homework (holidays, state and local testing dates, emergencies, etc.).

Make-Up Work

Students who are absent from school with excused absences shall be expected and allowed to make up the work they have missed. The teacher of each subject area will determine the plans for making up the work. The privilege of making up work shall be extended for unavoidable absences such as illness.

For overall academic progress students are expected to do the work missed during a suspension. Students shall be allowed to make up missed work during an out-of-school suspension. The student shall have at least the same number of days to make up said work plus one day as he/she was suspended subject to the schedule of the teacher(s). For example, if a student is suspended for three days, he/she will have at least three days to make up the work beginning the second day back after the suspension. It is the student’s responsibility to find out from the teacher what he/she is responsible to make up and to make arrangements with the teacher(s). Individual teachers shall have the right to exempt a student from daily grades which may have limited bearing on the student’s final grade average.

Students shall not be penalized in their academic grade for the first suspension of a full credit period (semester for grades 9-12 and year for grades 3-8) if the student makes up the work in the time allotted by this policy and arrangements with the teacher. For subsequent suspensions in a full grading period, a student may receive a grade of no higher than “70” on graded work missed during an out-of-school suspension and made up within the

time allotted by this policy and arrangements with the teacher(s) except for final examinations and long-term assignments. If the student fails to make up the work, the teacher may assign a grade of “0” for each assignment not completed.

Long term assignments such as research projects and papers assigned before a suspension and due during the suspension may be turned in on the day the student returns from suspension without penalty. Long term assignments made during a suspension are due on the assigned due date.

Instructional Materials *[see Policy IFAA -Selection of Instructional Materials]*

Core instructional materials for each classroom and/or course shall be free to all students and are the property of the Cartersville City Schools. The selection of core instructional material, including textbooks, supplementary materials, and reference materials, shall be carried on continuously in order to keep up with the great expansion of knowledge and the rapid changes in our world today. The process of materials selection shall be based on projected teaching strategies and learning activities.

A core instructional material selection committee shall be established in each content area at such a time when there is consideration for adopting materials for that area or at such other time when review of materials is appropriate. The committee shall be composed of representatives from the school system who would be impacted the most from an adoption. The Chief Academic Officer shall serve as the chairperson of each core instructional material selection committee.

Lesson Plans

Teachers must develop appropriate lesson plans for all classes taught. These plans should be written and must reflect objectives, methodology, materials, and evaluation of the approved curriculum for the class or course. Teachers shall provide students and/or parents, as appropriate, with a copy of their course syllabus. Written lesson plans and course syllabi may be required to be turned in to the principal or his/her designee at any time.

Extra Credit

As a general guide, extra credit work is at the discretion of the teacher. However, extra credit work should be strongly related to the content of the course and curriculum.

Field Trips *[see Policy IFCB – Field Trips]*

A field trip is to be taken only in connection with the approved curriculum in which students are engaged. Teachers should consider wisely the impact of any such experience in the learning process. It is the responsibility of the individual teacher or sponsor to make all arrangements for field trips. However, such plans must be cleared with the principal or his/her designee before final arrangements are confirmed, students are notified, or funds are encumbered.

Trips should be planned so that there is no conflict with other school or system-wide activities.

The teacher must submit in writing to the principal or his/her designee plans for any field trip so that the principal or his/her designee may approve the trip at least ten (10) days in advance of the trip. The teacher must contact the proposed place of visitation and make all confirmed arrangements including, but not limited to: date, time of arrival and departure, cost(s) per pupil and/or cost(s) per adult and any other pertinent information. The teacher must determine transportation costs, admission prices, etc., and include this information on the approval form.

The teacher shall engage students in thorough pre-planning and follow-up activities relevant to any field trip. These plans must include purpose, curriculum-related objectives, pre-trip and post-trip activities, and evaluation plans.

No student will be permitted to go on a field trip unless a permission slip, signed by the parent or guardian, is on file with the school. It is the teacher’s responsibility to see that each student in the class is furnished a permission slip. The teacher shall make instructional and supervisory arrangements for any student who does not go on the field trip.

The teacher is responsible for the conduct of students at all times during trips. Repeated behavior referrals on a student or where there exists a safety risk or danger to others may result in the principal denying that student the privilege of attending a field trip. Denial of field trips is an administrative decision and parents must be notified if this loss of privilege occurs. Students affected by this decision will have appropriate alternative assignments at school the day of the field trip.

The teacher is responsible for checking student attendance before leaving the school grounds, before departure from the destination, and throughout the trip.

Adequate chaperones for the entire trip shall be provided as follows:

1. The faculty advisor(s) shall accompany and continue with the party from time of departure until their return.
2. In the event of an overnight trip, there shall be an adequate number of adults – faculty plus responsible parents, as needed. A faculty or staff member shall assume the full responsibility for the behavior and conduct of each young person.
3. The number of adult chaperones required for a particular trip shall be determined by the principal.

Overnight and/or out-of-state field trips must be approved by the Board of Education. These requests should be submitted in writing with the approval of the principal no later than the Monday of the week preceding a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Out-of-country trips are not sponsored by the Cartersville School Board. If school employees acting as individuals wish to sponsor such trips outside the school calendar, it must be made clear that these trips are not sponsored by the school or by the Cartersville Board of Education. School time and materials cannot be used in advertising or planning these types of trips.

Section 9 – Professional Growth

The purpose of professional learning activities is to enhance the capabilities of staff members in order to provide educational services to the students of the City of Cartersville. Professional learning is also designed to address deficiencies of as identified through the annual evaluation process and to meet other identified needs. Each school should have a professional learning committee assigned the task of evaluating professional learning opportunities and developing a written plan for the school. This plan can be part of the school improvement plan or at least tied to it.

Expense Reimbursement

Reimbursement of necessary travel expenses relating to professional and staff development may be authorized by the Superintendent or his/her designee. A travel voucher must be submitted to the business office by way of the local school bookkeeper for reimbursement. In general, state regulations regarding travel reimbursement limits and appropriate documentation will be applied to the expense statement. Certain funding sources may preset limits on expenditures, and these limits shall apply. In general, persons of the same gender from the system are expected to share a room where possible. Prior approval of expenditures is necessary from the employee's principal/supervisor or his/her designee.

Professional Organizations

Employees are encouraged to consider membership in professional organizations and associations which support the goals and philosophy of the school system. Automatic payroll deduction is available for membership dues to PAGE (Professional Association of Georgia Educators) and GAE (Georgia Association of Educators). Contact the Payroll Office about payroll deductions.

Schools Foundation

The Cartersville Schools Foundation is a nonprofit organization which specifically supports the Cartersville City Schools through student scholarships (GATEKEY), teacher grants, and teacher recognitions (Honor Thy Teacher, Teacher of the Year, etc.). The Foundation raises funds through gifts and activities to support its initiatives. Employees may contribute funds to the foundation which are returned 100% to students and teachers. Contact Lisa Bell, Executive Director, about Foundation information, lbell@cartersvilleschools.org.

Automatic payroll deduction is available for contributions to the Foundation which may be tax deductible. Contact the Payroll Office about payroll deductions.

Section 10 – Students

DISCIPLINE

A central goal of our schools is to help students develop self-discipline: a capacity for wise behavior through inner control on a sound knowledge of the forces in life. Our schools must help each student learn to control himself/herself so as to conform within responsible limits to the environment. Discipline so conceived is developmental rather than punitive. Based upon faith in the worth and dignity of each individual, discipline becomes a guiding rather than a punishing device.

The teacher's role in discipline should be like that of a kind, firm, judicious parent in the home; helping children grow in their capacities for self-discipline and self-direction. Basic to that approach is each teacher's success in maintaining an environment in which students eagerly learn.

A teacher shall have the authority, consistent with local board policy, to manage his/her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or his/her designee to maintain discipline in the classroom. The principal or assistant principal shall respond when a student is referred by a teacher. The administrator shall employ appropriate discipline management techniques that are consistent with local board policy and with the intent of changing the behavior. Once a teacher refers a student to the office for discipline, the matter is then left to the professional judgment and discretion of the administrator to deal with the student in the manner he/she feels most appropriate given all circumstances.

Punishment

Causes of infractions of rules and departures from good behavior should be analyzed and correction should be sought through improvement of causal factors before punishment is invoked. Study of individual differences, conferences with pupil and parent, and assistance from the school administration and specialists within the school system should be the teacher's first thought in attempting to help a pupil correct behavior patterns which may delay his/her own development and which may interfere with the rights of others.

Students should not be punished in a way which has a direct effect on their academic standing except as outlined in district or school policy.

Detention: Students may be detained before or after school for misbehavior. Schools shall establish procedures governing detention. Students must be given advance notice of at least one day before the assignment of detention is to begin.

Extra Work: Students shall not be given extra class work or homework as a punishment for misbehavior.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a means of discipline in the Cartersville City Schools.

Classroom Environment

We all respond better in an environment that is clean, orderly and attractive. This same is true for students and their behavior often is set by the tone in the classroom. It should be remembered that children respond to attractive surroundings, and an effort should be made by teachers to keep classrooms clean and attractive. Teaching children to be neat and to have proper respect for public property is one of the duties of the teacher. Don't assume students should know how to behave and how to take care of things. Make sure they know by teaching them this valuable characteristic. The teacher is expected to ensure that students are not destructive of school property, including books, materials, equipment, and furnishings.

Investigations and Searches

The administration of each school, or an authorized representative, possesses the authority to conduct reasonable questioning of students in order to properly investigate and punish student misconduct.

The Board authorizes reasonable searches of students and their personal property directed to that end by authorized school officials (i.e., administrators or authorized teachers acting in the place of an administrator). Searches based on reasonable suspicion of the presence of deleterious items may proceed without hindrance or delay, but they shall be conducted in a manner which ensures that students are not arbitrarily stripped of personal privacy. The decision to search a student, personal property, or assigned school property shall be made by the school administration. The search should be made in the presence of at least one adult employee witness. Some examples of such items may include but are not limited to, noisemakers, water guns, contraband, drugs, alcohol, and weapons.

The Board authorizes random searches of Board owned property such as lockers, desks, and other such property which may be assigned to students. Such general random sweep searches may be conducted without reasonable suspicion if care is exercised to be sure that students subjected to the search are demonstrably selected according to chance. If reasonable suspicion exists, student cars brought on campus, student book bags, and school lockers, desks, and other school property shall be subject to inspection and search by school authorities at all times without further notice to students or parents. It shall be the obligation of the authorized person conducting the exercise to be able to explain to the satisfaction of the Superintendent, if called upon to do so, that no bias as to gender, religion, or race entered the selection process.

Student Medication

Requiring, suggesting, or implying that any student should be on or consider taking any medication by name, by type, or by use is prohibited.

CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

[see Policy JGI – Child Abuse or Neglect]

Georgia statute, state board policy, and local board policy require teachers, administrators, substitute teachers, and all school personnel having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused and/or neglected to report such suspected cases immediately. Personnel who report cases of suspected child abuse and/or neglect are immune from prosecution if such reports are made in good faith.

School system personnel having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused and/or neglected shall report or cause reports of the suspected abuse/neglect to their school principal or his/her designee or school counselor immediately. A report by phone or other oral communication or a written report by electronic submission or facsimile shall be made immediately, but in no case more than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse or neglect has occurred to DFACS. Knowingly or willingly failing to report suspected child abuse is a misdemeanor under Georgia law. Except as hereinabove stated all information pertaining to the report of the abuse/neglect shall be kept in strict confidence.

REPORTING OF BULLYING

[O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4]

Any employee who has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is the target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal. Any person who reports an incident of bullying in good faith shall be immune from civil liability for any damages caused by such reporting. Employees should report all reasonable suspicions of: physical abuse, neglect, emotional neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation or exposure to family violence, sexual abuse, and commercial sexual exploitation (child sex trafficking).

Solicitations of Students

Solicitation of students for financial or materials contributions, or for purchase of goods and/or services, on school property, using school property or supplies, and/or at school-sponsored activities, by outside groups is not permitted except where the solicitation is an integral part of a properly approved contract or agreement.

Solicitations of information through surveys or other data gathering projects may be permitted where these have been reviewed and approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee as authorized by the Board. The Superintendent is directed to develop procedures for receiving, reviewing, and acting upon requests to collect information or data from students on school property or at school-sponsored activities. The procedures shall meet the following requirements:

1. The project clearly has educational value to the students or to the improvement of education in general.
2. Any instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material that will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation will be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the students.
3. Without the prior consent of the student, or in the case of an unemancipated minor, without the prior consent of the parent or guardian, no student shall be required to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:
 - (a) political affiliations;
 - (b) religious affiliations;
 - (c) mental or psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or the student's family;
 - (d) sexual behavior and/or attitudes;
 - (e) illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and/or demeaning behavior;
 - (f) critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close relationships;
 - (g) legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; and
 - (h) income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Solicitations by Students *[see Policy JKB – Solicitations by Students]*

All school-related fund-raising activities involving students must have the prior written approval of the principal. There should be no sales during the instructional part of the school day involving students unless specifically authorized by the principal.

An application for an organized fund-raising activity shall be obtained from the principal's office.

Students are not to be involved in selling merchandise for the benefit of individuals or outside-school organizations while on the school campus or on the bus. In order to safeguard their health and safety, students are prohibited from selling items or soliciting contributions, pledges, donations, or orders door-to-door for the school or any school-related organization.

Transporting Students

Employees are advised that it is generally not in the best interest to transport students in any vehicle other than system vehicles. It is not an expectation that staff members transport students.

False Accusation

A student shall not falsify, misrepresent, omit or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a school employee toward a student. Such false accusation is prohibited both on and off school grounds and hours. Employees specifically aware of such accusations should report it to the principal immediately.

Section 11 – Complaints & Grievances

[see Policy GAE – Complaints & Grievances]

The Board encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible. Policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed.

This procedure shall not apply to:

- (1) Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluation and professional development plans;
- (2) Job performance;
- (3) Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee; or
- (4) The revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee.

Levels

A. Level One

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 complaint is based. The complaint must include sufficient information about the complaint to enable determination whether the complaint is covered by policy. The complaint shall include the following:

1. The intent of the complainant to utilize this complaint procedure, clearly stated;
2. A reference or description of the statute, policy, rule, contract provision or regulation that is alleged to have been violated, misinterpreted or misapplied; and
3. 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.
4. A statement of the relief desired. The relief requested must be reasonable, realistic, and directed toward correcting the alleged situation.

"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, 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.

The Level One Administrator shall conduct an investigation on the complaint and render a written decision thereon within fifteen (15) days of the filing of the complaint.

B. Level Two – Appeal to the Assistant Superintendent

If the matter is not resolved at Level One, the employee may proceed to Level Two by submitting a written statement to the Assistant Superintendent within five (5) working days of the Level One decision. This appeal should outline the relevant facts applicable to statute, policy, rule, regulation, or written agreement that has allegedly been violated, and the resolution sought. Complaints not based on an alleged violation, misinterpretation, misapplication of legal statutes, or Board policies may not be appealed beyond Level Two. The Assistant Superintendent shall conduct an investigation or hearing and render a decision within (10) working days of the date of the filing of the appeal.

C. Level Three – Appeal to Board of Education

If the matter is not resolved at Level Two, the employee may appeal to the Superintendent within five (5) working days of the Level Two decision. The Superintendent shall review the complaint and may meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved. The Superintendent shall render his/her decision in writing within twenty (20) calendar days and perfect service thereof on the Complainant. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final.

Evidence; Representation; Decisions; Records

a) Evidence. The Complainant shall be entitled to an opportunity to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses, but the Complainant may not present additional evidence at the Second or Third 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 hearing an appeal from a prior level.

b) Representation. The complainant and the person against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is appealed shall be entitled to the presence of an individual of his/her choice to assist in the presentation of the complaint to the central office administrator (Level Two and Level Three). The presence of any individual other than the Complainant and the Administrator at Level One is prohibited, except witnesses who present testimony or documents.

If the District misses a deadline, the complaint advances to the next level. If the complainant misses a deadline, the complaint is terminated.

Reprisals Prohibited

No personnel shall be subjected to reprisals as a result of filing any complaint under the complaint/grievance policy. Additionally, no personnel giving testimony or serving as a witness in the investigation or complaint procedure under this policy shall be subject to reprisals. Any reprisals may be referred to the GaPSC.

Forms

Forms for submitting a claim under the provisions of this policy are located in the School Board Policies in the Board Policy Manual or online.

Official Investigations

Employees are required to fully and truthfully participate in any official investigation conducted by an administrator, legal counsel, PSC, law enforcement, or any third party secured by any of these sources. Employees have no inherent right to silence. Refusal or failure to so participate in an investigation is considered insubordination and may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Cartersville City Board of Education will not discriminate against any qualified employee because of a disability. Employees must be able to perform the essential duties of the job assignment. Reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with a disability will be provided, following the ADA guidelines.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

It is the policy of the Cartersville City Schools not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, marital status, age, religion, national origin, or handicap in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices.

Contact Information:

Special Education/IDEA/504/Student Program Accessibility – Dr. Susan Tolbert, 770-382-5880

Title IX (students)– Darrell Demastus, 770-382-3200

Title IX (employees)/ADA/ADEA/Personnel Issues/Title II-A- Andre Weaver & Audra Saunders, 770-382-5880

Section 12 – References

Cartersville Board of Education Policies

Cartersville School Board of Education policy manual contains rules and guidelines that relate to all aspects of school operations. All policies in their full text are available on the system website with a link to the GSBA (Georgia School Boards Association) e-Policy website. Go to the Cartersville City Schools website at www.cartersvilleschools.org, select Board of Education, then Policies & Minutes, then Policies. A policy manual is also located in each school media center and the office of the principal.

Board policies that begin with the letters “GA” in their descriptive code relate to all personnel in the school system. Policies that begin with the letters “GB” relate to certified personnel. Policies that begin with the letters “GC” relate to classified personnel including paraprofessionals. Policies that begin with the letters “GD” relate specifically to paraprofessionals. Employees are encouraged to be familiar with the policies and be aware of all implications or changes of policy. Changes in Board policy take official action of the Board of Education. Any changes are recorded in the minutes of the Board and in Board highlights/summaries sent out by the central office after a Board meeting. Contact the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of HR/Operations if you have any questions related to board policies.

Cartersville Board of Education Meetings

The Cartersville City School Board of Education regularly meets generally the second Monday of each month in the Board Room at the Central Office, 15 Nelson Street, Cartersville, Georgia 30120. Additionally, the Board meets in a Work Session the Thursday prior to its regularly scheduled monthly meeting. Both of these meetings begin at 6:00 p.m.

Website Resources

Cartersville Board of Education, www.cartersvilleschools.org

Includes system strategic plan and goals, school system calendar, employment opportunities, board policy, bus routes, board meetings, PowerSchool login, school foundation, e-mail, teacher resources, SACS report, and links to system schools.

Cartersville School Foundation, www.cvsf.org

Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA), <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/legislation.html>

Georgia Department of Education, www.doe.k12.ga.us

Includes the Georgia Public Education Report Card, education definitions, education acronyms, and information on the state curriculum, Georgia public schools and the State Board of Education.

Georgia Professional Standards Commission, www.gapsc.com

Includes information on Georgia Teacher certification, Educator preparation, & Ethics for Georgia Educators.

Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE), www.gace.ets.org

Includes information on Georgia Assessments in relation to certification requirements.

Georgia Teacher Retirement System (TRS), www.trsga.com

Georgia School Boards Association, www.gsba.com

Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, www.gpee.org

Georgia Library Learning Online (GALILEO), www.galileo.usg.edu

Georgia Department of Technical & Adult Education, www.dtae.tec.ga.us

American Association of School Administrators, www.aasa.org

MyPSC, <https://mypsc.gapsc.org>

National Center for Education Statistics, www.nces.ed.gov

National Association of Elementary Schools Principals, www.naesp.org

National Association of Secondary School Principals, www.nassp.org

U.S. Department of Education, www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/index.html

Central Office Directory

As of August 1, 2024

Cartersville City Schools

P.O. Box 3310 ~~~~~ 15 Nelson Street, Cartersville, Georgia 30120

770-382-5880 ~~~~~ 770-387-7476 FAX

Dr. Marc Feuerbach	.....	Superintendent
Andre Weaver	.....	Assistant Superintendent of Admin Services/Operations
Audra Saunders	.....	Associate Superintendent of Teaching & Learning
Matt Gibson	.....	Executive Dir. Of State/Fed Programs & Human Resources
Dr. Susan Tolbert	.....	Director of Exceptional Services
Floyd Braid	.....	Chief of Staff Strategic Initiatives & School Improvement
Diane Hassler	.....	Director of Inst. Technology, Media Services, & SIS
Jessica Childers	.....	School Board Secretary
Denise Brown	.....	Secretary of HR/Operations
Kathy Lockard	.....	Secretary, Teaching & Learning
Xochilt Benitez	.....	Secretary, Exceptional Services
Lisa Bell	.....	Executive Director, Cartersville Schools Foundation
Cheree Dye	.....	Director of Community Relations
Katie Vaughan	.....	Coor. of K-5 Instruction & Literacy
Beth Glover	.....	Coor. of 6-12 Instruction & Advanced Academics
Ashley Chupp	.....	Coor. of Assessment, Title III, ESL, & Parent Family Engagement
Jorie Wright	.....	Coor. of Exceptional Services
Althea Collins	.....	School Psychologist
Raven Ward	.....	School Psychologist
Samantha Berry	.....	Receptionist
Carla Boyd	.....	Data Support Specialist
Kenelle Gresham	.....	District Registrar & Data Clerk
Hilary Mullinax	.....	Chief Finance Officer
Christa Vosburgh	.....	Payroll Manager
Tonya Nally	.....	System Bookkeeper
Kim Black	.....	Accounting/Benefits Clerk
Charlene Farriba	.....	Accounting Clerk/School Nutrition
Kristy Hovers	.....	Director of Technology
David Hutcheson	.....	Network Specialist
Marc Vosburgh	.....	Technology Specialist
Kimberly Crapps	.....	Technology Specialist
Steven Schreck	.....	Technology Specialist
Crystal Price	.....	Technology Clerk
Ken Paige	.....	Director of Construction & SPLOSTS Projects
Cathy Watkins	.....	Transportation Supervisor
Keith Williams	.....	Maintenance Supervisor
Phoebe Martin	.....	Secretary, Transportation & Maintenance
Mallory Whorton	.....	Director of School Nutrition
Katrina Boyd	.....	School Nutrition Bookkeeper & Coordinator
Kristen Braid	.....	School Social Worker
Mari Casole	.....	School Social Worker
Tiffany Mize	.....	School Social Worker
Midorie Mujahid	.....	School Social Worker

The Cartersville City Schools Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational, employment or other activity under its jurisdiction on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age or handicapping condition; and will honor all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination.