



District Employee Handbook

2019-2020

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

[Elbert County School District](#)

It is not the intent or purpose of this handbook to answer all the questions that may arise for the educator. It may, however, serve as a guide to the major issues that come into question. It is the responsibility of the educator to become familiar with this handbook and to explore other sources of information when needed. In most instances each school issues a school level handbook. An Elbert County Board of Education Policy is available online at the system web site, <http://www.elbert.k12.ga.us/> . By going to this site and clicking “Board of Education” and then the “eBOARD” ” link, you will find links to local Board of Education policy and state legislation. In this handbook policy codes (i.e. GAAA for the non-discrimination statement as shown above) are shown for your reference. State laws are referenced by their code (e.g. 20-2-210 for Evaluations).The school system has the right to change policies, practices and benefits. The policies and guidelines in this handbook are references only and do not replace or extend official existing policies.

[Elbert County Board of Education](#)

The Elbert County Board of Education holds their official monthly meeting on the third Monday of each month at the central office building in the boardroom at 5:30. The Board of Education holds their monthly work session on the second Monday of each month at the central office building in the board staff development room at 5:30. A matter may be added to the agenda or brought to the attention of the Board by contacting the superintendent’s office before noon on the Monday preceding a regular meeting. Staff members are welcome and invited to attend all meetings.

Board of Education Members

District 1 – Keith Harper
 District 2 – Ben Baker (Chairman)
 District 3 – Samantha Rucker
 District 4 – Mike Turner
 District 5 – Teresa Barnett (Vice Chair)

[POLICY - INTERNAL ORGANIZATION - BB](#)

[POLICY - SPECIAL BOARD MEETINGS - BCAC](#)

[POLICY - BOARD MEETING AGENDAS - BCBD](#)

[ELBERT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES - eBOARD](#)

Information concerning the Elbert County School Board Policies can be located on the Elbert County Schools’ eBOARD Site. There are links (in blue) throughout this employee handbook that will take you directly to Elbert County Board Policy.

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DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

**50 Laurel Drive, Elberton, GA 30635
(706) 213-4000**

Chuck Bell..... Superintendent
Keith Martin..... Chief Financial Officer
Jon Jarvis..... Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Fran Floyd..... Federal Programs Director
Tanya Long..... Director of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Adam Kurtz..... Special Education Director
Bridgette Matthews..... School Nutrition Director
Kim Fuller..... Accountability, Assessment, and CTAE Director
Bruce Stewart..... Technology Director
Clint Winter..... Instructional Technology Coordinator
Mark Cartledge..... Transportation Director

MISSION OF THE ELBERT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Elbert County School District, in partnership with the entire community, will nurture, educate, and graduate students who have been empowered to reach their full potential as responsible, ethical and productive citizens.

VISION OF THE ELBERT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Elbert County School District will work successfully with families, community partners, and other key stakeholders to continually improve student outcomes. We envision creating a world-class school district founded on teacher and leader quality, innovative practices, and overall academic excellence.

BELIEFS OF THE ELBERT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

- ❖ We believe all students can learn, and our schools must assist them in reaching their full potential.
- ❖ We believe our schools must be warm, welcoming, and safe. We believe that every individual is entitled to an emotionally and physically safe and respectful learning environment.
- ❖ We believe a rigorous and comprehensive education will prepare our students for the challenges of the 21st Century.
- ❖ We believe it is essential to embrace diversity, including ethnicity, ability level, and socioeconomic status, and implement initiatives to ensure the needs of all students are met.
- ❖ We believe good character must be developed and nurtured to promote citizenship at the community level and in a global society.
- ❖ We believe that leveraging technology is essential for college and career readiness.
- ❖ We believe that a commitment to student success is a shared responsibility among students, parents, educators, and the community.
- ❖ We believe the more connected families are in the educational process, the more successful students will be.
- ❖ We believe that every employee of the district plays a vital role in the growth and development of our students.
- ❖ We believe that by making these beliefs real in our actions, we can nurture the complete growth of "Every Student, Every Day."

ELBERT COUNTY DISTRICT CALENDAR**2019-2020 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

Pre-Planning	Wednesday-Tuesday	July 31-August 6
Open House	Monday	August 5
First Day of School	Wednesday	August 7
Start of 1st Semester		
Start of 1st Grading Period		
Labor Day Holiday	Monday	September 2
Parent Conference Day/Student Early Release	Wednesday	September 25
End of 1st Grading Period	Wednesday	October 9
Start of 2nd Grading Period	Thursday	October 10
Fall Holidays	Monday-Tuesday	October 14-15
Thanksgiving Holidays	Monday-Friday	November 25-29
Early Release Day	Friday	December 20
End of 1st Semester		
End of 2nd Grading Period		
Holiday Break	Monday-Tuesday	December 23-January 7
Teacher Planning	Monday-Tuesday	January 6-7
Students Return to School	Wednesday	January 8
Start of 2nd Semester		
Start of 3rd Grading Period		
MLK Holiday	Monday	January 20
Presidents Day Holiday	Monday	February 17
Parent Conference Day/Student Early Release	Wednesday	March 4
End of 3rd Grading Period	Thursday	March 12
Start of 4th Grading Period	Friday	March 13
Spring Holidays	Friday-Friday	April 3-10
Early Release Day	Friday	May 22
End of 4th Grading Period		
End of 2nd Semester		
Graduation	Saturday	May 23
Memorial Day Holiday	Monday	May 25
Post Planning	Tuesday-Thursday	May 26-28

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT

The Elbert County Board of Education provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. The Elbert County Board of Education complies with applicable state and local laws governing non-discrimination in employment in every location in which the company has facilities. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

The Elbert County Board of Education expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. Improper interference with the ability of The Elbert County Board of Education employees to perform their expected job duties is not tolerated.

[POLICY - EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT - GAAA](#)
[POLICY - COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES - GAE](#)

ELBERT COUNTY SCHOOLS GENDER EQUITY IN SPORTS

State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A.-20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that Elbert County Schools does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. The Sports Equity Coordinator for this school system is Mr. Jon Jarvis. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the Sports Equity Coordinator.

[POLICY - GENDER EQUITY IN SPORTS - IDFA](#)

TITLE VI AND TITLE IX NOTIFICATION

The Elbert County School District does not discriminate in its education and employment programs on the basis of religion, age, race, color, national origin, gender, marital or parental status, and disability. This district complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX education amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Perkins CTE Act of 2006. Inquiries may be made to Dr. Adam Kurtz regarding Title VI, Title IX and the Perkins Act at: Elbert County Schools, 50 Laurel Dr, Elberton, GA 30635.

SECTION 504 INFORMATIONAL NOTICE

Section 504 is an Act that prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a disability as anyone who: Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working); Has a record of such impairment; Is regarded as having such an impairment. In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Elbert County School System recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the school system. Our Section 504 Compliance Coordinator for the Elbert County School System is Dr. Adam Kurtz.

[SECTION 504 PARENT RIGHTS & PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS](#)

EMPLOYMENT & EMPLOYMENT EXPECTATIONS

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT – CERTIFIED

All new certified employees must have a Criminal Background Check. Additionally, a complete fingerprint and background check through the GCIC and FBI are required for all new certified employees. In accordance with state law, new hires will be issued a temporary contract, not to exceed 200-days, which may be extended for the entire school term pending results of fingerprinting and background checks.

The following documents must be on file at the Board of Education Office:

- 1) Certified employees are issued an electronic contract, a signed copy of which must be on file in the Superintendent's Office stored electronically.
- 2) A copy of a current Teacher Certificate must be on file in the Superintendent's Office. **CERTIFIED PERSONNEL ASSUME ALL CERTIFICATION RESPONSIBILITY.**
- 3) A copy of your college transcript must be on file in the Superintendent's Office.
- 4) Federal and State Tax Forms will be completed at the time of employment.
- 5) If it is your first year in the Elbert County School System and you have worked in another school system, you must complete a verification form available at the County Office.
- 6) Criminal Background Check (GAK(1))
 1. The CBC consists of two parts, the Criminal History Records Check (CHRI) and fingerprinting. Both must be done in Elbert County. This information is not transferable between school systems.
 2. It is the responsibility of the employee to promptly report to his supervisor any arrest or charge brought against him during his employment with the school system.
- 7) I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification. The school system participates in E-Verify.

CONTRACTS

Professional employee contracts are renewed annually. Upon approval by the Elbert County BOE the superintendent will instruct that the contracts be issued to all approved personnel. Once these contracts are distributed, each individual has ten business days to sign their contract to their principal. The employee has the option to request an extension. The extension must be requested in writing and must be approved by the principal and superintendent. This contract must be dated and signed. Contracts are issued for one year and renewed each year. If not returning, an employee should return a written declination of the contract. Notice of non-renewal must be given to the employee by May 15. Contracts may be terminated by mutual agreement of the employee and the system or by dismissal for cause.

A teacher is considered to be a tenured employee upon the reception of a fourth contract. When the employee signs a fourth contract, he is considered to be a tenured employee by the school system. An employee who has received tenure in another Georgia school system may earn tenure in a new system upon accepting a second contract. An employee may not earn tenure in a specific position, but only in employment with the system.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT - NON-CERTIFIED

All new non-certified employees must have a Criminal Background Check. Additionally, a complete fingerprint and background check through the GCIC and NCIC are required. The Criminal Background Check consists of two parts, the Criminal History Records Check (CHRI) and fingerprinting. Both must be done in Elbert County. This information is not transferable between school systems. It is the responsibility of the employee to promptly report to his supervisor any arrest or charge involving moral turpitude brought against him during his employment with the school system.

The following documents must be on file at the Board of Education Office:

- 1) Your completed application
- 2) Federal and State Tax Forms will be completed at the time of employment.
- 3) I-9 Employment Eligibility. The system participates in E-Verify
- 4) Criminal Background Check

CERTIFICATION

The State Department of Education, Professional Standards Commission, issues certificates. The employee of any school system must meet the criteria of the State Department before a certificate is issued. Certificates must be renewed every five years. Forms for renewal may be downloaded from the Professional Standards Commission website (www.gapsc.com). Application for renewal may be made beginning in October of the year the certificate expires.

Certified employees:

- 1) Must have criminal record checks each time the certificate is renewed by the PSC. OCGA 20-2-211 (e);
- 2) An individual who has received two unsatisfactory annual performance evaluations in the previous five-year period shall not be entitled to a renewable certificate prior to demonstrating that such performance deficiency has been satisfactorily addressed. The individual may apply for a nonrenewable certificate. OCGA 20-2-200 (b) (8)

For a teaching contract to be valid, a teacher must have the proper Georgia certificate. It is the responsibility of all teachers to be certain they possess a valid certificate. Staff members with questions related to certification should contact Mr. Jarvis in the personnel office, or the school principal. It may also be necessary for teachers to deal directly with the Professional Standards Commission in Atlanta, Georgia at www.gapsc.com.

The teacher is responsible for submitting an application for a new certificate when he/she is eligible for a higher level certificate, renewal, and/or for adding a new field. The application packet must be completed and sent to the Professional Standards Commission with an official copy of the transcript. The office of Human Resources can assist the teacher with this. For more information on certification, log onto www.gapsc.com.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GOAL / PLAN

All certificated employees must develop a professional learning goal or plan within the SLDS Portal. The PLG/PLP will be signed off on annually by the employee and their supervisor. The employee must be making progress or complete their PLG/PLP in order to renew their certificate with the GA PSC.

GACE ASSESSMENT

All teachers, with the exception of those holding "life" certificates, are required to make acceptable scores on the GACE Assessment in their teaching area as part of the certification process. Any presently employed teacher who holds a certificate that requires the appropriate subject area test to be successfully completed in order to renew their teaching certificate for the following school year must provide proof of a passing score. If written proof is not submitted, the teacher may not be recommended to the Board for employment.

The principal may use discretion in holding a position open for any person in this category.

PARAPROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Paraprofessionals in all school programs who are hired after January 8, 2002 must have:

- Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education or
- Obtained an associate’s degree (or higher) or
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and demonstrated through a formal state approved assessment the knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, language arts, writing and mathematics or reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

All paraprofessionals must have a valid certificate with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

AT WILL EMPLOYEES

It shall be the policy of the Elbert County Board of Education to classify all personnel not under contract as classified personnel. Classified employees are “at will” employees of the Board of Education whose employment is continuous until ended by resignation, retirement, or discharge. No policies or procedures of the Board of Education or Superintendent shall be construed as establishing a contractual relationship with any classified employee, and no tenure right is granted or implied by such policies or procedures.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS (OCGA 20-2-211)

OCGA 20-2-211 requires criminal background checks for all school employees at the time they are hired and periodically thereafter. CBCs must be done in Elbert County. This information is not transferable from other systems and agencies. The CBC consists of two parts: 1) Criminal History Record Information, (form completed in Human Resource Office) and 2) fingerprinting, done at the Sheriff’s Office in Elbert County. Fingerprint cards for the school system are available at the Human Resources Office at the BOE.

POLICY - CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS - GAK (1)

STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONS

All Elbert County School District employees are expected to abide by all federal, state, and local laws and statutes. They should always maintain a professional relationship with all students and parents both in and outside the classroom; should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice; and should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. They should always demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.

POLICY - STAFF - STUDENT RELATIONS - GAF

OFF-DUTY CONDUCT (OCGA 20-2-984.2) / CRIMINAL CHARGES

Employees are expected to comply with all local, state, and federal laws. As a condition of continued employment, each employee must notify the Board or its designee of any immediate arrest. Further, employees are required to immediately disclose any convictions. The Superintendent shall make an immediate written report to the Board of Education upon receiving information that a school system employee has committed certain specifically identified crimes. These crimes include murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault and/or battery, any sexual offense, including sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving marijuana or a controlled substance, any offense involving theft, and unlawfully operating a motor vehicle after being declared a habitual violator. If it is determined that an investigation is warranted, the Professional Standards Commission will be notified. The Superintendent or designee is required to make a written administrative referral to the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and will inform the Board of Education if a written complaint from any school employee or parent of a child is received by the Superintendent contending that any "school system educator employed by the local unit of administration" has committed any one of the following crimes:

1. Violent crimes such as murder, manslaughter and kidnapping.

2. Sexual crimes such as rape and sexual exploitation of a minor.
3. Drug-related offenses.
4. Any offense involving theft.
5. Unlawfully operating a motor vehicle after being declared a habitual violator.

Any school employee who is charged with a violation of any criminal law, other than a minor traffic Offense which does not involve a criminal arrest, must inform the Elbert County Board of Education of the criminal charge and/or criminal arrest the next day subsequent to the employee's criminal charge and/or criminal arrest. Failure to timely report criminal charges and/or criminal arrests may result in adverse employment actions, up to and including possible dismissal.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

It is the purpose of this policy to implement the provisions of O.C.G.A. §20-2-989.5, et seq. In accordance with the foregoing, it is the policy of the Board of Education that certified personnel shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. The Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible. This policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed, or where, for any other reason, the certificated employee desires to pursue this procedure.

Procedures for filing a complaint and/or grievance can be found under BOE Policy GAE.

[POLICY - COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES - GAE](#)

HARASSMENT

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

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

Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent or other individual who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the school district as prohibited by this policy should promptly report the same to the principal of their school or to the appropriate coordinator designated in policy GAAA, who will implement the board's discriminatory complaints procedures as specified in that policy. Students may also report harassment or discrimination to their school counselor or any administrator. Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. If at any point in the investigation of reported sexual harassment of a student, the coordinator or designee determines that the reported harassment should more properly be termed abuse, the reported incident or situation shall be referred pursuant to the established protocol for child abuse investigation.

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

POLICY - HARASSMENT - GAEB

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

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

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

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

As a condition of employment, each employee must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the Board within five days after any arrest on any drug-related criminal charge and further notify the board within five days of any conviction of a drug-related offense.

A copy of this policy shall be disseminated to all employees either directly or through employee handbooks.

The Board of Education shall not consider for employment any applicant who has been convicted for the first time of any drug offense as described above for a three month period from the date of conviction nor shall the Board of Education consider any applicant for employment who has been convicted for the second time of any drug offense as described above for a five year period from the most recent date of conviction.

For purposes of this policy, "conviction" refers to any final conviction in a court of competent jurisdiction, specifically including acceptance of a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or any plea entered under the First Offenders Act of Georgia or any comparable state or federal legislation.

No certified employee or employee with a contract for a definite term shall be subject to suspension or termination pursuant to this policy except in compliance with the provisions of the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia, Official Code of Georgia Annotated §§ 20-2-940 through 947. This policy is not intended and shall not be interpreted as prohibiting the school system from taking appropriate disciplinary action against any employee where there exists evidence that an employee uses, distributes or sells illegal drugs even though the employee has not been convicted of any criminal offense or where there exists evidence that an employee is under the influence of alcohol while on duty, except that the school system may not use the statement of any employee to the superintendent requesting treatment as described in this policy.

The School District shall provide such staff development as required by state or federal law to inform employees of the dangers of drug abuse, the availability of employee assistance and drug counseling and treatment and the terms of this policy.

POLICY - DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE - GAMA

DRUG SCREENING OF BUS DRIVERS

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

Operating a school bus or other commercial vehicle requires a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and is considered a safety-sensitive function. Individuals who are employed by the Board of Education to operate safety-sensitive vehicles include, but are not limited to: mechanics, school bus drivers, substitute school bus drivers, maintenance workers, coaches, teachers, and administrators.

In order to meet this goal, we hereby endorse the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration's anti-alcohol and controlled substances policies and regulations. This Board will not tolerate unauthorized use, abuse, possession or sale of alcohol or controlled substances by its employees.

Individuals who have positive controlled substance test results shall be terminated, as shall individuals whose test results reveal blood alcohol concentrations 0.04 and above and individuals who refuse to submit to a required alcohol or controlled substance test. Individuals whose tests results reveal blood alcohol concentrations of at least 0.02, but less than 0.04, and individuals who engage in other conduct prohibited by the regulations may, in the Board of Education's discretion, be terminated.

Drivers must inform their immediate supervisor of any therapeutic drug use, whether by prescription or "over the counter", and must provide a statement from their treating physician that the substance does not adversely affect the driver's ability to operate the bus.

[POLICY - DRUG SCREENING OF BUS DRIVERS - GCRA \(1\)](#)

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS BY EMPLOYEES

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining a safe and secure working and learning environment. Unless authorized by the Board of Education or an administrator in accordance with this policy, or specifically authorized by state law, employees shall be prohibited from bringing weapons on any property or in any building owned or leased by the District, at school functions, and on school buses or other transportation furnished by the School District. Employees in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 16-11-130.1 the Board of Education may authorize certain personnel to possess or carry weapons on any property or in any building owned or leased by the District, at a school function, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the District, subject to the following conditions:

(1) Training of approved personnel shall occur prior to their authorization to carry weapons. The training shall be approved in advance by the Superintendent and shall, at a minimum, include training on judgement, pistol shooting, marksmanship, and a review of current laws relating to the use of force for the defense of self or others. The Superintendent may substitute for certain training requirements an individual's prior military or law enforcement service if he or she has previously served as a certified law enforcement officer or has had military services which involved similar weapons training.

(2) An Approved list of the types and quantity of weapons and ammunition authorized to be possessed or carried shall be prepared and maintained by the Superintendent.

(3) Selection of personnel to possess or carry a weapon shall be done strictly on a voluntary basis. The final appointment will be made by the Superintendent consistent with the requirements of this policy. Each employee appointed must be licensed under the laws of the state to carry a firearm and shall be subject to an annual criminal history background check. Approval will not be granted for any employee who has had an employment or other history indicating any type of mental or emotional stability as determined by Board or Superintendent. The Superintendent shall be able at any time to remove or suspend the authority granted to any employee under this policy.

(4) Weapons possessed or carried by personnel under this paragraph shall be secured as follows: Concealed weapons are permitted if they are carried in a holster and not a purse, briefcase, bag, or similar other accessory which is not secured on the body. If maintained separated from the body, the weapon shall be maintained in a secured lock safe or similar lock box that cannot be easily accessed by students.

In addition to those employees appointed pursuant to this policy, the Board recognizes that other exceptions exist under O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127.1. All records regarding the appointment of individual employees and the implementation of this program shall be exempt from production under the Open Records Act as specified in Georgia law.

[POLICY - POSSESSION OF WEAPONS BY EMPLOYEES - GAMB](#)

EMPLOYEE TOBACCO USE AND VAPING

The Elbert County School Board recognizes that the use of tobacco products is a health, safety, and environmental hazard for students, employees, and school facilities. The Board acknowledges that adult employees and visitors serve as role models for students and that the Board’s acceptance of any use of tobacco products implies school approval, if not endorsement, of such use. In addition, the Board recognizes that it has an obligation to promote positive role models in schools and promote a healthy learning and working environment, free from unwanted smoke, for the students, employees, and visitors to the school campus. Finally, the Board recognizes that it has a legal authority and obligation pursuant to the Georgia Smoke free Air Act of 2005 (O.C.G.A. 31-‘2a-1 et seq.), the federal Pro-Children’s Act (Title X Public Law 103-227), the Georgia Youth Access Law (GA. Code ANN. § 16-12-171 2004) and the No Child Left Behind Act.

TOBACCO USE AND VAPING IS PROHIBITED

No student, staff member, or school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco products or vape devices at any time, including non-school hours 24 hours per day, seven days per week:

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

TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND TOBACCO USE (AND VAPING)

Tobacco products are defined to include cigarettes, candy cigarettes, chewing tobacco, blunts, blunt wraps, pre wrapped blunt cones & tubes, cigars, cigarillos, bidis, e-cigarettes, vaping products, pipes, cigarette packages or smokeless tobacco containers, lighters, ashtrays, key chains, t-shirts, coffee mugs, and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products. Tobacco use includes smoking, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products.

SCHOOL GROUNDS AND PROPERTY

School grounds and property means and includes land, school facilities and school vehicles used for the provision of academic, extracurricular programs and administration by the district. School grounds include playgrounds and recreational places. School grounds include that portion of land, school facilities and other facilities owned by municipalities, private entities or other individuals during those times when the school district has exclusive use of a portion of such land, school facilities, or other facilities for the provision of extracurricular programs.

TIME OF DAY

“Any time” or “at all times” means during normal school and non-school hours- 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

ENFORCEMENT FOR STAFF

Consequences for employees who violate the tobacco use policy will be in accordance with personnel policies and may include verbal warning, written reprimand, or termination.

ENFORCEMENT AT OUTDOOR SCHOOL SPONSORED EVENTS ON CAMPUS GROUNDS

All outdoor school sponsored events on campus (ex. Athletic events, meetings or functions by community groups renting school property) must be tobacco free. This policy must be clearly stated in all contracts, correspondence and verbal and written announcements to all attendees and contractors.

ENFORCEMENT AT SCHOOL SPONSORED EVENTS OFF CAMPUS

All indoor and outdoor school sponsored events off campus in venues (ex. Rented arenas, stadiums, halls, theaters) must be tobacco free. This policy must be clearly stated in all contracts, correspondence and verbal and written announcements to all attendees and contractors.

POLICY - EMPLOYEE TOBACCO USE - GAN

EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE

Educators are professionals and are expected to dress as professionals. Faculty and staff should be properly and appropriately dressed while in school as well as during the performance of their duties in school sponsored activities. Principals and other supervisors may formulate and enforce such reasonable rules as necessary to carry out this policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Much of what personnel may see or hear in schools is confidential by law. Any information concerning student achievement and behavior is confidential. The confidentiality rights of students are protected through state and federal regulations, and employees become liable for protecting students' rights. Confidential information regarding students or staff is not to be discussed at any time. A breach of this confidentiality can result in termination of employment.

EMPLOYEE WORKLOAD

Elbert County Board of Education and state policies require that the employee workload be governed by rules and regulations that contribute to the program through efficient economical administration and operation at the local school and system levels. The following procedures and regulations pertain to employee workload:

1. The workload of an employee is defined as those work-related responsibilities that are assigned to the position and for which the employee is expected to satisfactorily discharge in return for the salary specified.
2. The minimum workday for teachers is defined as eight (8) hours and the minimum workweek is defined as forty (40) hours. Duties for which the base salary is paid include teaching and teaching preparation, staff meetings, parent and student conferences, extra class activities in the community, and extra class activities such as before and after school duties. All teachers are expected to be available, if needed, before or beyond the scheduled workday for duties related to employment.

Elbert County Schools reserves the right to modify the length of the workday and workweek pursuant to applicable laws.

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT, 40 HOUR WORK WEEK

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1937 establishes a 40-hour work week for most employees. Certified personnel are exempted from this provision. Classified personnel are included in this provision and may work only 40 hours per week.

The Board of Education authorizes overtime in accordance with administrative regulations set forth by the Superintendent. Overtime is defined as time worked beyond the additional 40-hour work week (Sunday through Saturday) including emergency or planned overtime. The forty (40) hours are defined as actual hours worked and do not include hours or days for which the employee was paid for leave time such as sick leave, personal leave and annual leave.

Employees are not to perform overtime work or direct that overtime work be performed without the determination of the supervisor of the employee that there is no other viable alternative. Cases involving

approval for overtime compensation shall be the result of emergency situations, limited timelines or when additional responsibilities are assigned individuals on a temporary basis. The supervisor who makes such a determination shall certify such determination in writing, in advance, and shall certify the amount of overtime approved for such classified employee, in advance, and shall obtain the signature of the employee, in advance, as to the amount of overtime authorized so that the employee, before working said overtime, shall know the maximum amount of overtime that has been authorized for that calendar week. No supervisor shall authorize any overtime for any classified employee unless the specific amount to be authorized first approved by the Director of Budget and Finance or his/her designee. Compensation will be reimbursed at one and one-half the employee's regular rate of pay or compensatory leave at the same rate. Violation of this policy concerning prior approval for overtime work may result in disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including termination.

All classified employees who are considered "non-exempt" under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and are legally entitled to compensation for overtime work as provided by law and in accordance with this policy shall comply with any requirements of the District for documenting time actually worked and shall be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of such records.

An organization renting school facilities shall be informed that they will be obligated to pay any personnel costs incurred by the District pursuant to the renting of school facilities, including payment of hourly personnel costs and overtime compensation.

Employees shall be informed of the requirements of this policy on an annual basis. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement regulations to carry out this policy.

[POLICY - CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL OVERTIME PAY - GCRD](#)

TRANSFERS

Personnel may be transferred at the discretion of the Superintendent and other administrators to serve the best interest of the employee, students, and school system. Employees may initiate a transfer by seeking permission of the current supervisor, future supervisor, and superintendent.

If an employee is interested in transferring to another school or position, they can apply for any position they feel qualified for when they are posted in our jobs vacancy system on the system website. As a professional courtesy, an employee should always make their current supervisor aware of their desire to transfer.

EVALUATIONS (OCGA 20-2-210; GBI-R)

State guidelines require that all school personnel be evaluated annually. The superintendent is evaluated by the Board of Education. He, in turn, evaluates administrative personnel. Building level administrators evaluate the employees in their buildings. The main purpose for the evaluation should be to identify strengths and weaknesses in an educator and thereby serve as a guide in efforts to enhance those strengths and remedy those weaknesses. In this latter respect, the motivation of the employee to change takes on the same vital role as the motivation of a student to learn. Given that the best motivation is "self-motivation", each educator should be directly involved in his/her assessment. To this end, the following procedures are suggested.

1. Become aware of the areas in which you will be evaluated. Information regarding the instrument under which you will be evaluated will be reviewed annually and additional information is available through your supervisor.
2. Objectively evaluate your own performance using the appropriate self-assessment form.

3. Request a pre-observation conference with the administrator if you have concerns about the evaluation.
4. Take advantage of the opportunity you will be given to discuss the evaluation.

RELEASE FROM CONTRACT / RESIGNATIONS - CERTIFIED

Any certified employee desiring to be released from his or her contract of employment with the Elbert County Board of Education during the term of the contract for the current school year or after signing a contract for the subsequent school year should (1) discuss the request with the principal/supervisor and (2) submit a written request to the superintendent and Board of Education through the principal/supervisor to be released from the contract. The position of the administration and the Board of Education is to release a contracted employee only if a suitable replacement can be employed in a timely fashion.

Any certified employee who plans to leave the system at the end of the contract for the current school term should (1) discuss the decision with the principal/supervisor, and (2) submit a written resignation or declination of offered contract to the superintendent and Board of Education through the principal/supervisor. An employee who fails to submit a resignation for consideration and leaves their position will have a recommendation made to the Professional Standards Commission to revoke his/her teaching certificate in accordance with State Board policies.

RESIGNATIONS - CLASSIFIED

The following procedures should be followed when an employee considers ending his or her employment status with the Elbert County Board of Education: (1) discuss the decision with the principal/supervisor and submit a resignation to the supervisor; (2) the supervisor will submit a letter to the superintendent stating your decision to resign or leave your position. Your last date of employment should be clearly stated in your letter. A two-week notice is expected.

The superintendent will make a recommendation concerning requests/resignations to the Board of Education and the employee will be notified in writing concerning the decision of the Board.

ATTENDANCE, LEAVE AND ABSENCES

This system recognizes that the staff of our school system can have a positive impact on student attendance by example. Not only will our good attendance set an example for children, more importantly, the presence of a classroom teacher and other support staff everyday will allow the students to take advantage of all we can offer.

Punctual regular attendance is expected of all employees. Employees are expected to keep accurate time records. Failure to meet this job requirement may result in disciplinary action, ranging from, but not limited to, verbal warning, written reprimand, or dismissal. Those terminated for such cause may not be eligible for benefits of unemployment insurance. Within a school year certain days are considered essential for effective school operation. These days include pre-planning, the first three and the last three days of the school year for students, the days immediately preceding and following holidays, state testing days, and post-planning. Request for personal and professional leave on these days must be approved by the principal or immediate supervisor and then forwarded to Superintendent.

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

1. The Elbert County Board of Education herewith provides a leave program for all school personnel with 20 hours or more that is earned at the rate of 1.25 days for each completed school month of service during a fiscal year.
2. Unused leave will accumulate from one year to the next. Accumulated leave will be forfeited if the employee withdraws from service for twelve or more consecutive months, but may be reinstated in accordance with the provisions of Official Code of Georgia Annotated 20-2-850.
3. State leave days that have accumulated shall be transferred when a certified employee changes employment to another local board of education in Georgia in accordance with the requirements of Georgia law. Likewise, the Elbert County Board of Education accepts accumulated sick leave from another Georgia Public School System when new employees transfer to the Elbert County system. The maximum number of days accepted is forty-five (45). This does not apply to any non-certified category of employee.
4. Leave may be used for:
 - Personal reasons, but only up to three days per school year and only upon approval by the Superintendent or designee;
 - Religious holidays upon approval by the Superintendent;
 - Personal illness, physical disability (including disability related to maternity) or injury. A doctor's statement may be required and if there is disagreement with the doctor's statement of

disability or ability, a physician of the same medical specialty as the employee's physician may be appointed for the purpose of receiving independent medical judgment;

- Absence necessitated by exposure to contagious disease;
 - Absence due to illness or death in the employee's immediate family, which shall be interpreted to mean father, mother, brother, sister, child, husband or wife of the employee, grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, or any relative living in the residence of the employee.
5. Salaries of substitute employees shall be paid by the Board and not by the regular employee. Substitute employees are defined as those individuals employed to serve in lieu of regular employees who are absent for reasons specified in this policy.

Paid leave under this policy is authorized for the following categories of employees in the amounts shown in Schedule I.

	Professional Staff	Bus Drivers	Clerical	Paras	Maint & Cust.	SFS Workers
Leave days earned per month worked	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
Leave days that can be used for personal or professional reasons*	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Days eligible for accumulation under State policy	45.0	45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total days eligible for accumulation	no limit	no limit	no limit	no limit	no limit	no limit
Accumulated days eligible for transfer	45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

7. In the event of a personal or family tragedy, up to three additional days of earned leave may be used upon approval of the Board or designee.
8. *Absence for professional meetings on behalf of the district or for activities approved by the principal due to official duties with school-sponsored teams or clubs or due to other official duties will not count against earned leave.
9. Deductions in pay will be made for absences not covered by this leave program.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Employees may use up to three (3) days of sick leave for personal reasons. Employees are responsible for securing prior approval from the principal or other supervisor in charge of leave prior to taking any leave.

Any absence caused by severely inclement weather will be counted as personal leave. Contact your supervisor for additional information.

SICK LEAVE

Sick leave may be used for personal illness, physical disability, or injury. Sick leave may also be used for illness or death in the employee's immediate family, as defined in board policy. For any absence lasting 10 or more days, or any possible Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) qualifying absence, an employee must apply for FMLA with the Human Resource Services-FMLA Office. Sick leave will run concurrent with FMLA. Medical documentation may be required any time employees are absent due to illness, or whenever questions arise concerning approval of requests for sick leave. The principal / supervisor may require a medical release to return to work.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

The use of professional leave requires prior approval by the employee's principal or immediate supervisor. Approved absences for professional purposes will not affect sick leave or personal leave days.

JURY/WITNESS DUTY

There will be no loss of pay or benefits for absences resulting from service on the jury or as a subpoenaed witness in a case arising out of the individual's duties as a school system employee, nor shall the employee be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute.

MILITARY LEAVE

All employees of the Elbert County Board of Education are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen days in any federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military leave duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. Employees also are entitled to leave not exceeding thirty days in any one federal fiscal year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States armed forces. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the director annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

ANNUAL VACATION LEAVE

Twelve month employees earn annual vacation leave in the amount of one (1) day per month (12 days annually). All other vacation leave must be used by June 30 of each year with the exception of three days. These three (3) days of unused vacation leave can be carried over, making a maximum of 15 days per year.

Maintenance personnel and school custodians shall work 240 days per year. They shall be entitled to two weeks (10 days) vacation in addition to the regular scheduled school holidays at the discretion of their immediate supervisor.

All leave is recorded at the individual school and reported to the central office. Employees will have the opportunity to verify leave reports and sign them before they are submitted to the central office for processing. Misrepresentation by an employee as to the purpose or necessity of any leave is a violation of policy and may result in disciplinary action or referral to the Elbert County Board of Education and/or the Professional Standards Commission.

[POLICY - PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL LEAVES AND ABSENCES - GBRH](#)

COMPENSATORY TIME

An agreement to give compensatory (comp) time must be made in writing before the work is performed.

The school principal and employee must agree in writing to a compensatory time arrangement, and there must be prior, written approval by the Director of Operations/Human Resources or the Superintendent of Schools. Compensatory time must be utilized during the pay period in which it was earned.

Compensatory time is not an alternative to be used with classified employees, paraprofessionals, or administrators.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

It is the purpose of this policy to set out in summary form the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("Act") as adopted by the U.S. Congress on February 5, 1993 and which became effective August 5, 1993. This Board does not intend by this policy to create any additional rights to leave not provided by the Act. The Board does intend to elect certain options as the Act authorizes. Any portion of this policy inconsistent or contrary to the Act is unintentional and shall not be given effect. As to the interpretation of this policy, the Board's employees should look to the Act itself and its regulations.

A. ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

Employees of the Board of Education who have been employed by the Board for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours for the Board during the 12 month period immediately prior to requesting leave are eligible to take 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA").

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

1. Birth of a child and to care for the newborn child;
2. Adoption or foster placement of a child with the employee;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent, if that person has a serious health condition;
4. Serious health condition of employee that prevents the employee from performing the job functions.
5. Any qualifying exigency arising from the fact that the employee's family member (the covered military member) is on active duty or has been notified of an impending deployment in support of a contingency operation. Qualifying exigencies are defined as short-notice deployment (seven or less calendar days); military events and related activities; childcare and school activities; financial and legal arrangements; counseling; rest and recuperation (up to five days per instance); post-deployment activities; additional activities where the employer and employee agree that the leave is an exigency and agree to both timing and duration of the leave; and
6. Military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of the service member.
7. Defined as one that requires in-patient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, or which requires continuing treatment by a health care provider.

In the event of the birth, adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter, all leave must be completed within 12 months after the birth, adoption or foster placement.

B. DEFINITIONS

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

"Parent" means a biological parent or one who acted in place of a parent when the employee was a child. The term "parent" does not include parent "in-law".

"Serious Health Condition" means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

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

"Spouse" means a husband or wife.

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

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

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

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

C. AMOUNT AND TYPE OF LEAVE TAKEN

Except as provided below, an employee may take a total of 12 weeks during any twelve-month period. The 12-month period shall be measured backward from the date the employee begins using any FMLA leave. See 29 C.F.R. 825.200(b)(4).

If both spouses work for the Board and both are eligible for FMLA leave, they are authorized to take only a combined total of 12 weeks 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 unpaid leave to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition for twelve (12) weeks.

Employees seeking to take Family and Medical Leave to care for a newborn or adopted child, a child placed with the employee for foster care, a parent, spouse or child with a serious health condition, or because of their own serious health condition, must substitute any personal leave, paid vacation, applicable accumulated sick leave, and any other applicable paid leave for their Family and Medical Leave.

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

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

D. INTERMITTENT OR REDUCED LEAVE

An employee is not permitted to take leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule unless it is medically necessary due to the serious health condition of a covered family member, the employee, or the

serious injury or illness of a covered service member, or when necessary because of a qualifying exigency. The Board will require a certification, in the form designated by the Board, to document the necessity of such intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave.

E. NOTIFICATION OF LEAVE

If the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, an employee requesting leave must provide at least 30 days advance notice to the Office of the Superintendent. If such advance notice is not possible, the employee must give said 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 unduly disrupt the operations of the school district.

F. BENEFITS AND RETURN TO WORK

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

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

With the exception of paid vacation, personal, medical or sick leave required to be substituted for unpaid leave under Section C above, the employee's absence during leave will not alter benefits which the employee accrued before taking leave.

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

G. REQUIRED CERTIFICATION AND REPORTING

The Board of Education requires that a request for leave due to a serious health condition of an employee or an employee's family member or a serious injury or illness of a covered service member be supported by a certification issued by the appropriate health care provider of the eligible employee or of the son, daughter, spouse, or parent of the employee on a form to be provided by the Board of Education.

This certification must include: (1) the date on which the serious health condition commenced, (2) the probable duration of the condition, (3) if the purpose of the leave is to care for a son, daughter, spouse or parent ("family member"), a statement that the employee is needed to care for the family member and the estimated amount of time needed for such care, and (4) if the leave is due to the employee's own serious health condition, a statement that the employee is unable to perform the job functions; and (5) if intermittent or reduced schedule leave is requested, information sufficient to establish the medical necessity for the same and an estimate of the dates of the dates and duration of treatments and any periods of recovery. The employee may require that the eligible employee obtain subsequent recertification on a reasonable basis as requested by the school district.

The Board, at its own expense, may obtain the opinion of a second health care provider of the Board's choice, if it should choose to do so. If a conflict exists between the opinion in the certification and the second opinion, the Board may, at its own expense, obtain a third opinion from a health care provider

upon which the Board and the employee jointly agree. Such a third opinion as to the necessity for the leave is binding on both the Board and the employee.

Upon an employee's return to work after leave for his/her own serious health condition, the Board may require the employee to obtain certification from a health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

The Board may require that a first request for leave because of a qualifying exigency arising from active duty or call to active duty be supported by a copy of the covered service member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military. A certification form requesting the required information to support a request for exigency leave will be provided by the Board upon request. The Board may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically to the principal or supervisor on the employee's status and intent to return to work.

H. SPECIAL PROVISIONS

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

If an instructional employee begins leave more than five weeks before the end of a semester, the Board may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if:

- i. The leave will last at least three weeks; and
- ii. The employee would return to work during the three-week period before the end of the term.

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

- i. The leave will last more than two weeks; and
- ii. The employee would return to work during the two-week period before the end of the term.

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

[POLICY - FEDERAL FAMILY and MEDICAL LEAVE ACT - GBRIG](#)

[CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATION - FMLA](#)

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

The Elbert County School Systems contracts with ESS/Source for Teachers to provide substitutes for certified staff and classified staff that require a substitute. Procedures for contacting a substitute teacher vary at the individual schools. The employee should become aware of the procedures determined at their school. The teacher is responsible for leaving sufficient lesson plans, schedules, and emergency procedures for the substitute to use with all classes.

Administrators will pre-approve all personal, jury duty, and professional leave.

[ESS/Source for Teachers Log In](#)

CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

Effective January 1, 2018

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

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

(2) **Definitions**

(a) “Breach of contract” occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

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

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

(d) “Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

(e) “Student” is any individual enrolled in the state’s public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.

(f) “Complaint” is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A “complaint” will be deemed a request to investigate.

(g) “Revocation” is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.

(h) “Denial” is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.

(i) “Suspension” is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.

(j) “Reprimand” admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(k) “Warning” warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(l) “Monitoring” is the quarterly appraisal of the educator’s conduct by the Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.

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

(3) Standards

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

(b) **Standard 2: Conduct with Students** - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or

7. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator’s supervision (including but not limited to at the educator’s residence or any other private setting).

(c) **Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and

2. being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc). 505-6-.01

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

1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;

2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;

3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;

4. reasons for absences or leaves;

5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and 6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.

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

1. misusing public or school-related funds;

2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;

3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);

4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and

5. using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

(f) **Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct** - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;

2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;

3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and

4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator’s school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

(g) **Standard 7: Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;

2. sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;

3. violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and

4. violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

(h) **Standard 8: Required Reports** - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;

2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90)

days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and

3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

(i) **Standard 9: Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

(j) **Standard 10: Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
2. compromising the integrity of the assessment.

(4) **Reporting**

(a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).

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

(5) **Disciplinary Action**

(a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);

2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);

3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);

4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);

5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate

6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16-13-111); and

7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

(b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

[CODE OF ETHICS - GA PSC](#)

AUTHORITY O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 THROUGH 20-2-984.

MORAL TURPITUDE

It has been stated that the term “moral turpitude” is so clear that there is no duty on the trial judge to define it in the absence of a request. The term has been defined in Georgia as follows: “Turpitude in its ordinary sense involves the idea of inherent baseness or vileness, shameful wickedness, depravity.... In its legal sense it includes everything contrary to justice, honesty, modesty or good morals.... The word ‘moral,’ which so often precedes the word turpitude, does not seem to add anything to the meaning of the term, other than that emphasis which often results from a tautological expression. All crimes embraced within the Roman’s conception of the *crimen falsi* involve turpitude; but it is not safe to declare that such crimes are the only ones involving turpitude.” In *Ramsey v. State*, the court said that a crime involving moral turpitude is one which is *malum in se* rather than *malum prohibitum*. In Georgia, the test for whether a felony is one involving moral turpitude is “does the [crime], disregarding its felony punishment, meet the test as being contrary to justice, honesty, modesty, good morals or man’s duty to man?”

It has been held that the following offenses are crimes involving moral turpitude:

- Fraud or false pretenses in obtaining something of value
- Larceny or a misdemeanor theft by taking
- Larceny after trust
- Murder
- Soliciting for prostitutes
- Voluntary manslaughter
- Sale of narcotics or other illegal drugs
- Pattern of failure to file federal tax returns in years in which taxes are due
- Criminal Issuance of a bad check
- Making a false report of a crime

The following have been held to be offenses which are not crimes involving moral turpitude:

- Public drunkenness
- Driving under the influence
- Carrying a concealed weapon
- Unlawful sale of liquor
- Fighting
- Simple Battery
- Simple Assault
- Misdemeanor criminal trespass
- Child abandonment
- Misdemeanor offense of escape
- Misdemeanor offense of obstructing a law enforcement officer
- The federal misdemeanor offense of Conspiracy in Restraint of Interstate Trade and Commerce
- Possession of less than one ounce of marijuana

[This is taken from *Handbook of Criminal Evidence* by Davis, 2000 edition.]

[MORAL TURPITUDE - GA PSC](#)

REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE, STUDENT WELFARE AND STUDENT INJURIES

All Employees of the Board of Education, as well as persons who attend to a child pursuant to their duties as a volunteer for the school system, who have reason or cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred shall notify the principal or the school system's designee, who shall report such abuse immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred, in accordance with Georgia law and the protocol for handling child abuse cases for Elbert County, Georgia.

Under no circumstances shall the principal or designee to whom a report of child abuse has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification or make any other change to the information provided by a mandated reporter, although the reporter may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant and necessary information when making the report.

With the exception of very minor cuts and bruises, if a student is injured while under your supervision, you must promptly provide or seek medical attention, and complete a Student Accident Report as soon as possible. Serious injuries, suspected broken bones, blows to the head, or serious sprains should be reported immediately so that decisions on medical care can be made in a timely manner. Accident Reports must ALWAYS be turned in before the end of the school day in which the injury occurred, or the day on which you are made aware of the injury. A copy of this form is available in the teachers' workroom.

A report can be made by calling **1-855-422-4453**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. A phone agent will respond to your call quickly and gather necessary information that an intake specialist will need to assess the child's safety.

[POLICY - CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT \(JGI\)](#)

STUDENT REPORTING OF ACTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

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

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

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

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1 184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

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

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

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

SOCIAL MEDIA

When used herein, the term “educator” shall mean all certified and classified agents and employees of the Elbert County School District.

When using any form of social media or electronic communication, all educators are held to the standards outlined in the Code of Ethics for Educators and to FERPA (the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act) which provides that students’ educational records and information are deemed private and confidential. All educators must comply with Board policy, state and federal law, the Code of Ethics for Educators and FERPA when communicating electronically or through social media.

The Code of Ethics for Educators applies to educators twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, and three hundred and sixty five days per year. All educators shall read, understand and follow the Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics applies to any and all electronic communications regardless of whether the communication is made through a privately owned computer or through the school computer system.

Even when off duty, educators must comply with Board Policy, state and federal law, the Code of Ethics for Educators and FERPA when communicating through social media or through other electronic means. Educators must be mindful that they represent the Elbert County School System at all times and that the content of their electronic messages and posts on social media can go viral and be readily spread across the world in minutes. Staff members must also be mindful that once an electronic message or social media post is sent, it cannot be retrieved and the recipient has the power to disseminate it to anyone. Standard Ten of the Code of Ethics titled “Professional Conduct” applies to all social media posts and electronic communications made by educators and provides:

An educator shall 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 any conduct that impairs and or diminishes the certificate holder’s ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

Educators must adhere to Standard Ten anytime they communicate through social media or other electronic means. Educators should be mindful that being “Friends” with students on Facebook and other social media sites can have serious consequences if inappropriate content is shared. Please note that students are considered students under the Code of Ethics until September 1 following their graduation and include students from any school.

MANDATED REPORTERS – SOCIAL MEDIA

All educators are Mandated Reporters as defined by Georgia law. All standards and expectations of this designation apply to online activity as well. If an educator witnesses any form of child abuse through the use of social media or electronic means he or she must immediately report such abuse pursuant to state law and Board protocols.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

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

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

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

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

Your Personal Responsibility:

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

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

Specific Guidelines to Consider:

- Use common sense when posting online. While these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to free speech, it remains good practice to never post anything that would embarrass you or Elbert County School District or would call your professional reputation into questions.
- You are personally responsible for the content you publish online. “Content” includes personal comments, links, photographs, audio or video, and content created by other users that you choose to share or re-post.
- Any content you publish will be public for a long time. Not only can your content show up in Google and other search engines, but the FTC allows private corporations to store publicly accessible Facebook posts for a period of some seven years to be used in employee background checks made by current or potential employers. Moreover, even posts that are “private” may be subject to discovery in legal actions.
- Once something is posted, you cannot take it back. In most instances, deleting content will not make it disappear. Deleted content can still show up in online searches. Or, with the click of a button, other users can take a screen shot, re-post, or share your content with others. Even if you share your content with a very limited number of people, nothing prohibits your contacts from sharing the information you post.

- Ask yourself if you would want your post in the media. Would you feel comfortable if your content was read by colleagues, your students, parents, or the School Board? If the answer is “no,” then the content is best not shared.
- Special care should be taken when posting personal photographs. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality and professional reputation. All photographs should be posted with the assumption that they could end up in the public realm.
- The lines between personal and professional are blurred in the online world. When you are online, you may be connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Sometimes those connections may be direct and obvious. Other times the connections may be indirect or via mutual connections. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at Elbert County School District.
- Protect your privacy. You are responsible for understanding and controlling privacy settings on each social network you use. Always assume default settings will make your profile and any content you share publicly accessible. You should also understand that even with maximum privacy settings in place, content can still find its way in to the public domain.
- Use your personal email addresses on personal social sites and while engaging in off-duty social media activities or sites that are not connected with or approved by the District. Never use your District email address on personal sites.
- At no time should you claim to be speaking or issuing opinions on behalf of Elbert County School District, except with prior consent from the appropriate supervisor. In instances where there could be confusion, you “should” add a disclaimer stating that views and content are exclusively your own and not representative of Elbert County School District.
- Employees should not make any derogatory statements about colleagues or students or other comments that would reflect badly on your professional reputation or the reputation of Elbert County School District. You are ultimately responsible for your comments and Elbert County School District recommends that you thoughtfully consider your rights and responsibilities prior to posting.
- Do not post photos or videos that contain identifying information concerning any students on personal sites. Do not post identifying information of co-workers without their permission. For District-sanctioned sites, such as school Facebook pages, do not post items of students who have opted out, as per District media policy, but you may post items of public events of students and staff who have not opted out, as long as it’s not derogatory in nature.
- Respect the privacy and rights of both colleagues and students. Confidential student or personnel information should not be posted online. Be sure not to violate any provision of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others.
- Do not use any school logo or image without permission on personal sites. You may use them on District-sanctioned sites.
- Do not create any social media account, blog or website intended to represent Elbert County School District without express prior consent from the superintendent or designee. It is important for the District to protect its brand, ensure certain brand standards and content guidelines are maintained, and ensure any new accounts fit overall communications and education standards established by the district.

Employee-Student Relations

The District recognizes the role that communication and collaboration between employees and students play in the educational process and experience. The District further recognizes that the advancement of electronic communication and social media technologies creates greater opportunity for interactions

between employees and students, and provides these additional guidelines for your own and students' protection.

- Employees are never under any obligation to accept friend or follower requests from any student, or to use personal social media accounts to engage with students or participate in District projects. In addition, you should bear in mind that unless your account has privacy settings correctly configured, everything you post may be publicly accessible to your students whether you are connected to them or not.
- Employees must exercise great care in connecting with students on any social media channels. Do not send permission-based friend or follower requests to students, such as a Facebook friend request. Use discretion and carefully consider the guidelines provided by the District before accepting any permission-based friend or follower requests received from students. It is Elbert County School District's recommendation that if an employee decides to accept friend or follower requests received from students that they should accept all such requests, and not selectively limit their interactions to what could be perceived as a few preferred individuals.
- The District recognizes there may be certain limited exceptions to these guidelines, such as a student being a family member or relative, or in those instances where an employee's interaction with a student is as a result of certain extra-curricular activities.
- Any employee-student communications or relationship via social media should be of an appropriate professional nature, have content that is appropriate for both the communications medium and the audience addressed, and must not violate any provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Educators must be mindful that FERPA and the Code of Ethics for Educators including Standard 2 "Conduct with Students" applies anytime they communicate electronically with a student.
- Employees are also responsible for immediately reporting to the District any inappropriate communication received from a student. This is as much for the employee's protection as the student's. Any content or communication generated either by you, or by a student, which would be inappropriate in the classroom should also be considered inappropriate when shared via social media.

Expressing Your Ideas and Thoughts

- Are you adding value? Communication associated with our District should help fellow educators, parents, students, and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community and engagement. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand education better—then it's adding value. Keep the conversation informative and educational for all. Be sure that all content is consistent with your work and with the District's beliefs and professional standards.
- Keep your cool. One of the aims of social media is to create dialogue, and people will not always agree on an issue. Sometimes, it's best to ignore a comment and not give it credibility by acknowledging it with a response.
- If you make an error, correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper, deal with it quickly, and/or ask for additional assistance.
- Be honest and transparent. Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty – or dis-honestly. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out.

Help Students Leverage Social Media

Students should learn how to use social media to empower, not just connect. With more and more employers and educational institutions looking at prospective candidates online, it is important that we help educate and instruct on best practices for our students using the various social media channels.

Teachers and administrators should be teaching students how to leverage their connections, associations and level of engagement as a way to strengthen their individual brands online. This increases their chances of being seen in a positive light for potential employers, colleges, or universities – as character becomes more and more a consideration for enrollment or hiring in today’s workforce. Having our students ready and adaptable to 21st Century communications is a must.

PAYROLL / BENEFITS**PAYROLL INFORMATION**

All personnel will be paid monthly. Direct deposit and pay card transactions will be issued in accordance with the established and approved payroll calendar. Employees must complete the proper form, available from the BOE office, and provide account numbers for direct deposit. Salaries are calculated by using the approved salary scales by the district. State salaries are based on years teaching experience and type of certificate held. The state pay schedule and county supplement pay scale can be found on our website. It is especially important that each staff member's correct mailing address be filed in the central office. Any changes should be submitted immediately. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the board office of any changes of name, address, or withholding tax information. Notice of change must be in before the 10th of the month to be effective that month.

Changes to tax status may be made at any time by completing a G-4 Form (State) or a W-4 Form (Federal) through the ESS (Employee Self Service) portal. Changes should be submitted by the 10th of each month to ensure that the change is processed in the month submitted.

DEDUCTIONS

The following deductions are mandatory for the employees specified:

-Social Security - All employees are required to participate. Required contributions of 7.65% of salary will be deducted monthly. The Elbert County Board of Education pays a matching amount for all employees.

-Georgia Teacher Retirement - All professional personnel, paraprofessionals, clerks, and secretaries are required to participate in the Georgia Teacher Retirement System. Supervisors may elect to participate in TRS. Employee and Employer contributions are withheld in accordance with the established and approved rates.

-Public School Employee Retirement System – All personnel not covered under TRS are required to participate in the Public School Employee Retirement System

-State and Federal Taxes - all employees are subject to state and federal income tax withholding.

BENEFITS

The Elbert County Board of Education extends to each employee a variety of benefits. Details of these benefits may be found at www.myelbertbenefits.com or by contacting Alexander & Company (1-877-422-3312)

ELIGIBILITY FOR RETIREMENT

Teacher retirement information is available upon request through the central office.

- **Service Retirement** - Active members may retire and elect to receive monthly retirement benefits after completion of 30 years of creditable service regardless of age, or after completing 10 years of creditable service and attainment of age 60. Effective July 1, 1992, there is a 25-year option available for those who have attained age 55. A member who retires before reaching age 62 or with less than 30 years of service is retiring early. Benefits will vary based on age and years of creditable service.
- **Retirement under PSERS** – (1) Normal Retirement: Normal monthly retirement benefits can begin at age 65 with 10 years of creditable service. (2) Early Retirement: Early monthly retirement benefits can begin at age 60 with 10 years of creditable service. Retirement before age 65 results in a reduction of ½ of 1% for each month under age 65.
- **Disability Retirement** - An individual is eligible to apply for retirement under the disability provision of the law if he or she has at least 9 1/2 years of creditable service and is permanently disabled.

Teacher Retirement System website - <http://www.trsga.com/home>

Public School Employee Retirement System website - <http://www.ers.ga.gov/plans/psers/psersmain.html>

INSURANCE

The system attempts to provide several types of group insurance plans which may benefit employees. Information about group plans will be made available to employees during the school year. Employees may only make changes to their plans during open enrollment or if there is a qualifying event. A qualifying event (QE) or life event change is defined as a personal change in status that may allow you to change your benefit elections. Examples of a QE are a change in marital status, number of dependents, employment status or eligibility for health coverage. The QE rules that apply to you will depend on whether you are an active employee, former employee continuing coverage, or a surviving spouse or surviving child. These rules are set forth in your SPD.

All professional and eligible classified employees and their families are covered through the State Health Benefit Insurance Plan with premiums being paid through payroll deduction. All employees should become familiar with [State Health Benefit Plan](#) website. Please contact Human Resources if you have any questions.

CAFETERIA PLAN

All employees of the Elbert County Board of Education are eligible to enroll in a Section 125 Plan (Cafeteria Plan). Enrolling in the Section 125 Plan enables employees to pay qualifying insurance premiums with pre-tax dollars which results in more take-home pay. (Non reimbursable medical payments and dependent child care also qualify.) New employees may enroll during the first ten days of employment. Other employees may revise the plan during open enrollment only.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

The Board provides Workers' Compensation Insurance for all school employees. An employee must immediately report to the principal or supervisor any accident which he/she has while working or any injury which occurred while on duty. The principal/supervisor or their designee will complete the First Report of Injury.

The central office will provide information related to Workers' Compensation Insurance for any employee requesting information. Claims against Workers' Compensation Insurance should be filed within 24 hours after the injury with the central office.

You must follow correct procedures when reporting a work-related accident or injury. The most important thing to remember is to report the injury to your Principal or supervisor immediately and to complete the

proper Workers' Compensation forms before you leave your work location. The Official Notice regarding Workers' Compensation and information regarding your rights and responsibilities in the event of injury are posted in your building. It is important to read and follow these to ensure receiving benefits. A panel of physicians is posted with this notice. The employee should select from this panel. The system nor its representative may recommend a physician. The employee must make the selection.

No employee is required to work at a job which is not safe. It is our goal to completely eliminate accidents and injuries at our workplace. Because of the many different potentially hazardous conditions associated with our industry, we must all maintain a constant safety and health awareness to achieve this goal.

Employees who fail to observe proper safety procedures or fail to promptly report potential hazards may be subject to disciplinary action, ranging from verbal warning to written reprimands to more serious action, including possible dismissal for repeated or serious violations. All dismissals would adhere to the guidelines of the Fair Dismissal Act (20-2-940) or other State and Federal requirements.

HANDLING OF FINANCES

The Superintendent and staff shall establish a procedure for the procurement of supplies, equipment, services and facilities maintenance for the Elbert County School District. This procedure shall provide for the consistent and complete accountability of all funds. All purchases made through the system budget shall be made according to the established procedure and shall have the prior approval of the Superintendent or a designated representative. Gifts and bequests should follow board of education policy.

Policies, procedures and finance forms can be found on the district website under the financial services tab.

POLICY - PURCHASING - DJE

ELBERT COUNTY BOE FISCAL MANAGEMENT - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CASH HANDLING

Controls include:

- 1) Provide that all revenue collected is receipted. (Receipts that are less than \$5 per student may be receipted as one receipt provided that proper documentation is maintained to support that one receipt, i.e., spreadsheet, list, etc.).
- 2) Provide that funds be deposited daily and intact, with proper documentation supported.
- 3) Provide that the funds be receipted on pre-numbered receipt forms provided by the District. The receipts should involve two people; i.e. the teacher receipts money from the students then the secretary receipts the total money receipted by a teacher each day (i.e. secretary/bookkeeper should not receipt funds directly from students).
- 4) Provide that reviews of operations by the Principal and any person involved with the school activity funds as well as audits by persons from outside the school.
- 5) Provide the use of a secured container, preferably a locked safe or vault, for all funds on hand. Money should never be left unattended or accessible to unauthorized personnel.

NON-PURCHASE CARD TRANSACTIONS

Any purchase of \$1,000 or more other than blanket/open or emergency requires a purchase order. For purchases not handled with a purchase order a check request form or properly approved invoice should be submitted for reimbursement.

PURCHASE CARD TRANSACTIONS

The single transaction limit is \$1,000 during a 24 hour period. Purchases above this amount require the issuance of a District Purchase Order. If a purchase is needed that exceeds the \$1,000 limit, the purchase will be declined unless the Finance Department/Chief Financial Officer approves the purchase and authorizes the bank to accept the card. Under no circumstances should a transaction be split into separate receipts to bypass the single transaction dollar amount established for the card. An original itemized sales slip/invoice is required for all transactions. Failure to provide an original itemized sales slip/invoice will result in personal reimbursement for the transaction.

PURCHASING

The Elbert County School District (ECSD) must purchase supplies and services from the business community to operate. The Board of Education will appropriate funds that will be used by the Superintendent through the Chief Financial Officer to procure the required goods and services. Federal Program purchases should be pre-approved by the Federal Program Director and guidelines should be followed.

The guidelines on which the purchasing functions shall operate are provided in the ECSD Purchasing Regulations and Requirements Manual. The board policies on which purchasing functions shall operate are found in Policy DJE and Policy DJED.

1. Purchases less than \$1000 may be accomplished without multiple quotes. Purchaser should use their best judgment when making the purchase.
2. Purchases from \$1000 to \$9,999.99 may be made at the local school/department level provided that two (2) quotes are obtained and submitted to the Financial Services Department.
3. Purchases from \$10,000 to \$24,999.99 require pricing to be secured by the Financial Services Department. Schools should email the Chief Financial Officer a description of what is being requested and any supporting documentation for specifications. The Financial Services Department will issue a written Request for Quote and attempt to solicit at least three (3) competitive quotes. Purchases from \$10,000 to \$24,999.99 will be included as agenda items and reported to the Board at monthly work sessions.
4. Purchases of \$25,000 or more require a formal Invitation to Bid or Request for Proposal process. These purchases shall also be made only after advertising same in two consecutive issues of the local newspaper and taking sealed bids, which shall be opened publicly at the Board of Education by the Superintendent or designee, tabulated, awarded to the lowest qualified bidder and submitted to the Board for approval. Purchases \$25,000 and over not requiring a bid must also be submitted to the Board for approval (see Exceptions).
5. Purchases of materials, equipment, and/or services in connections with capital outlay projects under \$100,000 will be made or awarded only after securing three written quotations and submitted to the Board for approval. Purchases of materials, equipment, and/or services in connections with capital outlay projects \$100,000 or more shall be governed by O.C.G.A. 36-91-1, et seq., as amended. Bids shall be opened publicly.
6. All bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed as specified, plainly marked with the name of the bid, and comply with all bid instructions. Bids shall be opened publicly at the time and place specified in the request for bid and all bidders and other persons shall be invited to be present.
7. The Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to accept that bid which appears to be in the best interest of the Board.

Exceptions to These Procedures/Guidelines

1. Sole/Single Source Purchase – When the Superintendent or designee determine that:
 - a. Minimum needs can best be satisfied by unique supplies or services readily available from one source with unique capabilities.
 - b. When purchasing utility services (gas, electric power, etc.), circumstances may dictate that only one supplier can furnish the service.
 - c. It is in the best interest of the ECSD to limit purchases to specified makes and models of equipment and parts to satisfy needs for additional units or replacement items.
2. The printing of legal briefs, records, and appendices to be used in any legal proceedings in which the school district may be a party.

3. The purchase of real estate.
4. The purchase of foods, except milk.
5. Tests and test scoring services from the publisher or licensed agent.
6. System-level purchases of textbooks and learning resources ordered directly from publishers in accordance with the approved textbook list or committee-adopted resources.
7. Library books, media, newspapers, reference materials, or other instructional media ordered on the basis of discount from lists and services available.
8. Maintenance service from the original vendor or authorized agent of the installed equipment or products.
9. Any contract made or entered into with the United States of America, the State of Georgia, any county or municipality or any board, body, officer agency or authority, thereof.
10. Any item purchased under a state or other competitively bid contract.
11. Any emergency need for equipment, materials, and/or services in which the failure to act immediately shall cause significant financial loss or appreciable damage to the physical facilities, or the educational program, or endanger the life or health of members of the community, or impede the educational mission of the school district. The Superintendent or designee shall have the authority to approve such an order.

TRAVEL APPROVAL AND REIMBURSEMENT

Approval from the principal and superintendent or superintendent's designee must be obtained BEFORE an employee travels during school time on professional leave if he/she expects reimbursement for travel. This request must be submitted at least three (3) days in advance to the district office. Once approved by the principal and/or the superintendent, or the appropriate program manager, reimbursement for travel outside the school system must be obtained on travel request form. Any claims for reimbursement without prior approval from the principal, superintendent or superintendent's designee will be at the employee expense.

Reimbursement for official travel will be made in compliance with the State Accounting Office. An individual will be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred while traveling on approved school system business. Travel forms can be found on the district's website under financial services. It is expected that conservation and good judgment will be used in the choice of lodging.

Upon arrival at a hotel/motel facility, furnish the facility operator with the State of GA Tax Exemption Form for state taxes and the State of GA Certificate Exemption of local hotel/motel excise to be exempt from paying state taxes and local hotel/motel excise tax. These taxes cannot be reimbursed by the Elbert County Board of Education. Anyone traveling on official district business should check out a travel procurement card for hotel/ motel expenses.

No reimbursement will be allowed for entertainment, personal expense, or any portion of conference fees covering social activities.

Properly completed employee expense statements should be received in the central office no later than five (5) working days after the end of the month in which the travel occurred or upon returning to the district, whichever is shortest. Travel that is not turned in will not be reimbursed and will be the responsibility of the employee.

ABSOLUTELY NO PAYMENT CAN BE MADE FOR TRAVEL EXPENSE STATEMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE END OF THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR.

FACILITIES / MAINTENANCE / SAFETY

SCHOOL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

School equipment or property may be sold after permission is granted by the superintendent and the item has been given surplus status. Questions regarding the loaning of school property of any type should be referred to the principal. In order to keep school insurance coverage complete, new materials or equipment should be promptly added to the school inventory. This information should be kept up to date at each school.

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Elbert County Board of Education will permit its school facilities to be used by associations or organizations located within Elbert County School System for appropriate activities which do not interfere with any activity of the school system, under the following conditions. The Board of Education develops this policy for the purpose of establishing a fair and consistent method by which school property may be enjoyed by the public. For additional information, please see board policy KG and contact the Director of Operations. Applications for use of school facilities can be made at the Elbert County Board Office.

[USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES - KG](#)

FACILITY MODIFICATIONS

To ensure the Elbert County Board of Education is adhering to local, state, and federal codes and regulations, and to provide for the safety of those who use school facilities, it is necessary to monitor and control all modifications to school facilities and property. All facility and property modifications, of any sort, must be submitted in advance and approved by the Director of Operations, regardless of the funding source for the work or who performs the work. Such modifications include, but are not limited to, additions, renovations, alterations, signage, lighting, fencing, drainage systems, playground systems, shrub and tree plantings, painting, wall and floor coverings, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and electronic work.

MAINTENANCE REQUESTS

Requests for maintenance should be submitted to school administration. School administration or designee will email the Director of Operations and school maintenance department. Emergency maintenance requests should be reported by telephone to the Director of Operations by the school principal or his/her designee.

Summer repair list for each school should be completed and submitted to the maintenance department by the end of post-planning.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN/EMERGENCY DRILLS

The Georgia Emergency Management Agency reviews and approves the school system's comprehensive School Safety Plan and each school's Emergency Management Plan. All school personnel have access to an Emergency Handbook and Emergency Flip-chart, which is a guide for responding to various types of emergencies. Fire/evacuation drills are held on a monthly basis, and drills for severe weather, lockdown of the school, and bus evacuation will be held at least once each year. For additional information regarding school safety, contact your school administration.

SAFE AND HEALTHY FACILITIES

All employees should report anything that could be deemed unsafe or potentially hazardous to school administrators. To protect against the threat of fire, items such as microwaves, coffee pots, electric skillets, and other cooking devices are prohibited for use in any location of the school other than the kitchen. In addition, candles or other open-flame devices are prohibited in any location of the school other than science labs that are equipped for such use.

Employees are required to report to their administrator/supervisor if restraining orders or other problematic situations exist that may impact the safety of school premises.

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

CURRICULUM

District and school employees work collaboratively to ensure that the curriculum in Elbert County Schools maximizes student achievement. The curriculum framework is aligned with local, state, and national standards, and serves as the basis for the selection of textbooks and other instructional resources. Consequently, all teachers are expected to use the curriculum framework as a primary resource when preparing for instruction. Persons needing additional information related to Curriculum should contact the school administration or the Director of Teaching and Learning.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/TEXTBOOKS

Elbert County Schools follow the Georgia Department of Education instructional materials adoption cycle.

TEACHER LESSON PLANS

Teachers are expected to develop lesson plans. School administrators can expect teachers to verify local and state requirements through their lesson plans.

CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

Teachers should consider very carefully any classroom instruction or assignments that may be considered controversial. When there is any doubt as to the possible controversy of an issue, the teacher should discuss the issue with the school principal for guidance, direction, or clarification.

STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT

Standardized assessment is an integral part of curriculum and instruction and has three (3) distinct purposes:

1. Testing provides key information relative to curriculum strengths and weaknesses.
2. Testing provides key information about individual student achievement for communication with parents.
3. Testing provides opportunities for teachers, grade levels, schools, and the school system to determine if students are functioning at optimum performance level.

The school system recognizes the value of student assessment and encourages the use of assessment to improve teaching and learning. Standardized assessment results are sent home to parents and copies are maintained in the administrative offices of the schools. Teachers are expected to be able to analyze, interpret, and utilize test results for the benefit of students and parents.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The system seeks to provide and keep employees aware of professional learning opportunities. The curriculum department coordinates professional learning programs with school administration, and the curriculum department will assist staff members interested in professional learning opportunities. Check with the school site-based professional learning coordinator for additional information.

POLICY - PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES - GAD**FIELD TRIPS**

The Elbert County Board of Education considers student field trips to be an integral and valuable component of the instructional program.

Teachers shall complete a field trip request form for field trips and extended excursions and shall submit to the school principal for review and approval. The request shall include such information as:

1. Date of trip and time span;
2. Destination;
3. Purpose of trip keyed to instructional program written objectives; and
4. School personnel attending.

Field trip requests shall be submitted at least two (2) weeks in advance. Field trips requiring transportation must be submitted at least two (2) weeks in advance so as to secure system school bus. Upon approval, the principal shall forward field trip requests to the superintendent for final written approval. The superintendent shall develop regulations or procedures governing the approval of field trip requests.

Any field trip involving travel out of state or overnight stays requires the prior approval of the board of education.

A. Rules

Educational field trips will not be authorized during the first ten (10) school days nor the last ten days of the school year. This restriction does not apply to after-school activities.

1. Teachers, working with school administrators, have the authority to exclude the participation of students whose behavioral history suggests the possibility that they may endanger themselves or others while on a field trip. This decision must be made on actual student behavior and not based on disability identification.
2. Only students who are regularly enrolled in the school district and who are involved in the instructional activity will be eligible for transportation.
3. The field trip request must include an instructional plan for accommodating all students. A quality alternative instructional experience for those students choosing not to attend the field trip must be provided by the teacher supervising the trip.
4. Students must be counted present when on a field trip and must be allowed to make up work.

B. Supervision and Chaperones

1. Employees, parents, guardians, and/or their spouses, as well as similar adults of supervisory age, approved by the school administrator will be permitted to accompany transported groups on school buses for supervisory purposes.
2. A teacher or adult supervisor must ride on each bus.
3. In all cases, appropriate adult supervision shall be provided and approved by the school administrator. Minimum requirements for adult supervision are the following:
 - a. Elementary: 1 Adult for every 15 students
 - b. Middle School: 1 Adult for every 20 students
 - c. High School: 1 Adult for every 25 students
4. Chaperones may not bring other children on a bus during the field trip.
5. For the duration of the field trip, employees and adult chaperones are directly accountable for their actions as if they were responsible for students on school premises. Employees and adult supervisors must refrain from personal practices, both in and out of the presence of students, which would be inconsistent with their responsibilities to supervise students.
6. Employees that request field trips must have all chaperones complete a volunteer release form. Chaperones who will have direct, unsupervised interaction with students must complete a background check to include fingerprinting through the Human Resources Department at the district office. These forms should be completed and approved before fees for chaperones are accepted.

C. Transportation

1. Curricular field trips involving county buses should not be scheduled during regular school busing hours:
 - a. 6:00 am - 8:30 am; and
 - b. 2:15pm - 4:00pm
2. The use of county buses for field trips will be contingent upon the availability of vehicles and the scheduling of regular school transportation.
3. No field trips will be scheduled when school is closed because of inclement weather.
4. Weekend trips will be determined on a case by case basis by the superintendent.
5. Transportation arrangements must be provided to accommodate any students with special needs.
6. Mileage will be charged to the local school at the current rate of portal-to-portal mileage as determined by the Director of Transportation. The driver will be paid at the hourly rate specified for field trip pay as determined by the Director of Transportation. Driver time will be calculated from point of departure and back.

D. Transportation Other Than School Buses

1. A School Bus or the Activity Bus should only be used to transport students.
2. The use of regular automobiles and 10-15 passenger non-conforming vans is strictly prohibited for transporting students to school related activities.

E. Non School-Sponsored Events

1. If a staff member plans a non-school sponsored trip that involves students (even if planned for weekends, holiday, or summer) the school administrator must be advised. However, the administrator is not required to approve the trip.
2. No class time may be used to promote the trip and no funds may be solicited nor accepted during the school day.

3. When meetings are held at school to discuss trips that are non-school sponsored trips, they must be held outside of the staff member's regular working hours and when students are not scheduled for class time.
4. When staff members plan non-school sponsored trips, even when the guidelines called for in this regulation are followed, parents will be informed, in writing, that the trip is a non-school sponsored event. Therefore, the school system takes no responsibility for the trip.
5. The employee must make it clear that arrangements and transactions about the trip (including phone calls) must be handled outside the school day.
6. School system supplies must not be used to pursue a non-school sponsored trip.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS / TITLE I

Title I is a part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This act provides federal funds through the Georgia Department of Education to local educational agencies (LEAs) and public schools with high numbers or percentages of poor children to help ensure that all children meet challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards.

Local Educational Agencies target the Title I funds they receive to public schools with the highest percentages of children from low-income families. These funds may be used for children from preschool aged to high school. Title I is designed to support State and local school reform efforts tied to challenging State academic standards in order to reinforce and enhance efforts to improve teaching and learning for students. Title I programs must be based on effective means of improving student achievement and include strategies to support parental involvement.

Persons needing additional information related to Federal Programs should contact the school administration or the Federal Programs Director.

[ELBERT COUNTY BOE TITLE I WEBSITE](#)

[ELBERT COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM FRAUD ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS](#)

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SECTION 504s

Students for whom teachers feel special testing and special services may be needed should be referred to the school response to intervention team. Prior to a child being referred for Special Education, the student goes through various levels or tiers in the school's Multi-Tier Support System. Student referrals must be preceded by evidenced-based academic and/or behavioral interventions. The procedures for referral can be found in the ECSD Special Education Procedures Manual. Teachers should become familiar with response to intervention procedures at their school.

Persons needing additional information related to special education should contact the school administration or the Special Education Director.

[ELBERT COUNTY BOE SPECIAL EDUCATION WEBSITE](#)

IEPS AND 504s

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Section 504 plans must be followed by all school employees. Teachers cannot make adjustments to a plan unless an IEP or 504 meeting is held and a new plan is put into place. Parents must be invited to all meetings and have input to their child's education plan. These are binding agreements that must be followed at all times. If a student is still struggling and the plan is being followed, teachers should work with school administration and parents to schedule a meeting to look at modifying the plan.

GENERAL INFORMATION**ADVERTISING IN SCHOOLS**

Advertising materials of a commercial, political, or other non-educational nature which do not serve a legitimate school or community interest shall not be displayed or distributed in the school or on Board property. Students may not be used as the agents for distributing non-school materials to their homes without the approval of the Superintendent.

This policy does not prevent advertising in student publications, which are published by student organizations, and subject to administrative control. Exceptions may also be made for businesses that are participating in a partnership arrangement with a school.

[ADVERTISING IN SCHOOL POLICY - KJ](#)**COPYRIGHT POLICY STATEMENT**

All staff members shall comply with the Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Staff members who fail to follow the Copyright Law shall be held personally liable for copyright infringement. The Elbert County Board of Education will not be responsible for any violations of the Copyright Law by its staff and hereby notifies all employees that a willful infringement of the law may result in disciplinary action.

COMPUTER/INTERNET POLICY STATEMENT

All staff members using school system computer resources and the Internet shall comply with the Elbert County Board of Education's Acceptable Use of Computer/ Internet Resources policy, the administrative procedures provided by the superintendent regarding such use. In addition, all staff members allowing students to use the school system's computer/ Internet resources under their supervision are responsible for ensuring such use is in compliance with School Board policy.

[POLICY - INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE - IFBG](#)**VOLUNTEERS**

In support of student safety, Elbert County Schools requires that all schools and administrative offices identify and screen all volunteers in accordance with the following guidelines. Security clearances for volunteers must be renewed every five years.

Volunteers who will have direct interaction with students, with other adults present at all times (an ECSD employee or no fewer than two other adult volunteers), do not require fingerprinting or a criminal

background check. Examples include parents/guardians volunteering for a field day or school fair, classroom helpers, in-class tutors, performers, and speakers from external agencies.

Volunteers who will have direct, unsupervised interaction with students are required to complete a background check to include fingerprinting. The fee for fingerprinting is the responsibility of the volunteer or principals can elect to cover the fee through respective principal accounts. Examples include chaperones on overnight field trips who will have unsupervised interaction with students and mentors who will have unsupervised interaction with students.

Activities such as Read Across America, etc. in which individuals are solicited to read for only that particular activity under the supervision of a certified teacher/staff individual are not required to complete the attached form.