

**Griffin-Spalding County
School System**
Certified Employee Handbook
**2013-2014
School Year**



**Julie Evans
Teacher of the Year
and her Principal
Rachelle Holloway**

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CURTIS L. JONES, JR. Superintendent

Accredited by SACS and GAC

MEMO TO: All Certified Employees

FROM: Curtis L. Jones, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent

SUBJECT: WELCOME TO GSCS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2013-2014

DATE: July 30, 2013

A Message to Our Returning Employees

I've heard it said that it is important to remember where you've been. I've also heard much about the importance of knowing where you're going. I believe both are true. And yet, more so than these two thoughts, I believe the key to success is in knowing how to get there.

This year, our past includes celebrating 60 years of excellence in educating the students of our area. The big question remains, what does our future hold, and more importantly, what do our students' futures hold? I want to challenge you as you return to your classrooms to look beyond routine functions, and see your students graduating college, discovering an unknown solar system or becoming a successful electrician. Imagine that rambunctious and overly curious student in the third row becoming the President of the United States.

How do they get there? Some students are just destined to stumble into greatness. But for all others, they depend on you, and me, and every other adult who can touch their lives in a positive and impactful way. It's not just about teaching academics; it's about helping to shape character by modeling and reinforcing the traits of highly successful people. When Dr. King dreamed of a world where the quality of character mattered above all things, I think he gave us insight into the heart of successful and responsible citizens.

Dream big for your students; teach them to dream big for their futures. Give them a pattern of success to model by encouraging them to be respectful, punctual, present and ready to learn. I welcome you back—I dare you to dream.

A Message to Our New Employees

Welcome! You have just joined one of the finest school systems in this state. I say that without boast but with all the humility that goes along with leading a great team of teachers, administrators and support staff. Our staff knows that my open-door policy keeps me plugged into the trials as well as the triumphs. I look forward to hearing from you.

The Griffin-Spalding County School System is preparing each student for college and career by providing a quality, character and standards-based education today. These are not just words posted in our halls; instead, these words guide our every action and should give us pause before every decision we make. I am glad that you are joining us as we make those decisions in 2013-2014. I want you to remember that you are not alone; rather, you are to take comfort in the strong support system available to you as part of the GSCS family. As you join our team, be encouraged by the knowledge that your success will be shared by the entire system, and that guarantees the support and commitment of the entire system—starting with me.

Daring . . .

Curtis

Vision:

Griffin-Spalding County School System is transforming our community through a quality public education.

Mission:

To prepare each student for college and career by providing a quality, character and standards-based education today.

Motto:

Daring to do better!

Griffin-Spalding County School's Values:

Competency

We are data-driven and research-based.

Open Communication

We communicate with students, parents, and the community about our mission, vision, and goals. We practice effective collaboration.

Loyalty

We support public education, our school system, our schools, and each other. We care for our students--they are why we are here.

Defined Autonomy

We use the GSCS Strategy Map to guide our actions. We come together as individuals to work as teams to achieve our shared goals.

Respect

We treat others as they would like to be treated. We practice customer service.

GSCS Strategy Map

Student Achievement

Increase Content
Mastery

Post School
Readiness

Predictors of High
School Readiness

Student and Stakeholder Engagement

Partner
with Students

Partner
with Parents

Partner
with the Community

Teacher Effectiveness

Be a
Professional Learning
Community

Know
Technology

Do
Standards Based
Classrooms

Reliable Organization

Manage
Processes and
Projects

Manage
Finances and
Personnel

Manage
Perceptions

Maintain a
Safe Learning
Environment

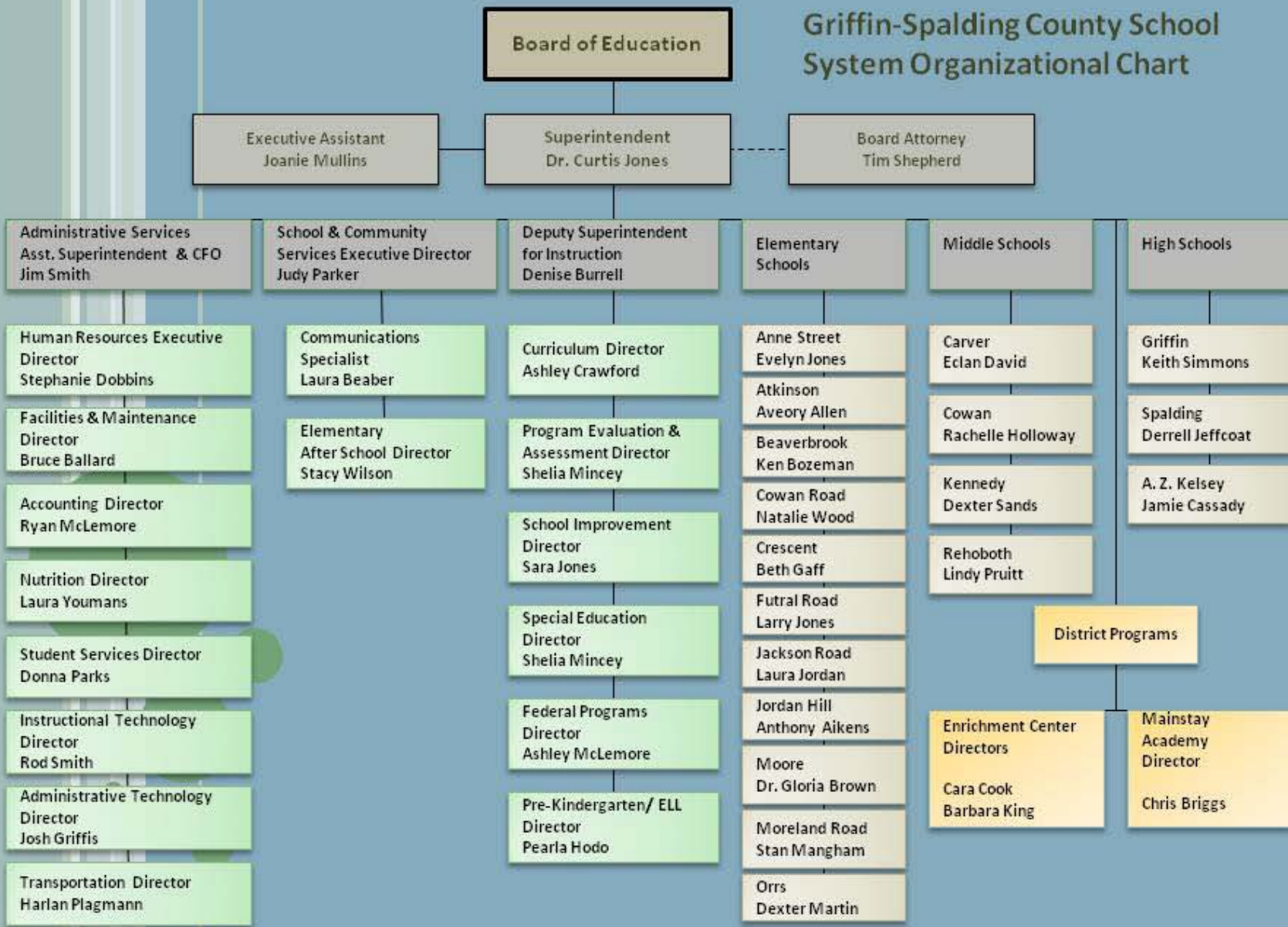
Learning and Growth

Recruit and Retain
the Right People

Learn
GSCS Values & Culture

Grow
from Evaluations

Griffin-Spalding County School System Organizational Chart



Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
DISCLAIMER	1
POLICY	1
CHANGES IN POLICY	1
EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP	1
EMPLOYMENT POLICIES	2
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY / NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT	2
DEFINITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS	2
TITLE IX—NON-DISCRIMINATION	2
PERSONNEL RECORDS	2
IDENTIFICATION BADGES	3
EMPLOYEE WORKLOAD/WORKDAY	3
ATTENDANCE CHOICES FOR CHILDREN OF EMPLOYEES	3
STAFF ATTENDANCE	4
CONTRACTS	5
ANNUAL CONTRACT	5
CONTRACT SALARY	5
<i>Factors Determining Salary</i>	5
<i>A contracted employee's salary is based on:</i>	5
<i>Working Fewer than the Number of Contracted Days</i>	5
RESIGNATION FROM CONTRACT	6
CREDITABLE EXPERIENCE	6
NONRENEWAL OF CONTRACT (NON-TENURE STATUS)	6
NONRENEWAL OF CONTRACT OR DEMOTION (TENURE STATUS)	6
TERMINATION OF CONTRACT	7
(GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION, SUSPENSION OR DEMOTION)	7
ASSIGNMENTS/TRANSFERS	7
ASSIGNMENT (GENERAL)	7
PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS (TKES AND LKES)	7
UNSATISFACTORY EVALUATIONS	7
NON-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT (MOONLIGHTING)	8
PROMOTIONS (JOB POSTINGS)	8
SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT	8
REDUCTION IN FORCE	8
RESPONSIBILITIES AND PREROGATIVES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION	8
REASONS FOR REDUCTION IN FORCE (HEREINAFTER "RIF")	8
APPLICABILITY OF POLICY	9
RIF PROCEDURE	9
NOTICE OF HEARING PROCEDURES	9
REPRIMAND	9
EXIT SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS	9
WAGE AND SALARY POLICIES	10
SALARY	10
DIRECT DEPOSIT	10
<i>Eligibility</i>	10
<i>When to Apply</i>	10
<i>How to Apply</i>	10

<i>Proof of Deposit</i>	10
<i>Production Problems</i>	10
<i>Notice to Discontinue or Change Direct Deposit</i>	10
<i>Questions</i>	11
SOCIAL SECURITY	11
ADVANCEMENT ON THE SALARY SCHEDULE	11
BRAWNER BONUS	11
EXTENDED DAY/YEAR SALARIES	11
EXTRA-DUTY ASSIGNMENTS	12
EXTRA-DUTY SUPPLEMENTS.....	12
FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS.....	12
MINIMUM SALARY FOR TEACHERS	12
PLACEMENT (INITIAL)	12
RETROACTIVE ADJUSTMENTS.....	13
PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS	13
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND SERVICES.....	13
GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE	13
GROUP LIFE INSURANCE	13
FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN (CAFETERIA PLAN).....	14
DISABILITY (SHORT TERM)	14
DISABILITY (LONG TERM)	14
CRITICAL ILLNESS	14
DENTAL.....	14
VISION.....	14
CREDIT UNION	14
WORKERS' COMPENSATION	15
RETIREMENT	15
<i>Service Retirement (TRS)</i>	15
<i>Disability Retirement (TRS)</i>	15
<i>Unused Sick Leave Credit Toward Retirement (HB 203)</i>	16
LEAVES AND ABSENCES (GARH)	16
<i>Sick Leave</i>	16
<i>Bereavement Leave</i>	17
<i>Jury Duty/Court Appearance (Legal Leave)</i>	17
<i>Personal Leave</i>	17
<i>Employee Leave without Pay</i>	17
<i>Sick Leave Bank</i>	18
<i>Personal Leave Bank</i>	18
<i>Unpaid Medical Leave (Leave after FMLA)</i>	18
<i>Professional Leave</i>	19
<i>TRS Implications of Professional Study Leave (Creditable Service)</i>	19
TEMPORARY RELIEF OF DUTY WITH PAY	20
TEMPORARY RELIEF OF DUTY WITHOUT PAY	20
UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE.....	20
ABSENCE WITHOUT PROPER NOTICE	21
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)	21
<i>Eligibility</i>	21
<i>Amount of Leave Available</i>	21
<i>Notification of Anticipated Leave</i>	21
<i>Benefits During and after Leave</i>	22
<i>Required Medical Certification</i>	22
<i>Military Leave (Employee is a Military Member)</i>	22
<i>Military Leave (Employee is a Family Member of a Covered Military Member)</i>	22
<i>Definition of a Qualifying Exigency</i>	22
<i>Eligibility of a Qualifying Exigency</i>	23
<i>Required Exigency Leave Certification</i>	23

<i>Eligibility for Military Caregiver Leave</i>	23
<i>Required Military Caregiver Leave Certification</i>	23
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP).....	23
JOB COUNSELING.....	24
EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS.....	24
SUGGESTIONS.....	24
PUBLIC RELATIONS.....	24
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.....	25
COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCES.....	25
<i>Definitions</i>	25
<i>General Provisions Applying to All Levels</i>	25
<i>First Level (Presentation and Contents)</i>	26
<i>First Level (Filing, Hearing, Decision)</i>	26
<i>Second Level (Appeal from Level I to Level II Administrator)</i>	26
<i>Third Level (Appeal to the Board of Education)</i>	27
<i>Exhaustion of Remedies (Duplicate Review Prohibited)</i>	28
<i>Costs</i>	28
<i>Appeals to the State Board of Education</i>	28
<i>Reprisal</i>	28
<i>Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedure</i>	28
USE OF TECHNOLOGY.....	29
SAFETY.....	30
SYSTEM-WIDE SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT.....	30
ACCIDENTS OR INJURY.....	30
STATE EYE PROTECTION STANDARD.....	30
CONDUCT ISSUES.....	30
WEAPONS, DRUGS, ALCOHOL.....	30
THREATS OF VIOLENCE.....	30
POSSESSION OF A WEAPON ON SCHOOL PROPERTY.....	31
CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.....	31
SOLICITATION OF CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS / SOLICITATION FOR.....	31
PERSONAL GAIN.....	31
USE OF TOBACCO.....	31
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.....	31
CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS.....	31
<i>Test Data</i>	32
SEXUAL AND OTHER HARASSMENT.....	32
<i>Unwelcome Conduct of a Sexual Nature</i>	32
<i>Sexual Harassment</i>	32
SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS.....	32
<i>Administrators and Supervisors</i>	32
<i>Non-Administrative and Non-Supervisory Employees</i>	33
<i>Reporting, Investigation, and Sanctions</i>	33
CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE.....	33
<i>Drug Free Work Force</i>	33
<i>Definitions</i>	33
<i>Procedures</i>	34
DRESS CODE.....	34
CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS.....	35
<i>Introduction</i>	36
<i>Standards</i>	36
<i>Disciplinary Action</i>	39
PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	40

CERTIFICATION	40
<i>Applying for Certificates</i>	40
<i>Expiring Certificates</i>	40
<i>New Certificates</i>	40
<i>Adjustment for New Certificate</i>	40
<i>Newly-Employed Teachers</i>	41
<i>Certification Tests</i>	41
<i>Who Must Take the Tests</i>	41
<i>Registration</i>	41
<i>Certification Ineligibility</i>	41
STAFF DEVELOPMENT	41
<i>Components</i>	41
<i>Professional Learning Opportunities</i>	42
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF 2013-2014	43

NOTE: It is the responsibility of each staff member to study this document and become familiar with the rules, regulations and policies of the Griffin-Spalding County School System. A current copy is maintained on the school system web site at www.spalding.k12.ga.us.

This employee handbook supersedes all previous employee handbooks and management memos which may have been issued on subjects covered herein.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this manual is to:

- provide information which is essential for an adequate understanding of the rights and responsibilities of each certified staff member;
- assist each employee in understanding the scope of benefits available to him/her and family members;
- inform employees based upon laws, policies, procedures, regulations, benefits, rights, and responsibilities relating to personnel affairs assembled from such sources as: Federal laws; Georgia laws; policies of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; policies of the Georgia Department of Education; and policies of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education;
- provide information based upon code defined as follows: "O.C.G.A. 20-2-850" denotes Section 20-2-850 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated which is the law of the State of Georgia; "GBOE Rule JGI (160-4-8-.04)" denotes Georgia Board of Education Rule JGI (160-4-8-.04) which is the policy of the State Board; and "GSCSS Policy GAM" signifies a local board adopted policy.

DISCLAIMER

- **NOTE: Every staff member must be aware that each session of Congress and the Georgia Legislature brings new laws and modifications to old laws. Each month may bring changes in the policies of the Georgia Department of Education and the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. Fringe benefit provisions are also subject to alteration at any time. Queries concerning the accuracy and timeliness of any information in this manual should be addressed to an employee's immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department.**
- Additionally, benefit provisions are likely to change frequently, particularly with respect to the various insurance and retirement benefits available to each employee. Periodic updates of this manual will be provided to reflect these changes.
- The information found in this manual is not meant to be, and should not be relied upon as legal advice or financial investment advice. If you have any questions regarding your legal rights, then you should contact your attorney. If you have any questions regarding benefits or financial investment decisions, then you should contact a qualified financial advisor.

POLICY

- Board of Education policy manuals are available for viewing at the GSCS website at www.spalding.k12.ga.us
- Employees are encouraged to refer to the policy manual as needed.

CHANGES IN POLICY

- Since, from time to time policies do change; we expressly reserve the right to change any of our policies, including those covered here, at any time. Normally, we will notify you of these changes by informing principals and department heads, and by posting to our website. Changes will be effective on dates determined by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education, and you may not rely on policies that have been superseded.
- If you are uncertain about any policy or procedure, please check with your supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

- All school personnel must be employed by the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the superintendent.
- All personnel including substitutes will be fingerprinted and must clear a computer-based criminal record check prior to being offered a position or working as a substitute with the school system.
- The Human Resources Department will notify employees when they need to complete the fingerprinting/records check process.

- Applicants and employees will be asked to sign a statement which will allow the results to be released to the school system.
- The results will only be used by officials only to determine whether or not to grant or continue employment and to comply with federal laws, rules, and regulations.

NOTE: Furnishing false or misleading information or the intentional withholding of material facts regarding your arrest or criminal record will constitute grounds for immediate termination. Arrests, convictions, verdicts of “not guilty,” or any other case disposition will appear on a criminal history. There is no expiration date. Any arrests after age sixteen (16) will be listed.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY / NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Griffin-Spalding County School System not to discriminate according to federal law. Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, sex, or disability in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Employees, students, and the general public are hereby notified that the Griffin-Spalding County School System does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies or practices.

The following individuals have been designated as the employees responsible for coordinating the system’s efforts to implement this non-discriminatory policy. Contacts are:

- Title VI – Donna Parks, (770)229-3719, extension 349
- Title IX – Jim Smith (770) 229-3710, extension 357
- Section 504 and ADA – Shelia Mincey (770) 229-3710, extension 333
- Perkins Act – Sara Jones (770) 229-3710, extension 359

DEFINITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS

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

- Exempt—Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable state law and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements
- Non-Exempt—Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA and state exemption tests
- Benefits Eligible—Employees scheduled to work 20 hours or more per week
- Part-time—Employees scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week (not benefits eligible)
- Substitute Employees who are hired for a pre-established period or on call as needed. They may work a full-time or part-time schedule. They are ineligible for benefits.

TITLE IX—NON-DISCRIMINATION

- There will be no discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, creed or color in the educational program, activities, or employment practices within the Griffin-Spalding County Schools.
- The Superintendent has appointed Jim Smith, Assistant Superintendent and CFO, as the Title IX Coordinator. He may be contacted at 770-229-3710, extension 357.
- The Title IX Coordinator shall be responsible for supervising GSCS’s efforts to comply with all aspects of the legislation for procedures that provide for prompt and equitable resolution of such complaints.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

- Important events in each employee’s history with the Griffin-Spalding County BOE such as change in pay status, and change in location or address, will be recorded and kept in the employee’s personnel file.
- Regular performance reviews, change of status records, commendation, corrective action warnings, and educational attainment records are examples of records maintained.

- All references submitted on your behalf are considered the property of the Griffin-Spalding County BOE.
- Your personnel file is available for your inspection in the Human Resources Department.
- Contact the Human Resources Department to make an appointment to view your file.
- You are responsible for notifying the Human Resources Department of any changes in address, telephone number, and /or family status (births, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.).
- This responsibility includes employees on leaves of absence or out due to family leave.
- A copy of your social security card or a verification printout from Social Security Administration is required before a name change request will be processed by the Human Resources Department.
- Your employment name must match your name on the Social Security Administration's records.

IDENTIFICATION BADGES

- As a safety precaution, all employees must wear the picture ID badge provided by the system during the workday.
- If the ID is lost, the employee must contact the Human Resources Department immediately to have another badge issued for a fee of \$5.00.
- When an employee leaves the Griffin-Spalding County School System, the ID must be returned to the supervisor.

EMPLOYEE WORKLOAD/WORKDAY

- **The following procedures and regulations shall be followed pertaining to employee workload and workday :**
 1. The workload of an employee shall be defined as those work related responsibilities which are assigned to the position held by the employee and which the employee is expected to satisfactorily complete in return for the salary specified.
 2. The minimum workday is determined by the time required to perform the assigned duties. Check with your principal or supervisor for your time schedule.
- A week is defined as a seven-day work week beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday and ending at 12:00 midnight on Saturday.
- Full-time employees are expected to work a minimum eight-hour day and a forty-hour week.
- Part-time employees work the number of hours daily and/or weekly as specified in their contract or initial employment agreement.
- Principals have some discretion in the hours employees are at school and will work with employees on an individual basis to insure that schools are open and children supervised when they arrive and until the time they leave.
- Duties for certified staff members may vary according to assignments, and include responsibilities such as teaching and preparation, staff meetings, conferences with students and parents, planning conferences, related school activities in the community and extra class responsibilities and completion of those duties may result in a work week in excess of 40 hours.
- Distribution of work among staff members shall conform to the minimum requirements for accreditation, and classes shall be so arranged that each child will receive individual attention. (GBOE Rule AF, GBRC (160-5-1-.06) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-168(c)) (GSCSS Policy GBRC)

ATTENDANCE CHOICES FOR CHILDREN OF EMPLOYEES

- As stated in Griffin-Spalding County School Board Policy JBC-R(1), an employee may elect for his/her child(ren) to attend a Griffin-Spalding County School based on his/her residential address.
- Additionally, State Law provides that a student shall be allowed to be enrolled in and attend the school in which a parent or guardian of such student is a full-time employee, notwithstanding the fact that the student and his or her parent or guardian may reside in another county or attendance zone.

- When an employee elects for his/her child(ren) to attend the school where he/she is employed or attend a different grade level other than the campus where the employee is housed, the following options will apply:

Employee Who Work at:	Their Children May Attend:
Atkinson	Atkinson/CRMS/SHS
Anne Street	Anne Street/RRMS/GHS
Beaverbrook	Beaverbrook/CRMS/GHS
Cowan Road Elem.	Cowan Road Elem./CRMS/GHS
Crescent	Crescent/RRMS/SHS
Futral Road	Futral Road/RRMS/SHS
Jackson Road	Jackson Road/KRMS/SHS
Jordan Hill	Jordan Hill/KRMS/SHS
Moore	Moore/KRMS/SHS
Moreland Road	Moreland Road/CAMS/GHS
Orrs	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
Carver Road Middle School (CAMS)	Moreland Road/CAMS/GHS
Cowan Road Middle School (CRMS)	Cowan Road Elem./CRMS/GHS
Kennedy Road Middle School (KRMS)	Jackson Road/KRMS/SHS
Rehoboth Road Middle School (RRMS)	Futral Road/RRMS/SHS
Griffin High School (GHS)	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
Special Needs Pre-K Office	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
Spalding High School (SHS)	Futral Road/RRMS/SHS
Central Office	Crescent/RRMS/SHS
Transportation Department	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
Enrichment Center	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
A.Z. Kelsey Academy	Moore/KRMS/SHS
Mainstay	Moore/KRMS/SHS
Griffin-Spalding Alternative School	Atkinson/CRMS/GHS
Taylor Street Campus	Crescent/RRMS/SHS
Maintenance Department	Orrs/CAMS/GHS

Note: If bus transportation is not already scheduled between the schools identified above, the employee must provide transportation for his/her child(ren) to and from school.

- If an employee has a unique situation regarding their child's attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request a review of the situation by the Transfer Request Committee.
- Refer to JBC-R(0) for Transfer Request Committee procedures.

STAFF ATTENDANCE

- The school system believes in the importance of good attendance.
- We emphasize regular attendance for our students as an indicator for academic success.
- Instructional achievement and school attendance of students is also measured by the Georgia Department of Education and several other organizations that publish ratings of school systems based on assessments in several areas.
- Research supports that good attendance is a valid indicator of instructional success.
- This system also 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 enable students to take advantage of all we can offer instructionally.
- If we want success in our schools, we must be present and on the job every possible day.
- We realize that there are always circumstances that require some employees to be away from work.
- Illnesses, family crises, and occasional personal business that cannot be scheduled outside the work day are reasonable examples of time required to be away.
- However, use of personal days for business and sick days for doctor appointments that could be scheduled at other times, or excessive days away for staff development or meetings are poor choices for the use of time away from work.
- Because of the positive impact that good attendance has on the instructional success of our students, attendance will be considered as a part of the annual evaluation.
- Poor attendance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- Attendance data for all staff will be maintained.

CONTRACTS

ANNUAL CONTRACT

A written contract is issued to each new teacher. In the spring, upon the principal's recommendation, a contract is issued for each recommended teacher for the coming school year.

- A contract is made by and between the teacher and the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education for a teaching position within the system and not for a specific school. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-943(b))
- Employment contracts of teachers, principals, and other certificated professional personnel must be in writing and must be signed in duplicate by such personnel on their own behalf and by the superintendent on behalf of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211)
- Any laws to the contrary notwithstanding, the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education shall tender a new contract for the ensuing school year to every teacher on the payroll of the system at the beginning of the preceding school year, except teachers who have resigned or who have been terminated, by May 15 of each year or notify any such teacher that they will not be reemployed for the ensuing school year.
- The notification shall be in writing. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211)

CONTRACT SALARY

Factors Determining Salary

A contracted employee's salary is based on:

1. the number of work days scheduled in the official school calendar;
 2. the number of years creditable experience;
 3. the salary schedule he/she is on;
 4. annual evaluation and ;
 5. the highest level in-field certificate the employee has on file in the Human Resources Department.
- Therefore, for newly hired personnel, until a valid in-field certificate and certified experience records are on file, all quotations of salary are tentative.
 - For newly hired personnel, when the Human Resources Department receives a valid in-field certificate, the employee's pay rate will be adjusted, if necessary, to the beginning date of employment or the beginning validity date on the certificate, whichever is most recent.

Working Fewer than the Number of Contracted Days

- **An employee's salary will be subject to an adjustment, on a pro rata basis, for the number of days in the annual work schedule that the employee does not work due to:**
 1. late employment;

2. temporary relief from duty as the result of board action;
3. absence from work without approval;
4. non-compensated absence with approval;
5. absence when the employee has no accumulated sick leave to cover the absences;
6. early separation from employment;
7. board action to adjust the official work schedule (O.C.G.A. 20-2-212.1).

RESIGNATION FROM CONTRACT

- During a contract year, any employee desiring to relinquish a position with the Griffin-Spalding County School System shall give the superintendent written notice of this intention.
- This notice shall be given in sufficient time for a replacement to be employed.
- Any employee desiring to relinquish a position prior to the beginning of a new school year shall request the release from contract in writing to the superintendent.
- After June 1st of each year, employees will be released from his/her contract for the following school year only when there are extenuating circumstances and only after all positions in the system in the employee's certification field have been filled plus a qualified replacement found for the employee requesting release.
- Except in situations which the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education, in the reasonable exercise of its discretion deems to be an emergency, the contract of employment shall not be terminated by the teacher without the written consent of the board.
- In the event that the teacher terminates the contract, whether by formal notice or by the willful failure or refusal to continue teaching, without such written consent or emergency situation, the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education may recommend to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission that the certificate of the teacher be suspended in accordance with the policies of the Georgia Board of Education.

CREDITABLE EXPERIENCE

- See the State Salary Rule 160-5-2-.05 on the DOE Website at <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us>

NONRENEWAL OF CONTRACT (NON-TENURE STATUS)

- When the superintendent proposes not to renew the contract of any teacher or other professional employee certified by the Professional Standards Commission who was on the payroll and under contract on the beginning day of the current school year, written notification of such intention shall be given to the teacher or other certified professional employee by no later than May 15 prior to the ensuing school year.
- When such notice is not given, the employment of the teacher or employee shall be continued for the ensuing school year unless the teacher or employee has been removed in accordance with provisions of the Georgia Code.
- The superintendent is the final authority and there is no right to appeal under the provisions of this section. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211)

NONRENEWAL OF CONTRACT OR DEMOTION (TENURE STATUS)

- In order to demote or fail to renew the contract of a teacher who has gained tenure status in the current school system, the teacher must be given written notice of the intention to demote or not renew the contract of the teacher.
- Such notice shall be given by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery.
- A teacher who is so notified that he or she is to be demoted or that his or her contract will not be renewed has the right to the procedures set forth in subsections (b) through (f) of Code Section 20-2-940 before the intended action is taken.
- A teacher who has the right to these procedures must serve written notice on the superintendent of the local board employing the teacher within 20 days of the day the notice of the intended action is served that he or she requests a hearing.

- In order to be effective, such written notice that the teacher requests implementation of such procedures must be served by certified mail.
- Within 14 days of service of the request to implement the procedures, the local board must furnish the teacher a notice that complies with the requirements of subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-940. O.C.G.A. 20-2-942(b)(2).

TERMINATION OF CONTRACT (GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION, SUSPENSION OR DEMOTION)

- **The employment of a teacher, principal or other employee having a contract for a definite term may be terminated or suspended for the following reasons:**
 1. incompetence;
 2. insubordination;
 3. failure to obtain and/or maintain required certification;
 4. willful neglect of duties;
 5. immorality;
 6. inciting, encouraging, or counseling students to violate any valid state law, municipal ordinance, or policy or rule of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education;
 7. reduction in staff due to loss of students or cancellation of programs;
 8. failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training;
 9. any other good and sufficient cause.
- Termination of a contract, temporary relief from duty or demotion during a contract year are all subject to appeal to the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education in accordance with the Georgia Code. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211(b); 20-2-940 et seq; 20-2-1160)

ASSIGNMENTS/TRANSFERS

ASSIGNMENT (GENERAL)

NOTE: GSCSS Policy GBE is currently under revision. Please check the system website the most current version.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS (TKES and LKES)

- Evaluation is an integral component in the process of improving teaching and learning.
- All professionally certified leadership personnel, teaching personnel and service personnel employed by the board must have their performance evaluated annually by appropriately trained evaluators.
- **The purposes of the annual performance evaluation are:**
 1. to identify and reinforce effective teaching practices;
 2. to identify areas where development can improve instructional effectiveness;
 3. to identify teachers who do not meet the minimum standards so that the appropriate action can be taken.
- A single evaluation for certified personnel who share duties among schools will be completed collectively by all supervisors.
- A summary of the employee's formal appraisal will be prepared by the principal on a date designated by the superintendent.
- TKES and LKES evaluation data will be housed in the electronic platform hosted by the GADOE.

UNSATISFACTORY EVALUATIONS

- Professional employees who receive an unsatisfactory annual evaluation shall remain at his or her current step and will not receive salary credit for the year in which the unsatisfactory was received.
- Any teacher who receives 2 unsatisfactory annual evaluations in the course of the 5 year validity period of his/her certificate shall only be eligible for a Non-renewable, one year certificate.
- Deficiencies must be corrected in that one year period in order to maintain certification.

- Upon receipt of a satisfactory annual evaluation, the individual shall be placed on the next step of the state salary schedule for the subsequent school year. (GBOE Rule GBI (160-3-1-.11) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-210; 20-2-211; 20-2-212; 20-2-281(B); 20-2-282; 50-14-3(6)) (GSCSS Policy GBI)

NON-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT (MOONLIGHTING)

- Full-time employees are discouraged from holding non-school related jobs that might interfere with or affect their performances in assigned areas.

PROMOTIONS (JOB POSTINGS)

- We strive to promote the most capable and experienced individual based on demonstrated ability to assume greater responsibility.
- Sometimes it is necessary to recruit and hire outside of the district to attract the most qualified individual for a particular opening.
- Most job openings are posted on the district's website.
- Exceptions may be made to this procedure when a position is deemed critical by the Superintendent or requires immediate staffing.

SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

- Any employee desiring to terminate his/her employment with the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education should submit a written resignation to his/her immediate supervisor who will in turn submit the resignation letter to the Superintendent for recommendation to the Board of Education.
- All uniforms, ID badges, keys, and any other system property must be returned to the supervisor at the time of separation.

REDUCTION IN FORCE

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PREROGATIVES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- The most important function of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education are to employ personnel and management resources within the limitations defined by the funding sources of the school system.
- Consequently, it shall be the prerogative of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education (hereinafter the "Board") to abolish job positions, to reduce the length of the work year and salary of certified and non-certified personnel (hereinafter "to downgrade") and/or reduce the number of employees when seeking to cope effectively with program changes or financial exigency.

REASONS FOR REDUCTION IN FORCE (HEREINAFTER "RIF")

- **The Board shall consider a reduction in the professional work force to include abolition of job positions, the downgrading of an employee's position, and/or the reduction of the number of employees, as a response to the following:**
 1. a decrease in student enrollment in the school district which would necessitate a decrease in personnel, or discontinuation of programs;
 2. a change in state or local curriculum, personnel, or financial practices which would necessitate a change in or elimination of program or services provided by the Griffin-Spalding County School District;
 3. a loss of funds due to a reduction in state funds, reduction in local funds or other funds that make necessary a reduction in spending;
 4. a lack of funding for programs, personnel, or services provided by the Griffin-Spalding County School District;
 5. any reasonable reorganization plan to achieve a more efficient school district.

APPLICABILITY OF POLICY

- This RIF policy shall apply to all personnel employed by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. Nothing in this policy, however, shall be construed to extend to professional personnel any expectation of re-employment or due process rights greater than those that are available to the specific employees under the Fair Dismissal Law of Georgia; nor is this policy to be construed to mandate the promotion of an employee to a position of higher rank, authority, or compensation, even though the employee who is to be terminated may be qualified or certified for a higher position.

RIF PROCEDURE

- When the Superintendent of the Griffin-Spalding County School System determines that the application of this reduction in force policy is necessary, it shall be his or her primary responsibility to prepare for presentation to the Board of Education a plan for reduction in force in the affected program area(s).
- In making recommendations for terminations or downgrading of employee positions, the Superintendent may consider any position or employee of the school system.
- Factors to be considered by the Superintendent in devising a RIF plan shall include, first and foremost, the professional expertise, effectiveness, and overall job performance of individual employees.
- Only where demonstrated competence and expertise are equal among employees shall other factors such as tenure status, level of certification, and length of continuous service with the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education be considered in order to make recommendations for the termination or downgrading of an employee's position.
- In order to develop a RIF plan, the Superintendent may consult with any and all school district personnel who might have information which would enable the Superintendent to rank employees according to overall job performance.
- Once the Superintendent has completed a comparative assessment of employees, he or she shall prepare and present a plan for reduction in force for Board approval and action.

NOTICE OF HEARING PROCEDURES

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

REPRIMAND

- The superintendent may write a letter of reprimand to a teacher or other school employee for any valid reason. A copy of the letter of reprimand will be placed in the teacher's or employee's permanent personnel file.
- The teacher or certified employee receiving such a letter of reprimand shall have the right to appeal the decision of the superintendent to the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education.
- The board shall have the right to either affirm the decision of the superintendent or to reverse it.
- If the decision of the board is to reverse it, the letter of reprimand shall be removed from the teacher's or certified employee's permanent personnel file. (OCGA 20-2-944)

EXIT SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS

- An exit interview documents your reason for leaving and solicits constructive feedback to enable the GSCS to improve aspects of employment and job productivity.
- All employees are encouraged to complete the Exit Survey and/or Interview in an objective fashion.
- Exit Surveys are either requested via E-mail or by hard copy.
- The Human Resources Department also extends an invitation to conduct a face-to-face Exit Interview in addition to the written survey.

WAGE AND SALARY POLICIES

SALARY

- All personnel will be paid monthly.
- Checks or direct deposit transactions will be issued on the last working day of each month.
- Checks will be mailed during the summer months to all personnel who are not on duty.
- **NOTE: It is especially important that each staff member's correct mailing address be on file in the Human Resources Department.**

DIRECT DEPOSIT

- Employees are strongly encouraged to have their payroll check deposited to their choice of any bank, provided the bank is a member of the Automated Clearing House (ACH).
- The deposit may be made to a checking account. The employee may end the arrangement at any time.

Eligibility

- All monthly employees are eligible for Direct Deposit of Payroll. For employees newly enrolled, direct deposit will take effect beginning with the second pay check.

When to Apply

- Application can be made at any time.
- Direct deposit of payroll will begin no later than 60 days following receipt of the properly executed authorization form.

How to Apply

1. Complete the Direct Deposit of Payroll Application Form which can be obtained from the school/department secretary or in Finance.
2. Attach a voided check to the completed application form.
3. Return the completed form with the attached voided check to the Finance Department by the 10th of the month for which direct deposit is desired.
4. If received after the deadline, direct deposit will not be effective until the following month.

Proof of Deposit

- Employees will receive a "Direct Deposit Voucher" showing their wages, taxes, and other deductions. The employee's bank statement will also show the date and the amount of the deposit.

Production Problems

- It is possible that production problems concerning power failure, inclement weather or technical operations may prevent the direct deposit of payroll.
- Should a rare production problem prevent a direct deposit, then a regular paycheck will be issued. Immediately upon receipt, each check stub should be reviewed for accuracy.

Notice to Discontinue or Change Direct Deposit

- Any changes to direct deposit accounts require written notification, (i.e. closed bank account; transfer of account to new bank; same bank - new account; etc.) and must be received no later than the 10th of the month by the Finance Department.
- Bank accounts should be closed only after a written notice to discontinue direct deposit has been received and processed by the Finance Department.

Questions

- Contact Rita Smith at 770-229-3710, extension 316.

SOCIAL SECURITY

- Social Security coverage became available to teaching personnel on July 1, 1960.
- GSCS participates in Social Security.

ADVANCEMENT ON THE SALARY SCHEDULE

- **The contract salary of a 190-day teacher holding a valid, professional, in-field certificate will be advanced to the next consecutive step on the salary schedule unless:**
 1. the maximum progression step for the position has been reached;
 2. services were contracted for fewer than 120 days in the previous academic year;
 3. certification requirements have not been met;
 4. insufficient funds are budgeted for salary advancement; or
 5. the teacher fails to receive a satisfactory performance evaluation for the prior year.
- A teacher may advance only one step on the salary schedule per year and must work one year on each step. Step advancement normally occurs only at the beginning of an academic year.
- Under regulations effective July 1, 1983, professional staff employed on 10-month, 11-month, or 12-month contracts must be under contract a minimum of 120 days in the previous academic year to be eligible for a step increase.

BRAWNER BONUS

- The Brawner Bonus is to be distributed equally among certified high school staff, including the principal. (GSCSS Policy GBA)

EXTENDED DAY/YEAR SALARIES

- The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education recognizes as necessary the extension of secondary educational programs through the use of extended day/year funds in the Quality Basic Education Act.
- These extended day/year funds are generated through the full-time equivalency funding process for the categories of 9-12 regular high school, 9-12 non-vocational laboratory program and the 9-12 vocational laboratory program.
- These funds are reflected in the direct instructional cost allocations in the above categories.
- **The board establishes the following criteria that apply to all instructors receiving extended day/year salaries:**
 1. The extended time required will be beyond the employee's normal eight hour work day and/or the established work year.
 2. All approved extended instructional activities relate to state approved instructional student competencies.
 3. Teachers will be limited to teaching a maximum of one additional hour beyond the teaching work day.
 4. Payments will be made only for work performed beyond the normal eight hour work day.
 5. Monthly/yearly documentation of extended salary time and program responsibilities will be maintained and reported to the Georgia Department of Education.
 6. Payments for extended day are based on the hourly rate of the teacher's state base salary times the number of days worked. Local supplement is not calculated in extended-day salary.
 7. Payments for extended year are based on the daily rate of the teacher's state base salary times the number of days worked. GBOE Rule GBA(1) (160-4-3-.09); GBA(2) (160-43-.11); GBA(3)(160-4-3-.04); GBA(4) (160-3-1-.01) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-168(d)(e); 20-2-182(d); 20-2-212) (GSCSS Policy GBA)

EXTRA-DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

- Personnel may be assigned by the principal or administrator additional duties requiring daily and calendar schedules exceeding the schedules for regular assignments.
- These assignments may include athletic coaching, instruction in instrumental music, on-the-job training, counseling, sponsorship of student organizations and other activities which are a part of the school program.
- All personnel receiving salary supplements are employed with the specific understanding that duties shall be performed in addition to classroom instruction.
- Extra-duty assignments made by the principal or other administrator which are compensated in addition to the contracted salary are specifically duties assigned on a semester or annual basis and are accepted with the understanding that they are exclusive of all contract provisions, including due process provisions of the Georgia Code.

EXTRA-DUTY SUPPLEMENTS

- Supplements for coaching assignments and club sponsorships are paid for the extended daily and calendar schedules which are necessary for practice, competitive events and other activities related to the respective programs.
- A maximum of four supplemental activities will be assigned to a teacher.
- Teachers who complete a partial assignment will receive a proration of the supplement as recommended by the principal and approved by the Human Resources Department.

FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS

- The contract amount may be decreased according to any decrease in the Georgia Teacher Salary Schedule or any decrease of federal funds or other grant funding from the date of execution of the contract or the termination thereof.
- The rate is also subject to an adjustment upward or downward according to the Quality Basic Education Act (as amended) applicable to the classification and type of service to which the teacher has been assigned.
- In the event funds for designated programs are discontinued, the positions funded by the special grants will be terminated when the funds have been exhausted.

MINIMUM SALARY FOR TEACHERS

- The board shall not pay to any teacher or other certificated professional personnel in its employment a salary less than that prescribed by the index schedule of minimum salaries for the State of Georgia. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-212)

PLACEMENT (INITIAL)

- A teacher employed by the Griffin-Spalding County School System will receive a salary based on experience and the highest, valid, in-field certificate.
- **NOTE: Educational Leadership certificate holders must meet specific guidelines prescribed by the GAPSC to receive compensation in a non-leadership position.**
- The initial salary placement will be based on the salary schedule and policies adopted by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education.
- **Active military experience will be recognized to a maximum of three years for initial salary placement.** Prior experience in professional positions in the Griffin-Spalding County School System or in other systems will be recognized at full credit for initial salary placement.
- It is the employee's responsibility to provide acceptable verification of experience in other systems. Salaries will be adjusted for unverified experience.
- Experience is accepted based on the standards set by the Georgia Department of Education.

RETROACTIVE ADJUSTMENTS

- Salary adjustments are sometimes necessary due to:
 1. late employment;
 2. temporary relief from duty by board action;
 3. absence without approval;
 4. non-compensated absence with approval;
 5. absence when there is no accumulated leave to cover such absence;
 6. early separation;
 7. adjustments in official work schedules;
 8. certification irregularities;
 9. new upgraded certificates;
 10. verification of experience irregularities;
 11. changes in supplemental duty assignments; and
 12. other factors.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Services are provided through payroll deductions for:

1. credit union (50)
2. federal income tax (FED WH)
3. direct deposit of payroll (700-999 Dir Dep Bk)
4. garnishments (580 GARN) or (581 GARN)
5. Georgia income tax (STATE WH)
6. Dental (121-124 D-H)
7. Flex (Flex)
8. Flex for Dependent Child (CK 133)
9. health (185 C HLTH—DEF=United, CIG=Cigna)
10. Medicare (SOC SEC WH)
11. professional dues (GAE and PAGE) (051 GAE) (052 PAGE)
12. retirement (600 T RET)
13. tax levies (520-538)
14. critical illness (255 Critic)
15. Trustmark – Permanent Illness (256 Perm L)
16. tax-sheltered annuities (055 V TSA); (061 V 457); (062 LL 457); (065 VT403b); (066 VT457)
17. United Way contributions (053 U WAY)

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND SERVICES

- GSCS strives to provide a competitive package of employee benefit programs for our employees.
- Complete and official details of insurance and payroll plans are contained in materials which employees receive upon employment. The descriptions in this handbook are only brief summaries for your general information. Contact Kathy Gossett in the Human Resources Department at 770-229-3710, extension 353 for more details.

GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE

- All full-time employees working 20 or more hours per week are eligible to purchase group health insurance.

GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

- All full-time employees working 20 or more hours per week are eligible for Board-paid \$10,000 term life insurance.
- Other term and universal life policies are available.

FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN (CAFETERIA PLAN)

- A flexible benefits plan is available that allows eligible employees to select among one or more non-taxable benefits according to Section 125 of the IRS Code (medical, dependent care).
- The plan also enables eligible employees to convert their premium contributions for health benefits from an after-tax expense to a pre-tax expense.

DISABILITY (SHORT TERM)

- Does not pay in addition to sick leave
- Offsets with workers' compensation
- All sick leave must be exhausted before filing a claim
- 12 month portability feature
- 14 day elimination period
- 11 week maximum benefit duration
- Coverage levels available include a choice of 40%, 50%, and 60% of earnings

DISABILITY (LONG TERM)

- Does not pay in addition to sick leave
- Offsets with workers' compensation
- All sick leave must be exhausted before filing a claim
- Treatment for any condition 3 months prior to effective date of policy is considered preexisting
- 12 month portability feature
- 90 day elimination period
- Benefit duration extends up to Social Security Normal Retirement Age
- Coverage level is 60% of salary

CRITICAL ILLNESS

- Coverage available for benefits-eligible employee, spouse (ages 18-70), children and financially dependent grandchildren (through age 24) regardless of student status
- Lump sum benefit upon first diagnosis of a covered critical condition
- Portable coverage
- Rates do not increase with age
- No deductible
- Covered critical illnesses are limited to the specific definitions found in the policy

DENTAL

- High or low options available
- Choose your own dentist
- Payroll deduction and pre-taxed (subject to cafeteria plan participation)

VISION

- High or low options available
- Medically necessary contacts
- Exams
- Frames (once each 12 months)
- Multiple Network provider options

CREDIT UNION

- The Southern Federal Credit Union was organized to help members and their families save money and to borrow money for worthwhile purposes.
- Any school employee or family member may join the credit union by the deposit of a minimum of \$25.00.

- The current dividend rate paid on shares is compounded quarterly.
- Certificates are usually available at higher rates of interest.
- A credit union member may save through payroll deduction, by mail, or at the credit union offices. Deposits are insured up to \$250,000.
- Other services of the credit union include on-line banking, safe deposit boxes, drive-in-window, ATMs, VISA debit/credit cards, free notary public services, night depository, "money market" savings certificates, 30-year home mortgages, second mortgages, direct payroll deposit, "Share Draft" which is similar to the common checking account, a "Quick Cash" program for pre-approved instant loans, and car finder service.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

- The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education is self-insured to cover the cost of work-incurred injury or illness.
- **If you sustain an injury that arises out of and during the course of employment:**
 1. report the injury immediately to your supervisor, school nurse, principal, secretary, or department head;
 2. get proper forms so that you can select a physician from the approved medical panel card that is posted at your worksite;
 3. sign the medical authorization form to release medical information to the school system;
 4. see an approved physician if needed;
 5. get a release from the physician to return to work if lost work days are required by the physician;
 6. keep the Human Resources Department and your supervisor informed of your condition and expected return to work date; or
 7. sign a waiver that no medical attention is needed;
 8. it is the responsibility of the employee to assure the informing and processing of workers' compensation claims;
 9. understand that accommodations will be made for any physician-ordered restrictions to allow for return to work as soon as possible;
 10. contact Kathy Gossett in the Human Resources Department at 770-229-3710, extension 353.

RETIREMENT

- Georgia Teachers' Retirement System information is available upon request through the Human Resources Office or employees may view the TRS web site at www.trsga.com.

Service Retirement (TRS)

- 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.
- Members who retire before reaching age 60 with a minimum of 25 years of service are retiring early.
- Benefits will vary based on age and years of creditable service.

Disability Retirement (TRS)

- A member is eligible to apply for retirement under the disability provision of the law if he/she has at least 10 years of creditable service and is permanently disabled.
- A member currently employed by a school system with 15 or more years of creditable service who becomes permanently disabled may apply for disability retirement.
- To qualify for disability retirement, the TRS Medical Board must determine that you are permanently and totally disabled for the further performance of the duties in the position you occupied at the time the disability originated.
- The final decision is made by the Board of Trustees based upon the recommendation of the Medical Board.

- **NOTE: Provisions regarding returning to work after retirement have changed. Please see the Benefits Specialist in HR for more details.**

Unused Sick Leave Credit Toward Retirement (HB 203)

- In 1998 the Georgia General Assembly passed Act 859 which allows Teachers Retirement System (TRS) to grant service credit for accrued sick leave which a member has not used.
- Once an employee has made the decision to retire, arrangement for sick leave credit may be made through the Human Resources Office.

LEAVES AND ABSENCES (GARH)

- Each employee, who is absent from work for any reason, must abide by the procedures established by the administrator/supervisor at the work site. Generally, the employee who will be absent for sick leave purposes needs to notify the principal/supervisor or designee as soon as possible (either the day/night before the absence or the early morning of the day of the absence).
- Other types of leave need to be approved by the immediate supervisor as far in advance as possible.
- Each certified employee is responsible for entering his/her own leave request into AESOP.
- The following policies cover all authorized leaves and absences. For any absence which is not covered by policies or which exceeds the number of accumulated leave days, there will be a salary reduction equal to the pay earned in one day.

Sick Leave

- All employees shall annually earn sick leave days at a rate of one and one-quarter (1.25) days per 19 days worked.
- Unused leave days may be carried over from one year to the next until a total of one hundred twenty (120) days are accumulated.
- Any accumulated unused sick leave credited to an employee shall be forfeited if such employee withdraws from service for a period of 12 or more consecutive months. However, this same forfeited sick leave and any other unused sick leave will be reported to TRS upon retirement.

Sick leave may be used for the absence of employees from work due to the following reasons:

1. personal illness or disability (including any disability related to pregnancy);
2. absence necessitated by exposure to a contagious disease;
3. absence due to illness or death in the employee's immediate family.
 - The term "**immediate family**" shall be interpreted to mean:
 1. spouse
 2. child
 3. parent
 4. sibling
 5. grandchild
 6. grandparent of the employee
 7. parent or sibling of the employee's spouse
 8. son-in-law
 9. daughter-in-law
 10. relative living in the employee's residence
 11. anyone for whom you have medical power of attorney (O.C.G.A. 20-2-850(c)) (GSCSS Policy GARH)
 - An employee may make a one-time donation of up to ten (10) days of sick leave to his or her spouse if such spouse is an employee of Griffin-Spalding County Schools for the purposes of maternity leave, illness, illness of an immediate family member, or death of a family member.
 - It shall be within the supervisor's discretion to require a doctor's certificate to substantiate a personal illness claim for sick leave or to substantiate fitness to continue or return to work.

- Any sick leave claim shall be recorded and verified at the worksite and entered in AESOP by the employee or designee for certain jobs.

Bereavement Leave

- Up to 5 days of sick leave may be used for absence due to a death in the employee's immediate family.
- The term immediate family is defined above in the Sick Leave section.

Jury Duty/Court Appearance (Legal Leave)

- Each full-time employee shall be granted leave when necessary for jury duty.
- No adjustments will be made in accumulated leave or earned salary.
- Employees must return to work the same day if released before noon.
- Employees must return to work the following day if released after noon.
- Employees must request a letter of release from the Clerk of Court's Office and present to employer upon return to work.
- Employees may retain earned jury pay.
- **Court Appearance Under Subpoena**—Employees subpoenaed for jury duty or as a witness in a work-related matter shall be allowed a leave of absence without loss of pay. No leave will be deducted from sick, personal, or professional leave. No employee serving jury duty or as a witness in a work-related matter shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute to serve during the absence. A copy of the subpoena must be attached to the leave request.
- **Other Court Appearances**—all other court appearances will be considered personal leave.
- A copy of the court summons must be submitted with the employee's leave form.

Personal Leave

- Up to three (3) days of accumulated sick leave may be used annually by each employee for personal leave.
- The employee's immediate supervisor must approve such leave in advance.
- There are no provisions for accumulation of personal leave; i.e., no employee may be granted more than three (3) days of personal leave in any given school year.
- Employees must request personal or professional leave by entering into AESOP and, except in emergency situations, this leave should be requested in advance.

The following days are essential for the effective school operation of the Griffin-Spalding County School System and personal leave cannot be granted for their duration without prior approval by the appropriate supervisor:

1. pre-planning, post-planning;
 2. the first three days of school;
 3. days when standardized tests are administered;
 4. staff development days, teacher workdays;
 5. the workday before and the workday after a holiday;
 6. the last two weeks of the school year; and
 7. all days which are determined "critical" by the Supervisor, Principal or Superintendent.
- **Note: Activities related to the pursuit of an advanced degree will be considered personal. Exceptions may be individuals employed in leadership positions holding non-renewable leadership certification who are completing certification requirements under the "new" leadership program beginning in 2009 which requires on-the-job training.**

Employee Leave without Pay

- Sick leave is advanced to employees at the beginning of each fiscal year. However, if an employee fails, for any reason, to complete a fiscal year, sick leave used but not yet earned will be deducted from the employee's future checks.

- Upon request, an employee may be granted no more than two days leave without pay per year for personal reasons.

Sick Leave Bank

- The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education authorizes the establishment of a Sick Leave Bank (SLB) to provide all contributing employees, upon the exhaustion of all accrued sick leave, with additional sick leave for extended illness or disability.
- Sick Leave Bank days are available for the serious medical condition of the employee—not family members.
- An employee must have 1 year of service to be eligible to participate.
- Members of the SLB may apply to the SLB committee for the approval of days to cover absences for an extended or serious (catastrophic) illness.
- The SLB is **NOT** intended to provide additional leave for single day or short- term illness. There will be an open enrollment at the beginning of each school year.

Personal Leave Bank

The Personal Leave Bank is established to use during catastrophic events. The intent is to provide employees the opportunity to apply for personal leave after their own personal leave has been exhausted. All absences must be approved by the supervisor through currently established policies.

- Any qualified employee who is personally affected by a catastrophic event can apply for additional personal leave days from the Personal Leave Bank.
- The Personal Leave Bank Committee will render a decision within fifteen (15) working days.

The Committee will use the following criteria in administering the Personal leave Bank and rendering decisions:

Evidence of need—

1. accumulated sick leave used;
 2. employee’s absence history (number of absences as well as how the days were taken, i.e. before/after breaks, Monday/Fridays, etc.
- All leave granted but not used by the employee must be returned to the Personal Leave Bank.
 - Employees may donate a maximum of one day of personal leave only when a request for donations is sent out by the Human Resources Department.

Unpaid Medical Leave (Leave after FMLA)

Any benefits-eligible employee may be granted a leave of absence without pay (not to exceed 90 scheduled work days provided the employee:

- has been employed with the school district for at least three (3) fiscal years; and
- is unable to return to work due to a personal medical necessity or that of a spouse or child; and
- is at the end of an approved FMLA leave; and
- has exhausted all paid sick leave; and
- provides appropriate medical documentation stating an expected return to work date.

Employees on unpaid medical leave shall:

- provide medical documentation as required by the Human Resources Department;
- pay the full cost of all benefits (both employee premium and any appropriate employer subsidy rate);
- provide medical authorization to return to full duty;
- request to return to work in writing
- return to work only if a position for which the employee is qualified is available;

Certified employees who are unable to return to work may or may not be recommended for a contract for the next school year. See policy GARH (Leave) for additional information.

Professional Leave

- AESOP is used to request/approve all professional leave;
- Administrators' leave must also be entered into AESOP. The only exceptions are in-system activities during pre-planning, post-planning and teacher in-service days. (GBOE Rule GBRI, 160-5-1-.01) (O.C.G.A.,20-2-850) (GSCSS Policy GARH);
- There will be no deduction from accumulated leave or pay for absences concerning professional matters that are initiated by the school system.

The following guidelines should be used for applying for professional leave:

1. An absence request is created by the employee for an absence reason which requires approval. If a substitute is required, the employee can assign a substitute at this time;
2. Leave applications must be made at least ten days prior to the beginning of any out-of-system leave requests;
3. Employees who require substitutes **MUST** apply in advance for professional leave even if the professional activity is within the system;
4. All information must be attached including a completed Cost Estimator form; otherwise leave will be denied;
5. Select a funding code from the following choices:
 - a. CTAE
 - b. GNETS—for Mainstay usage only
 - c. Other Federal
 - d. Pre-K
 - e. RT3
 - f. SpecialEd
 - g. System Staff Dev
 - h. Title I
 - i. Title IIA
6. The administrator (s) will either approve or deny the request;
7. Attach a copy of the approval to corresponding travel reimbursement request.

TRS Implications of Professional Study Leave (Creditable Service)

A member of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia who undertakes full-time graduate study designed to advance or improve his training or abilities as a teacher is entitled to receive creditable service by the Teachers Retirement System for the period of graduate study under the following conditions:

1. The member must have been a full-time teacher in the public schools of the State of Georgia or in the University System of Georgia under the Board of Regents immediately (not more than six months) prior to the period of full-time graduate study.
2. The member must submit a transcript or similar document to the Teachers Retirement System as verification of the full-time period of graduate study.
3. The member must return to full-time employment as a teacher in the public schools of Georgia or in the University System of Georgia for a minimum of five years following the period of graduate study.
4. Member cost to purchase study leave credit is based on the annual salary the member was receiving for fulltime employment as a Georgia teacher immediately prior to the period of study leave.
5. Study leave service may be purchased by payment of appropriate employee and employer contributions plus interest.
6. Any period of eligible graduate study interrupted solely for a period of active duty military service during a period in which the military draft is in effect shall be deemed not to have been interrupted provided the member goes immediately (not more than 6 months) into active duty military service.

TEMPORARY RELIEF OF DUTY WITH PAY

The superintendent may temporarily relieve from duty, pending a hearing by the board, any teacher or other school employee for any of the following reasons:

1. incompetence;
2. insubordination;
3. willful neglect of duties;
4. immorality;
5. inciting, encouraging, or counseling students to violate any valid state law, municipal ordinance, or policy or rule of the local board of education;
6. to reduce staff due to loss of students or cancellation of programs;
7. failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training; or
8. any other good and sufficient cause.

Temporary relief from duty may occur in those cases where the charges are of such seriousness or there are existing circumstances which indicate the teacher's or employee's continued performance of his/her duties pending the hearing present a danger of disruption or other serious harm to the:

1. school
 2. school's mission
 3. students
 4. staff
- In any such case, the superintendent shall notify the teacher or employee in writing of such action which notice shall state the grounds thereof.
 - Such action by the superintendent shall not extend for a period in excess of ten working days and during that period it shall be the duty of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education to conduct a hearing on charges.
 - During the period that the teacher or other employee is relieved from duty prior to the decision of the board, the teacher or employee shall be paid all sums to which he/she is otherwise entitled.
 - Should the board hearing be delayed at the request of the teacher or employee beyond the mandated ten-day period, then the charged teacher or employee will not be paid beyond the mandated ten-day period unless reinstated by the board.
 - In the event the board reinstates the teacher or employee, the teacher or employee will receive all compensation to which otherwise entitled exclusive of days for which a delay was specifically requested by the teacher or employee. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-940 (G))

TEMPORARY RELIEF OF DUTY WITHOUT PAY

- In exercising its powers in the enforcement of due process, the board is authorized by State law to suspend a teacher or other school employee without pay for a period of time not to exceed 60 days.
- In such event, the teacher or employee shall provide no services for the school system and shall receive no compensation but shall be considered an employee on suspended status. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-943(a)(1)(B))

UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE

Unauthorized absence shall cause an employee to be subject to dismissal with the termination of all employment benefits or to have that absence posted as leave without pay.

Unauthorized absence is defined as follows:

1. an absence for any reason which is not permissible under the Georgia Code or policies of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education; or
2. an absence which occurs without the principal or principal's designee receiving ample advance notice regarding the absence. (This absence may result in no substitute teacher being available for students scheduled for classes.)

ABSENCE WITHOUT PROPER NOTICE

- If an employee fails to notify his/her supervisor or the Human Resources Department after three days of consecutive absence, the employee will be removed from the payroll for abandoning his/her position.
- If any employee must leave work for any reason before the end of the scheduled work day, that employee must inform his/her supervisor.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)

Eligibility

- **Employees of the Griffin-Spalding County School System who have been employed for twelve (12) months or more and who worked at least 1250 hours during that time, are entitled to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave during a twelve (12) month period for the following:**
 1. the birth and first year care of a child;
 2. the adoption or foster parent placement of a child;
 3. the illness of an employee's spouse, child, or parent with respect to a serious health condition, 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;
 4. the employee's own illness; or,
 - in the instance of birth adoption and foster placement, the entitlement for child-care ends after the child reaches the age of one (1) year, or twelve (12) months after the adoption or placement;
 - entitlement for leave associated with illness of a child occurs only where the child is under eighteen (18) years of age, or incapable of self-care due to mental or physical disability or on dependent student status;
 - the twelve (12) month period in which the twelve (12) workweeks of leave entitlement occurs is a "rolling" twelve (12) month period measured forward from the date an employee uses any leave granted by this policy;
 - any days absent due to a work-related illness or injury will count against an employee's FMLA leave entitlement as long as written notification is given by the Human Resources Department.

Amount of Leave Available

- In cases where both spouses are employed by Griffin-Spalding County School System, the combined amount of leave for child birth, adoption, foster placement, or to care for a sick parent is limited to twelve (12) weeks.
- Leave may be taken on an intermittent (irregular intervals) as deemed appropriate by policy.
- The unpaid medical and family leave provided under this policy runs concurrent with accumulated sick or personal leave that the employee is eligible for under other policies of the Griffin-Spalding County School System.

Notification of Anticipated Leave

- Except where circumstances are such that reasonable advance planning is not possible, employees must provide the Superintendent or a designee with at least thirty (30) days notice of the date when leave is to begin.
- With respect to foreseeable family or employee illness, the employee shall make reasonable effort to schedule treatment - including intermittent leave - so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the school district, subject to approval of the employee's or family member's health care provider.

Benefits During and after Leave

- Benefits accrued by the employee before leave is taken will not be altered by the employee's absence under this policy.
- Health benefits will continue during the leave period.
- Benefit premiums will be deducted from paychecks.
- If all pay is exhausted, premiums may be paid directly to the GSCS Finance Department.
- Upon return, the employee is entitled to restoration to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and conditions of employment.
- If an employee fails to return to work after the leave period has expired, the Board of Education may recover the health benefits premium expenditures extended to the employee during the leave period.

Required Medical Certification

- The Board of Education requires that a request for leave 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.

The certification shall include:

1. the date that the condition commenced;
 2. the duration or estimated duration of the absence;
 3. the necessity for the employee's leave; and
 4. if applicable, the employee's inability to perform job functions.
- The Board of Education reserves the right, at its own expense, to designate a second health care provider to provide a second opinion.
 - A third such opinion, should it be necessary, shall be binding.
 - When applicable, upon the employee's return to work, the school district may require the employee to provide certification by his/her health care provider that the employee is able to resume work and perform the essential functions of the job.

Military Leave (Employee is a Military Member)

- You have the right to be reemployed in your civilian job if you leave that job to perform service in the uniformed service and:
 1. you ensure that your employer received advance written or verbal notice of your service;
 2. you have five years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while with that particular employer;
 3. you return to work or apply for reemployment in a timely manner after conclusion of service; and
 4. you have not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions.
- If you are eligible to be reemployed, you must be restored to the job and benefits you would have attained if you had not been absent due to military service or in some cases, a comparable job.

Military Leave (Employee is a Family Member of a Covered Military Member)

Definition of a Qualifying Exigency

Unpaid leave is available to eligible employees with a covered military member serving in the National Guard or Reserves who is on active duty or called to active duty status for the following:

1. short notice deployment;
2. military events and related activities;
3. childcare and school activities;
4. financial and legal arrangements;
5. counseling;

6. rest and recuperation (up to 5 days);
7. post deployment activities;
8. additional activities where employer and employee agree on qualifications and timing.

Eligibility of a Qualifying Exigency

- **Employees eligible under the military provisions of this policy and who have been employed by the Griffin-Spalding County BOE for twelve (12) months or more and who have worked at least 1250 hours during that time are entitled to:**
- a combined total of up to 26 weeks of all types of FMLA leave during a 12 month period.
- up to 12 weeks of unpaid Exigency Leave for the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of members of the Reserves or National Guard.

Required Exigency Leave Certification

- The Board of Education requires that complete and sufficient certification to support exigency leave be submitted.

Sufficient certification includes:

1. appropriate facts
2. dates and time estimates
3. contact information to support the request.

Eligibility for Military Caregiver Leave

- **Employees eligible under the military provisions of this policy and who have been employed by the Griffin-Spalding County BOE for twelve (12) months or more and who have worked at least 1250 hours during that time are entitled to:**
- up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a spouse, child, parent or next of kin (nearest blood relative) who has suffered a serious illness or injury while on active duty that renders the member medically unfit to perform their duties. Sick leave can be used in this case, if available.

Required Military Caregiver Leave Certification

- The Board of Education requires that complete and sufficient certification to support military caregiver leave and to establish the familial relationship to the seriously injured or ill military member.

Sufficient certification includes:

1. Invitational Travel Order (ITO) or
2. Invitational Travel Authorization (ITA) issued to relative to join injured or ill at bedside.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

An EAP is a confidential, worksite-based program designed to assist both employees and employers. An EAP provides assessment and referral—in person and over the phone—for personal problems. Each eligible employee, along with each eligible employee’s dependents, is entitled to one visit (or session) free-of charge per calendar year. Also, telephone intakes and information calls regarding EAP services are free and unlimited. The Griffin-Spalding County BOE has an agreement with EAP Consultants, Inc. to offer assistance programs to employees who may require help in areas such as:

- Personal concerns
 - stress
 - crisis
 - psychiatric disorders
 - medical problems
 - work-related difficulties
 - marital & family issues
 - emotional concerns

- relationship issues
- life adjustments
- alcohol & drug problems
- childcare;
- eldercare;
- legal;
- financial;
- academic resources;
- pet services;
- disability and accessibility;
- addiction and recovery;

If you have a need for any of the above-referenced services, you may contact 1-800-869-0276 or go online to www.eapconsultants.com.

JOB COUNSELING

- Any employee concerned about job performance or simply wishing to discuss job prospects in line with career, interest, and abilities, may arrange for a counseling discussion with their supervisor or the Human Resources Director.
- These discussions will be confidential and will in no way jeopardize the employee's present position or future with the GSCS system.

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

SUGGESTIONS

- The Superintendent encourages employees to suggest methods to improve quality and efficiency of the GSCS system.
- Employees should submit suggestions in writing to his/her supervisor or to the Human Resources Department.
- Suggestions should be detailed so that the system or procedure can be adequately evaluated.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Public relations are a by-product of all school activity.
- Successful implementation of public relations objectives is the responsibility of the board of education, administrators, teachers and support personnel.
- **In order to promote effective public relations, the following beliefs are set forth:**
 1. The cause of public education can be promoted, resulting in an improved, quality instructional program.
 2. All citizens have the right to accurate and complete information on all aspects of the educational program.
 3. It is the primary responsibility of the public relations representative assigned to each department or school, the administrators, and the director of public relations to communicate effectively with the many stakeholders of the school system.
- Public relations require continuous internal (employee) as well as external (community) communication. This communication must be a planned, systematic, two-way process.
- Communication should incorporate the use of a variety of media.
- Educational communication must be dynamic and sensitive to change as determined by events and evaluation of the program. (GSCSS Policy KA)

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- All staff members are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities.
- Principals and supervisors train all staff under their immediate supervision and authority in procedures to follow for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.
- All suspected cases of child abuse shall be reported to the principal who in turn will make a report to the Department of Family and Children Services.
- The principal shall also notify the school social worker at the Central Office of all referrals of child abuse and neglect received.
- The school social workers are the official contact persons on child abuse and will make any other necessary contacts with the Department of Family and Children Services. (GBOE Rule JGI (160-4-8-.04) (O.C.G.A. 190705) (GSCSS Policy GAEC/JGI)

COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCES

- 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 congeniality 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. (GSCSS Policy GAE)

Definitions

1. **Administrator**—the the individual at each level designated by the local unit of administration to preside over and make decisions with respect to complaints.
 2. **Central Office Administrator**—the local school system superintendent or the director of a Regional Education Service Agency (RESA).
 3. **Complaint**—any claim by a certified employee of any local unit of administration who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of the local unit of administration with which the local unit of administration is required to comply.
 4. **Local Unit of Administration**—the the local board of education or the local board of control of a RESA.
- **Any certified employee who is affected in the employment relationship by an alleged violation or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules or regulations governing the school system shall have the right to pursue a complaint. However, the complaint procedure shall not extend to the following:**
 1. The termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension or reprimand of the employee as set forth in the Fair Dismissal Law.
 2. Personnel evaluations and professional development plans pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-210 and job performance.
 3. The revocation, suspension or denial of certificates of any employee as set forth in O.C.G.A. 20-2-790 et seq.
 4. Complaints with respect to the employment contract. A certified employee who chooses to appeal under Code Section 20-2-1160 shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

General Provisions Applying to All Levels

- Accurate records of the proceeding at each level shall be kept by means of mechanical recordings preserving all evidence. These recordings shall be made available at all times to the parties involved.
- The complainant cannot present additional evidence at each succeeding level of the complaint process unless it is submitted in writing by the Complainant five days prior to a hearing date for the Level II and Level III hearing.

- The board of the local unit of administration, when hearing an appeal from a prior complaint level, shall hear the complaint *de novo*.
- Any complaint not processed by the administrator or local unit of administration within the prescribed time frames shall be forwarded to the next level.
- The administrator shall give notice to the complainant of the time and place of the hearing either by certified mail or by being hand-delivered by a person designated by the superintendent.
- When notice is given by mail, it shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested to the address set forth in the complaint.
- If no address was included in the complaint, then the notice shall be sent to the last known address of the complainant on file with the board of education.
- Where service or notice is made by certified mail as provided above, it shall be deemed to have been perfected when timely deposited in the mail, regardless of whether it was actually received or not.

First Level (Presentation and Contents)

- **The complaint shall be presented in writing to the Level One administrator within ten (10) calendar days from the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. The complaint shall clearly state the intent of the employee to access the complaint policy. The complaint shall include the following:**
 1. the mailing address of the complainant to which notices and all other documents may be mailed;
 2. the intent of the complainant to utilize this complaint procedure;
 3. a reference or description of the statute, policy, rule or regulation that is alleged to have been violated or misapplied;
 4. a brief statement of the facts reasonably calculated to show how such statute, policy, rule or regulation was violated or misapplied, and how it substantially affects the employment relationship of the complainant;
 5. a statement of the relief desired.

First Level (Filing, Hearing, Decision)

- The Level I administrator shall stamp the date of filing on the complaint.
- The administrator shall give notice to the complainant of the time and place of the hearing, either by certified mail or by being hand-delivered.
- The complainant shall be afforded an opportunity at the hearing to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses giving testimony where practicable.
- The presence of any individual other than the complainant and the administrator at this level is strictly prohibited.
- The Level I administrator shall make and retain accurate minutes of all matters considered and shall preserve all evidence presented, all of which shall be available to the parties involved.
- The decision shall be made on the complaint within ten (10) calendar days of the complainant's filing.
- A copy of the decision shall be given to the complainant in the same manner provided above.
- The decision shall be dated, shall contain findings of the facts and reasons for the decision reached.

Note: For certificated personnel such as principals and central office personnel, the Level I administrator is the superintendent. Where the initial presentation is to the superintendent as the first level, any appeal shall be taken directly to the board of education in the manner provided in Section F hereof.

Second Level (Appeal from Level I to Level II Administrator)

- A complainant dissatisfied with the decision from the first level shall be entitled to appeal to the Level II administrator or designee, by filing written notice of appeal with the office of the superintendent within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the decision from Level I.

- The Level II administrator shall stamp the date of the filing on the appeal and shall notify the complainant in writing of the time and place of the hearing.
- The Level II administrator shall obtain copies of all minutes, documents and other records relating to the Complaint and shall conduct a hearing and render a decision within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the filing of the appeal.
- The hearing may be conducted by any designated representative of the Level II administrator. The complainant is entitled to the presence of an individual of choice to assist in the presentation of the complaint.
- If a designated representative of the Level II administrator conducts the hearing, he/she shall promptly submit his/her recommendations and finding to the Level II administrator for final decision.
- The decision shall be made in writing and dated, and shall contain findings of facts and reasons for the decision.
- The decision shall be sent by certified mail or hand-delivered to the complainant.

Third Level (Appeal to the Board of Education)

- A complainant or Level I administrator dissatisfied with the decision of the Level II administrator may appeal to the board of education by filing written notice of appeal with the office of superintendent.
- The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the Level II decision.
- The appeal shall be heard and determined by the board within ten (10) calendar days after filing.
- The complainant and administrators shall be entitled to appear before the board of education, or any hearing officer designated by the board, and be heard.
- The board of education may direct that a pre-hearing conference be held prior to the hearing to identify issues and facilitate presentation.
- Notice of the time and place of the hearing/pre-hearing shall be given in the same manner as provided in Section E above.
- The proceedings before the board of education or its designated representatives shall be recorded, dated, and preserved.
- The minutes shall be made available to the parties involved.
- If either party desires a transcription of the proceedings, the party shall have it prepared at the party's cost.

Overall Time Limit for Resolution of Complaint

- All complaints and the appeals thereon before the board of education shall be finally decided within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of filing.
- Nothing herein shall be construed to permit, foster or authorize collective bargaining by or on behalf of any employee or group of employees.

De Novo Determination (New Evidence)

- **A determination of a complaint made at the lower level shall be considered on appeal, but the complaint, nevertheless, shall be determined by the rendition of a decision thereon which the superintendent or local board (as the case may be) would have rendered had the matter been presented to that level at the outset; provided, however, the complainant cannot present additional evidence at any level after the first level, unless:**
 1. It is determined by the administrator presiding over the complaint that such evidence is relevant to the issues presented at the initial hearing and such evidence was either not made available by the administration or not discoverable by the complainant, or
 2. Where the local board notifies the complainant at least five (5) calendar days prior to the hearing that it will hear the new evidence.

Exhaustion of Remedies (Duplicate Review Prohibited)

- **A certificated employee shall exhaust the procedures and remedies of this policy with respect to all complaints coming within the scope of Section B, above, except:**
 1. Where the Constitution of the United States supports the right of the employee to present the complaint directly to the board of education under O.C.G.A. 20-2-1160. Example: Where the complaint relates to a matter of general public interest as distinguished from one which is primarily of private or personal interest to the complainant only.
 2. Where the law of Georgia supports the right of the employee to go directly to the board of education under O.C.G.A. 20-2-1160.
 3. Where other good cause supports the right of the employee to present the complaint directly to the board of education. Example: Where the complaint challenges the validity on its face (rather than as applied) of a policy of the local or state board of education.

Costs

- All costs and fees shall be borne by the party incurring them unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties involved except that the cost of preparing and preserving the record of the proceedings shall be borne by the local board of education.

Appeals to the State Board of Education

- Appeals from the decision of the board of education to the state board of education shall be governed by State Board Policy BCAEA (Appeals Hearings) and O.C.G.A. 20-2-1160.

Reprisal

- A complainant shall not be subjected to any reprisal as a result of filing a complaint under this policy. Should any reprisal occur, the complainant may refer the matter to the Educator Ethics Division of the GAPSC.
- (GBOE Rule GAE, 160-1-3-.01) (O.C.G.A., 20-2-1160; 20-2-210; 20-2-790; 20-2-940 et seq.) (GSCS Policy GAE)

Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedure

- **Complaints made to the board of education regarding alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in violation of Title VI, on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX, or on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, will be processed in accordance with the following procedure:**
 1. Any employee or other person with a complaint alleging a violation as described above shall promptly notify, in writing or orally, the appropriate coordinator designated below for the school system. If the complaint is oral, the coordinator shall promptly prepare a memo or written statement of the complaint as made by the complainant and shall have the complainant read and sign the memo or statement if it accurately reflects the complaint made.
 2. The coordinator shall have fifteen days to gather all information relevant to the complaint made, review the information, determine the facts relating to the complaint, review the action requested by the complainant, and attempt to resolve the complaint with the complainant and any other persons involved. The coordinator shall prepare a written response to the complaint detailing any action to be taken in response to the complaint and the time frame in which such action will be taken and copies of this response shall be furnished to the complainant and the superintendent.
 3. If the complaint is not resolved at the conclusion of this fifteen day period or if the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the complainant shall have the right, within five days of receiving a copy of the written response, to have the complaint referred to the superintendent.
 4. The superintendent shall have fifteen days to review the complaint and the response of the coordinator and attempt to resolve the complaint. The superintendent shall furnish to the

complainant a written response setting forth either his approval of the action recommended by the coordinator of the action to be taken by the system in response to the complaint or a new decision in lieu of that recommended by the coordinator and the time frame in which such action shall be taken.

5. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the superintendent, then the complainant shall have the right, within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the written response of the superintendent, to have the complaint referred to the board of education. In order to have the board of education review the superintendent's decision, the complainant must file with the superintendent a written statement setting forth the reasons he or she disagrees with the response of the superintendent and the action the complainant is requesting the system to take. The complainant shall also include in the written response a request that the complaint be referred to the board of education.
6. Within thirty days of receipt of the written request of the complainant, the superintendent shall present the matter to the board of education at its regular meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. The board shall review the original complaint, the response of the coordinator, the response of the superintendent, and the response of the complainant. In addition, the board may but is not required to, hear directly from any individuals with knowledge of any relevant facts relating to the complaint.
7. The board of education will either uphold the recommendation of the superintendent or require the system to take some other action in response to the complaint. A copy of the action of the board will be furnished to the complainant, either as a part of the minutes of the board of education or as a separate written statement. The board shall be the final reviewing authority within the system.
 - This procedure is not intended to deprive any employee of any right they may have to file a grievance pursuant to any other policy of the board of education, specifically including policy GAE, where appropriate. This procedure is not intended to provide an alternative process for resolving evaluation and employment disputes where there already exists a due process procedure mandated by state law or state department of education regulations, specifically including, but not limited to, hearings to be conducted pursuant to the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia, Official Code of Georgia Annotated 20-2-940 through 947. The complainant retains at all times the right to contact the Office of Civil Rights with regard to any allegations that the system has violated the statutes described above.
 - **Contact information is as follows:**
 - Perkins Act: Vocational Director
 - Title IX Coordinator: Assistant Superintendent and CFO
 - Section 504 Coordinator: Special Education Director
 - Title VI Coordinator: Special Education Director
 - ADA Coordinator: Human Resources Director
- (Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 503 and 504; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; 45 CFR Part 84; Americans with Disabilities Act; Executive Order, 11246, as amended. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211(d); 30-1-10 et seq.; 34-1-2; 34-6A-1 et seq.; 36-6A-1 et seq.; 45-19-20 et seq.) (GSCSS Policy JAA-R/GAAA-R)

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- Most employees are expected to develop skills in using computers and other technology and to implement these skills in their assigned areas of responsibility.
- All employees are expected to adhere to the guidelines in the Acceptable Use policy.
- Violations of the Acceptable Use policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

SAFETY

SYSTEM-WIDE SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

The Griffin-Spalding County BOE is committed to the provision of a healthy and safe workplace and work environment for all employees, students, contractors, visitors, and members of the general public who may be affected by the work of the school.

The Superintendent under the direction of the Board of Education recognizes and accepts this responsibility, and undertakes so far as is reasonably practicable to:

1. ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees while they are at work, and other persons who may be affected by the work of the District;
2. comply with all Federal and State guidelines regulating workplace safety;
3. provide the necessary resources to ensure that proper provision is made for health, safety and welfare;
4. regularly monitor the workplace and work activities to ensure the effectiveness of the Health and Safety policy and to ensure that safe systems of work exist and are followed by employees, students and visitors.

ACCIDENTS OR INJURY

- No matter how insignificant an on-the-job injury may seem when it occurs, notify your supervisor, school nurse, or the Human Resources Department immediately
- See Workers' Compensation section under Benefits.

STATE EYE PROTECTION STANDARD

- Eye protection devices will be provided for students, teachers, and visitors in the designated laboratory courses.

CONDUCT ISSUES

WEAPONS, DRUGS, ALCOHOL

- It is standard procedure at all schools to report any situations involving the possession, distribution, or use of weapons, drugs, or alcohol to the principal or the Human Resources Department immediately.

THREATS OF VIOLENCE

- Because of the instances of violence on school campuses around the nation, the Board believes that it is increasingly important to take preventative measures to stop potential violent situations before they occur.
- As a result, employees shall not assault, intimidate, coerce, provoke, fight with, threaten, verbally attack, or engage in horseplay with: students, teachers, visitors, supervisors, or any other persons.
- If the School System has reasonable cause to believe that an employee has engaged in behavior that threatens the safety of others or that indicates a propensity for violence, the system shall immediately terminate the employee.

Such conduct shall include, but not be limited to:

1. assaults;
 2. threats of violence;
 3. possession of an unauthorized weapon;
 4. outbursts of abusive language.
- The immediate termination of violent employees is necessary to protect students, teachers, other employees, and the public.

POSSESSION OF A WEAPON ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

- It is unlawful for any person to carry, possess or have under his control any weapon at a school building, school function, school property, school bus, or any other transportation furnished by the school.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones and other electronic devices can create a distraction and prevent proper supervision of students; therefore,

- In order to protect the integrity of our instructional program and to provide the most responsible supervision of our students, personal cell phones and other personal electronic devices should not be activated or used during the school day by faculty or staff.
- Exceptions due to extenuating circumstances may be approved in advance by the principal or supervisor on an individual basis.
- Exceptions are also made for emergency situations where the health and welfare of students, faculty or staff is an issue.

Note: It is imperative that no wireless communication devices be used during emergency situations, particularly bomb threats, since frequencies emitted have the potential to detonate an explosive device.

SOLICITATION OF CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS / SOLICITATION FOR PERSONAL GAIN

- Employees shall participate in charity or fundraising campaigns on a voluntary basis.
- Any solicitation or collections of funds from employees must be recommended by the building administrator and be approved by the superintendent.
- The superintendent shall establish administrative procedures to cooperate with community organizations as they solicit funds from employees for their charitable organizations. (GBOE Rule JKB (160-5-1-.11) (O.C.G.A. 16-12-33; 20-2-310; 20-2-1180) (GSCSS Policy GAI)
- Use of system email to sell items for personal gain is strictly prohibited.

USE OF TOBACCO

- The use of all tobacco products by any employee of the Griffin-Spalding County School System is prohibited during the normal workday and during any time when the employee is supervising student activities or school sponsored events.
- Furthermore, the use of tobacco products by anyone is prohibited in any building or vehicle owned by the GSCS system.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- All students in the Griffin-Spalding County School System shall be afforded daily, the opportunity to pledge allegiance to the United States flag in the traditional, respectful manner as established by each individual school principal.
- It should be noted that this policy does not require that all students recite the pledge, only that each student who desires to do so is afforded daily opportunity. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-310(c); 50-3-3; 50-3-4.1) (GSCSS Policy IKDA)

CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS

In accordance with state and federal regulations and to ensure student record confidentiality, the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education has established policies and procedures pertaining to student records.

- If employees works with students, teachers, records, material, and other sensitive information, confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- Protect confidential information by safeguarding it when in use, filing it properly when not in use, and discuss it only with those who have a legitimate business need to know.
- Employees should check with their supervisors to get more information about confidentiality in their respective areas of work.

Test Data

- It is the policy of the Griffin-Spalding County Schools that no test data or results are to be released or made public in any way except through the appropriate central office personnel.
- All test information, gained in any manner within the Griffin-Spalding County Schools, falls within the jurisdiction of the school system and is not be used or released by any persons except with the written permission of the superintendent of the Griffin-Spalding County School System with the following exception: A child's individual test records are open to inspection by the parent or legal guardian of that child upon a request to the principal. (GBOE Rule II (160-3-1-.07) (O.C.G.A. 50-18-72) (GSCSS Policy IIC)

SEXUAL AND OTHER HARASSMENT

- The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex.
- The board of education will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees.
- This policy similarly applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

Unwelcome Conduct of a Sexual Nature

- **Conduct of a sexual nature may include verbal or physical sexual advances, including:**
 1. subtle pressure for sexual activity;
 2. touching;
 3. pinching;
 4. patting;
 5. brushing against;
 6. comments regarding physical or personality characteristics of a sexual nature;
 7. sexually-oriented "kidding";
 8. teasing;
 9. double-entendres;
 10. jokes.
- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment when the allegedly harassed employee has indicated, by his/her conduct, that it is unwelcome.
- An employee who has initially welcomed such conduct by active participation must give specific notice to the alleged harasser that such conduct is no longer welcome in order for any such subsequent conduct to be deemed unwelcome.

Sexual Harassment

- **For the purposes of this policy, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment if:**
 1. submission to the conduct is made either an explicit or implicit condition of employment;
 2. submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee; or
 3. the conduct substantially interferes with an employee's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS

Administrators and Supervisors

- It is sexual harassment for an administrator or supervisor to use his/her authority to solicit sexual favors or attention from subordinates when the subordinate's failure to submit will result in adverse treatment, or when the subordinate's acquiescence will result in preferential treatment.

- Administrators and supervisors who either engage in sexual harassment or tolerate such conduct by other employees shall be subject to sanctions, as described below.

Non-Administrative and Non-Supervisory Employees

- It is sexual harassment for a non-administrative and non-supervisory employee to subject another such employee to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.
- Employees who engage in such conduct shall be subject to sanctions as described below.

Reporting, Investigation, and Sanctions

- It is the express policy of the board of education to encourage victims of a sexual harassment to come forward with such claims. This may be done through the grievance procedure, policy GAE.
- Employees who feel that administrators or supervisors are conditioning promotions, increases in wages, continuation of employment, or other terms or conditions of employment upon sexual favors, are encouraged to report these conditions to the appropriate administrator.
- If the employee's direct administrator or supervisor is the offending person, the report shall be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision.
- Employees are also urged to report any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors or fellow employees if such conduct interferes with the individual's work performance or creates a hostile or offensive working environment.
- Confidentiality will be maintained and no reprisals or retaliation will be allowed to occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment.
- In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated.
- The superintendent or his designee has the responsibility of investigating and resolving complaints of sexual harassment.
- Any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to sanctions, including, but not limited to, warning, suspension, or termination subject to applicable procedural requirements. (GSCSS Policy GAEB)

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE

Drug Free Work Force

- The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education is concerned with the well-being of all employees of the Griffin-Spalding County School System.
- The board recognizes that a drug-free workplace encourages employee productivity and promotes the accomplishment of the board's missions and goals.
- In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or a controlled substance in the workplace for all Griffin-Spalding County School System employees.

Definitions

1. A controlled substance is defined as those drugs or substances listed in schedules I through V of the federal Controlled Substance Act, including but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, opiates and amphetamines. Not included are substances used in accordance with a valid prescription.
2. The workplace is defined as a geographic location at which an employee performs work pursuant to his or her employment with the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education, including any travel while in travel status.
3. Conviction means a finding of guilt (including a plea of nolo contendere) or imposition of sentence or both by any judicial body charged with the responsibility to determine violations of the federal or state criminal drug statutes.

4. A criminal drug statute is defined as a federal or non-federal criminal statute involving the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, use or possession of any controlled substance.

Procedures

- As a condition of employment, employees will abide by the terms of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy (GAM) and shall notify the superintendent of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace not later than five days after such conviction.
- The Griffin-Spalding County School System shall notify the appropriate federal agency within 10 days after receiving notice of the conviction from the employee or otherwise after receiving the actual notice of such conviction.
- Any GSCS employee is subject to drug or alcohol screening if there is “reasonable suspicion” that he/she is under the influence while at work.
- **Within 30 days of notification by the employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction, the board shall, with respect to any employee so convicted:**
 1. take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination; or
 2. require such employee to participate satisfactorily in an alcohol or drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health, law enforcement or other appropriate agency.
- Entities contracting with the Griffin-Spalding County School System shall, as a condition of the contract, assure a drug-free workplace.
- For contracts, a drug-free workplace means a geographic location at which individuals are directly engaged in the performance of work pursuant to a contract with the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. (GSCSS Policy GAMA) (O.C.G.A., 20-2-11; 20-2-940 et seq.; 20-2-942; 45-23-1 through 45-23-9)

Teachers of these courses are to instruct their students in the use and care of the devices, and provide for their security and safekeeping. Students who are issued the devices are responsible for returning them to the custody of their teacher immediately following their use. (GBOE Rule JGF 160-4-3-.10), (O.C.G.A., 20-2-16; 20-2-1130; 20-9-1).

DRESS CODE

NOTE: This dress code is for all certified, instructional support, and clerical staff

- Staff choices concerning dress send clear messages to our students, our colleagues, and our community. It is important that those choices demonstrate a high level of professionalism.
- Professional dress enables instructional staff to command greater respect from students and as a result, ensures a learning environment more conducive to education.

Female Personnel

Female personnel are expected to wear:

- dresses, suits, slacks, and skirts;
- pants must be mid-calf or longer;
- sleeveless outer garments may be worn as long as under garments are not visible;
- dresses and skirts may not be more than two inches above the knee;

Male Personnel

Male personnel are expected to wear:

- suits or slacks with a collared shirt or turtleneck (no polo type shirts);
- a tie with a collared shirt, except in the case where a teacher works in a lab and/or around machinery or where ties would be a safety hazard; (Lab coats and ties are recommended.)
- slacks similar to Dockers or khakis, wool pants, or dress pants;
- socks at all times.

All personnel are expected to wear:

- System-issued lanyards and identification badges

- professional, safe, and non-distracting footwear;
- jeans, and T-shirts or sweat shirts only with the school logo and also only on pecially designated workdays approved by the principal or supervisor;

The following are not acceptable:

- athletic wear such as fleece and nylon pants;
- form-fitting apparel, tank tops, or revealing tops;
- hats (with the exception of head covers required for religious purposes or to honor cultural tradition)
- casual flip flops;
- slippers;
- athletic shoes (unless prescribed by a physician);
- overpowering perfume or cologne;
- jewelry that is not in good taste;
- visible body piercings (other than the ear);
- visible tattoos of inappropriate content;
- mini-skirts, sun dresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses.

NOTE: Building administrators have the responsibility to enforce the dress code, approve exceptions for documented medical conditions, and the right to deem attire inappropriate.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

Professional Standards Commission

- The Professional Standards Commission has assumed responsibility for setting and enforcing standards of competent professional performance and ethical conduct.
- The commission provides technical assistance, conducts formal investigations and makes recommendations in matters of incompetence, professional ethics, denial of certificate applications, suspension and revocation of teaching certificates and other educational concerns.
- **Upon the request of a local board of education, the State Board of Education, or one or more citizens of the State, the commission is authorized to investigate alleged violations by an educator of:**
 1. any law of the State pertaining to educators or the profession of education
 2. the code of ethics of the commission
 3. rules, regulations, or policies of the State Board of Education, the Professional Standards Commission or a local board of education
 4. failure to meet or comply with standards of performance of the Professional Standards Commission, the State Board of Education, or a local board of education.
- **Based upon its investigation, the commission may furnish the representing party with findings of facts, conclusions of law, and recommendations. The commission may recommend:**
 1. no action be taken against the educator
 2. that the educator be warned or reprimanded
 3. **that the contract of the educator be:**
 - a. terminated
 - b. suspended, or
 - c. not renewed
 4. **that the certificate of the educator be:**
 - a. suspended, or
 - b. revoked

(O.C.G.A. 20-2-793; 20-2-794; 20-2-796; 20-2-797)

Educator Ethics Division – Contact Information

Georgia Professional Standards Commission

200 Piedmont Avenue

Suite 1702

Atlanta, GA 30334-9032

Hours of Operation Ethics offices are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments may be made with Ethics staff by calling the numbers listed below.

Telephone

(404) 232-2700 - Metro Atlanta

(800) 537-5996 - Toll Free Outside Metro Atlanta Area

(404) 232-2720 - FAX Line

E-Mail Individuals may also contact the Ethics Division with questions and requests for information via the Internet at our e-mail address: ethics@gapsc.com.

Introduction

The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The 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.

Definitions

- **Certificate** refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.
- **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.
- **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 and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.
- **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.
- **Revocation** is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.
- **Denial** is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.
- **Suspension** is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.
- **Reprimand** admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

Standards

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.

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 who are under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

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 premises or at a school-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
 2. being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while 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).

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.

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 property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

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 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.

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.

Standard 8: Abandonment of Contract

- An educator shall fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or education agency for the duration of the contract.
- **Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:**
 1. abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer, and
 2. willfully refusing to perform the services required by a contract.

Standard 9: 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.

Standard 10: Professional Conduct

- 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:**
 1. any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or
 2. behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

Standard 11: 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.

Reporting

- 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 Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, personnel director, superintendent, etc.).
- 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.

Disciplinary Action

- The 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 1-10(PSC 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 1-10 (PSC 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; and
 7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- 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 superintendent's designee for certification 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. Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

CERTIFICATION

- The Professional Standards Commission (PSC) is vested with the power to establish necessary requirements and to issue certificates required of teachers employed in the State's public schools. Detailed information is available on the PSC website, www.gapsc.com.
- All certified employees are expected to create an individual MYPSC Account. The GAPSC communicates with educators electronically.

Applying for Certificates

- The Professional Standards Commission currently requires a single application form for all types of certificates.
- The forms can be downloaded from the PSC website – www.gapsc.com.
- All applications for certification should be processed through the Human Resources Office in order to ensure that all portions are complete.

Expiring Certificates

- Certificates of current employees can **only** be renewed through the Human Resources Office.
- In the late fall of the year preceding the expiration date of the certificate, employees should receive an email from the Human Resources Office describing renewal procedures.
- All certified employees must submit to a Criminal Background Check at the time of certificate renewal.
- The employee assumes the cost of the criminal background submission.
- **NOTE: Failure to maintain a valid in-field teaching certificate will result in immediate termination of employment.**
- Each teacher should be aware of the certification status of all certificates held.
- **Maintaining a valid in-field certificate is the teacher's personal responsibility.**
- Contact the Human Resources Department for assistance with any certification questions.

New Certificates

- **NOTE: After January 2010, certificates will no longer be mailed to teachers. Teachers are expected to view their certificates online at www.gapsc.com.**
- The school system's copy is e-mailed to the system if GSCS was listed on the application.
- Necessary salary changes or adjustments cannot be made until the school system has the certificate on file.

Adjustment for New Certificate

- The salary schedules for a certified employee are based on the highest, valid Georgia certificate on file in the Human Resources Department.
- **(NOTE: Education Leadership may not qualify if employee is not in a leadership position.)**
- State funds necessary to finance salaries are based on valid, in-field teaching certificates.
- Salary adjustments for new certificates will be processed during the month the new certificate is received by the Human Resources Department provided it is received prior to the payroll cut-off date.

- If it is received after the cut-off date, the salary adjustment will be made the following month. Salary adjustments will be retroactive to the effective date of the level of the certificate, or the date of employment, whichever is most recent.

Newly-Employed Teachers

- Georgia law requires that teachers in Georgia public schools have a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission.
- State funds are provided to local school systems based on the teaching certificate. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-200)
- In view of the legal and financial requirements, a teacher must have an in-field teaching certificate for all subjects/classes taught.
- In the event a teaching certificate is not file with PSC or applied for prior to the end of the second pay period, checks may be withheld.
- If an employee is experiencing problems obtaining information, an appointment must be scheduled with the Human Resources Director.
- During this conference, all steps for securing a certificate will be reviewed and assistance will be provided if needed.

Certification Tests

- Beginning fall 2006, the testing program for certification in Georgia changed to the GACE Series.
- Teachers who have previously posted a passing score on the TCT or Praxis II in their field will not be required to complete the GACE.
- However, all teachers applying for initial certification or working toward conversion of conditional certificates are required to post a passing score on the GACE.

Who Must Take the Tests

- In-State Applicants - All candidates applying for a certificate are required to present passing scores on the appropriate content area test (TCT, Praxis or GACE). Individuals applying for initial certification must pass or exempt the three Basic Skills Tests (reading, math, and writing).
- Out-of-State Applicants - If you hold or have held a professional certificate in another state, and **have passed the appropriate content knowledge test required by that state** for that certification field, you may not be required to take the Georgia test for licensure and are exempt from the Basic Skills Tests.
- If you hold or have held a professional certificate in another **state where a content knowledge test was not required**, you may be eligible for a nonrenewable certificate before passing the required Georgia test, but you are exempt from the Basic Skills Tests.
- Any questions regarding the need for testing should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

Registration

- Online registration for a GACE exam is available at www.gace.nesinc.com.

Certification Ineligibility

- In the event a teacher is not able to secure an appropriate Georgia teaching certificate, the teacher's services will be terminated at the discretion of the school system.
- Salary will be paid at the substitute teacher rate. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-940(a))

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Components

- The Griffin-Spalding County School System's staff development program addresses assessed needs based on professional development and instructional effectiveness.

- **Needs based on professional development for certificated and noncertificated teaching, leadership, and service personnel are considered based on three stages of professional development:**
 1. Induction refers to the process of preparing persons to enter a new field of employment. It can continue for three years. Induction refers to beginning teachers or to any employee who has accepted an assignment in a new function.
 2. Specific needs development means the provision of staff development opportunities to assist persons who have been employed in a field for three or more years and who must overcome deficiencies identified through their annual performance evaluations.
 3. Enhancement is the provision of learning opportunities which renew persons professionally by addressing needs that have been identified through the annual performance evaluations.
- Needs based on evaluations of the effectiveness of instructional programs are also considered. An educational program is effective to the extent that students are achieving the objectives of that program.
- If they are not, then program changes may be needed.
- The competencies needed by personnel to perform adequately in the roles required by the new or revised educational program are staff development needs.
- To determine staff development needs based upon instructional effectiveness, educational programs are grouped into four broad categories: general education, special education, remedial education, and instructional support.

Professional Learning Opportunities

- The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education endorses the concept of local staff development and is committed to this effort regarding the educational personnel employed by the Griffin-Spalding County School System.
- Such employees will be provided opportunities to add to or improve their competencies and skills through a planned staff development program.
- Credit for participation in such activities may be applied toward professional certification renewal only under the conditions and limitations specified in the Griffin-Spalding County Comprehensive Plan for Staff Development as approved by the local board of education and the State Department of Education. (GBOE Rule GAD(1) 160-3-3-.04; GAD(2) 160-3-3-.05; GAD(4) 160-4-9-.03) (GSCSS Policy GAD) (O.C.G.A.; 20-2-167(a); 20-2-182(g); 20-2-200(b); 20-2-201; 20-2-210; 20-2-213; 20-2-230; 20-2-232; 20-2-250(a))

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of 2013-2014
Certified Employee Handbook**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Griffin-Spalding County School System's Certified *Employee Handbook*. I know that it is my responsibility to review the information contained in the handbook and ask my supervisor or Human Resources if I have questions regarding covered topics. I am also aware that a current version of the handbook is maintained on the web site at www.spalding.k12.ga.us.

I have also read and understand the Certified Code of Ethics contained in the Handbook.

Signature

Date

Clearly Print Your Name

School/Department