

# Haralson County School District



## Personnel Handbook 2024-2025

(Revised July 2024)

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## **FOREWORD**

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

This handbook is designed as a guide for you, an employee of the Haralson County School District. It communicates our school system policies, procedures, and protocols to employees and other interested parties.

As with any organization, we have rules and regulations that employees are expected to observe to maintain a safe, efficient, pleasant, and productive environment for all. These simple, "common sense" rules are designed to preserve honesty, safety, and good relations between employees and our customers.

The information contained in this handbook is not all-inclusive, and an employee may be subject to discipline for any other circumstance that is not listed. Further, rules may be changed or added from time to time. The school district, in its discretion and subject to Georgia law, may terminate an employee upon the first infraction and without prior notice of any rule or other improper conduct or may choose to place the employee on probation or issue other discipline as the circumstances may dictate. The complete Board Policies are available at the District Office and online at the system's website, [www.haralson.k12.ga.us](http://www.haralson.k12.ga.us). Questions about policies and procedures should be addressed to your immediate supervisor or the Superintendent.

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

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

# School District Organization

## **Board Members**

Dr. Martha Smith, Chair  
Mike Benefield, Vice Chair  
Brad Davis  
Kendall Robinson  
James Watson

## **Superintendent**

Dr. Jerry Bell

## **District Office**

299 Robertson Ave. Tallapoosa, GA 30176  
770-574-2500

Angie Campbell.....Assistant Superintendent/ Chief Financial Officer  
Brandi Johnson.....Chief Administrative Officer  
Dr. Gina Smeeton .....Director of Special Education  
Keshia Williams..... Director of School Nutrition  
Stacy Gilbert .....Director of Maintenance  
Zac Crosby.....Chief Technology Officer

## **Transportation/Police Department**

1192 Macedonia Church Rd,  
Buchanan, GA 30113  
770-646-5532

John Daniel.....Director of Transportation/Chief of Police

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### **Schools Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades**

Buchanan Primary School.....Katrina Smith, Principal

271 Van Wert Street  
Buchanan, GA 30113  
770-646-5523

Tallapoosa Primary School.....Leisha Sauls, Principal

581 Ga. Hwy 120  
Tallapoosa, GA 30176  
770-574-7444

### **Schools 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grades**

Buchanan Elementary School.....Ethelyn Johnson, Principal

215 College Circle  
Buchanan, GA 30113  
770-646-5140

West Haralson Elementary School.....Kim Causey, Principal

4552 Hwy 100 North  
Tallapoosa, GA 30176  
770-574-7060

### **Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grades**

Haralson Co. Middle School.....Jodi Cash, Principal

2633 Ga. Hwy 120  
Tallapoosa, GA 30176  
770-646-8600

### **High School 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grades**

Haralson Co. High School.....Vic Coggins, Principal

1655 Ga. Hwy 120  
Tallapoosa, GA 30176  
770-574-7647

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### Vision

Haralson County Schools will be recognized as a leader in improving student achievement for ALL students.

### Mission

Haralson County Schools will produce high-achieving students who will graduate and become productive and responsible citizens.

### Motto

A 5-Star System where learning comes first.

### Beliefs

- ❖ We believe all students deserve to be held to high expectations that reflect individual abilities.
- ❖ We believe every person deserves to be treated with respect.
- ❖ We believe the health, safety, and welfare of all students and employees are prerequisites to student success.
- ❖ We believe students must be taught academic and life skills, including technology, to succeed in an ever-changing world.
- ❖ We believe school experience should be a relevant practice for adulthood.
- ❖ We believe regular attendance is fundamental to learning.
- ❖ We believe all stakeholders share the responsibility for educating students.
- ❖ We believe effective communication is essential for all stakeholders.

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# Haralson County School District 2024-2025 School Calendar

July 18	New Teacher Orientation
July 30-Aug 2	Pre-Planning (All Teacher)
August 6	First Day of School
September 5	Progress Reports
September 9	Professional Learning Day
October 4	End of First Nine Weeks
October 7	Teacher Work Day
October 10	Report Cards
October 21	Parent/Teacher Conferences
October 25	Holiday (Fall Break)
November 7	Progress Reports
November 26-29	Holiday (Thanksgiving Break)
December 20	End of Nine Weeks
December 21-January 5	Holiday (Christmas Break)
January 6	Teacher Work Day
January 7	Students Return
January 9	Report Cards
February 6	Progress Reports
February 10	Parent/Teacher Conferences
March 14	End of Third Nine Weeks
March 17	Teacher Work Day
March 20	Report Cards
April 1-April 4	Holiday (Spring Break)
April 24	Progress Reports
May 23	Last Day/End of Nine Weeks
May 27-29	Post Planning (All Teachers)

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# Section 1 - Professional Conduct

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

Effective January 1, 2024

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

- 1) **Introduction.** The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct, justifying disciplinary sanction, and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.
- 2) **Definitions.**
  - (a) "Breach of contract" occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the GaPSC.
  - (b) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by the authority of the GaPSC.
  - (c) "Child endangerment" occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.
  - (d) "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 GaPSC 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.
  - (e) "Educator" is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the GaPSC 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.
  - (f) "Inappropriate" is conduct or communication not suitable for an educator to have with a student. It goes beyond the bounds of an educator-student relationship.
  - (g) "Physical abuse" is physical interaction resulting in a reported or visible bruise or injury to the student.
  - (h) "Student" is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the school year of graduation.

### **(3) Standards.**

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

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

1. Committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. Committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. Engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student;
5. Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or
7. Failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

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

1. Being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
2. Being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum, i.e. foreign Language trips, etc.).

- (i) For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered "under the influence" if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general

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personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.

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

1. Professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
2. Information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other Governmental agencies;
3. Information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
4. Reasons for absences or leaves;
5. Information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
6. Information submitted in the course of professional practice.

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

1. Misusing public or school-related funds;
2. Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. Submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or casework);
4. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. Using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

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

1. Soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
3. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless

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approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and

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

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

1. Sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
2. Sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
3. Violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
4. Violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

(h) Standard 8: **Required Reports** - An educator shall file with the GaPSC 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 to the GaPSC all requested information on documents required by the GaPSC when applying for or renewing any certificate with the GaPSC;
2. Failure to make a required report of an alleged or proven 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 alleged or proven violation of state or federal law as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been

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abused.

- (i) Standard 9: **Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students; or failure to supervise a student(s).
- (j) Standard 10: **Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
  - 1. Committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
  - 2. Compromising the integrity of the assessment.

#### **(4) Reporting.**

- (a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the GaPSC must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).
- (b) The GaPSC notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Clearinghouse.

#### **(5) Disciplinary Action.**

- (a) The GaPSC 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 educator:
  - 1. Unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
  - 2. Disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
  - 3. Order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Services 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. Suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;

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5. Violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16- 13-111); and
  6. Any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- (b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics for Educators. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent’s designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent’s certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.
- (c) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no probable cause as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2- 984.4(e) and § 20-2-984.5(e) if:
1. After a preliminary investigation is concluded it is unlikely that there exists a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove at a hearing that a violation occurred; or
  2. After a hearing the administrative law judge makes a determination that there is not a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove that a violation occurred.
- (d) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no further action is necessary pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.5(a) if after review of the report of the preliminary investigation, sanctions should not be imposed.

**(6) Sanctions.**

- (a) As outlined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.5(c), the GaPSC has the discretion to issue a probable cause sanction against an educator. Common violations and associated sanctions can be found in the accompanying GaPSC Guidance.
1. Denial is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate;
  2. Monitoring is the quarterly appraisal of the educator’s conduct by the GaPSC through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit periodic criminal background checks (GCIC). The GaPSC specifies the length of the monitoring period;
  3. Reprimand admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action;

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4. Revocation is the permanent invalidation of any certificate held by the educator. A Voluntary Surrender is equivalent to and has the same effect as a revocation. A Voluntary Surrender shall be accepted and becomes effective upon receipt by the GaPSC;
5. Suspension is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the GaPSC; and
6. Warning informs the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(7) Application Procedures.

- (a) "Yes" answers to Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) require submission of information identified in the accompanying GaPSC Guidance.
- (b) With respect to an initial applicant, an application and corresponding ethics case that is initiated pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.3(c) will automatically close and be placed on hold if the applicant fails to submit requested documentation to the Ethics Division within 45 days of the request to the applicant. The application will be placed on hold in anticipation of the submission of a new application and the applicant's responding to any requests for documentation in a timely fashion.

### ***Dress and Appearance***

[See Policy GBRL - Employee Dress Code](#)

### ***Tobacco Free Workplace***

[See Policy GAN – Employee Tobacco Use](#)

### ***Drug-Free Workplace***

[See Policy GAMA – Drug-Free Workplace](#)

### ***Harassment Policy***

[See Policy GAEB – Harassment](#)

### ***Equal Opportunity Employer***

[See Policy GAAA – Equal Opportunity Employment](#)

### ***Purchasing Procedures***

All purchases must follow the Board Policy [DJEG – Purchase Orders and Contracts](#) and the guidelines outlined below:

1. All purchasing requires an approved purchase order of the requisition, invoice, and signed receipt (signed pink copy).
2. Requisition forms must be filled out completely, including complete addresses, phone, and fax numbers. This will speed up the process of placing your order. Requisitions must be approved and signed by the school principal in the space provided. Send the approved requisition to the district office for approval. Keep a copy for your records before sending it to the district office.
3. The designated staff at the district office will review the requisition form for accuracy and completeness. It will then be signed and submitted to the appropriate

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department. The staff will enter a request into the accounting system, which will assign it a purchase order number. The department head will then sign the purchase order and forward it to the vendor. A copy of the original requisition will be retained by the district office.

4. When an order is received, the items should be verified with the packing slip **and** the school (pink) copy. The "Received By" line of the (pink) copy should be signed and dated by the person receiving the items. The original packing slips and/or invoices (some packing slips also serve as invoices) must be attached to the school copy and submitted to the district office.
5. As soon as the total order is received, all necessary paperwork should be sent to the district office within 15 days.
6. A purchase order is complete and closed once payment is made to the vendor. All items on a completed purchase order should be indicated as received or canceled.

### ***Fiscal and Student Activities Funds Management***

An employee may occasionally have funds belonging to students or the school in his/her possession. All funds raised by classes, clubs, and other organizations shall be submitted to the school office for deposit daily.

Employees should not leave money unsecured, such as in a desk drawer or in any place where theft or loss may occur. These funds are the employee's responsibility. It is important that receipts be given daily for money collected for the employee's protection and for good business practice. Any purchases made from activity funds must be approved by the principal. All student activity accounts shall be audited annually. All student activity funds should follow the Board Policy ([DK – Student Activities Funds Management](#)).

### ***Fund Raising***

[See Policy JK – Solicitations](#)

### ***Solicitations of Students***

[See Policy JKA – Solicitations of Students](#)

### ***Staff-Student Relationships***

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

Specific student assignments to classrooms are an administrative function, and they are made in the best educational interest of the child.

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

## **Section 2 – Employment**

### ***Equal Employment/Educational Opportunities***

See [Policy GAAA – Equal Opportunity Employment](#) and [JAA – Equal Educational Opportunities](#)

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## ***Title IX Compliance***

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

## ***Section 504 Compliance***

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

## ***Employment Status***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Permanent Employee:** Employees who have been approved by the board to fill a vacant position. Permanent employees are eligible for all benefits offered by Haralson County Schools and are covered by one of two types of retirement offered, either TRS or PSERS. They include not only full-time employees or the equivalent but also part-time employees if their employment is to last indefinitely.

**Temporary Employee:** Employees who have been approved by the board to fill a vacancy that will only last a set amount of time, such as three months. A person who is hired to fill in for someone who is on maternity leave or sick leave is considered to be a temporary employee. Whether the employee works full-time or part-time does not change the status of a temporary employee. They are not eligible for any of the benefits offered by the Haralson County School District.

## ***Fingerprinting***

It is the intent of the Haralson County Board of Education to comply with all regulations as stipulated in the Georgia legislation regarding Fingerprinting and Criminal Records Checks for Educators. All new hires, certified and classified, will undergo fingerprinting and a criminal record check prior to employment. All employees must have a background check

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every five years thereafter. The results of these checks are confidential and kept separate from the employee's personnel files. See also [Policy GAK \(1\) – Criminal Background Check](#)

### ***Contracts***

Each certified employee who has been approved for employment in a teaching or leadership position shall be offered a legal and binding contract for the employment period. Recommendations are made by the principal/supervisor to the Superintendent and by the Superintendent to the Board of Education. All employees are hired by the Board of Education at the recommendation of the Superintendent. Contract renewal from year to year depends upon job availability and a recommendation for re-employment by the Superintendent. The Board of Education must approve these recommendations prior to the issuance of contracts, generally in February each year. If, however, there is a need to fill a vacancy or hire additional personnel during the time between its regularly scheduled meetings, the status is temporary until approved by the Board at its next meeting. Full-time hires only become benefit-eligible after official approval of the Board.

Contracts for new employees are temporary and are not considered binding until clearance is received from the required fingerprinting and criminal records check, release from any previous contract, and verification of certification. A certificated employee who violates his/her contract with a school system may have his/her certificate suspended or revoked by the PSC.

### ***Resignations***

Certified personnel who, for any reason, intend to resign or who intend to retire are encouraged to indicate their plans to their immediate supervisor as early in the school year as possible. Resignations become effective at the end of the school year in which they are submitted. Resignations requested to become effective earlier than at the end of the school year require a release by the Board, must be considered on an individual basis, and may be subject to employment of an acceptable replacement. Resignations are to be submitted in writing with a signature to the immediate supervisor and the Director of Personnel. Employees are required to return all Board of Education property, employee badges, computers, and keys to their supervisor prior to the effective date of resignation. A charge equal to the replacement cost will be levied for any lost property. Further, access to all computer systems will be terminated no later than the resignation date. Exceptions to computer access may be considered on an individual basis. Such requests should be made to the Human Resources Dept.

Classified employees must submit a written (signed & dated) letter of resignation to the immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Dept. Any classified employee is requested to give at least a two-week notice if they intend to resign from their position.

### ***Extended Year & Day Contracts***

Extended-year contracts shall be issued for work assigned and performed during a specified period of time beyond the approved work year calendar. The approved number of days for an extended-year contract must be worked during the fiscal year for which the contract was awarded. Monthly and yearly documentation of extended salary time and program responsibilities will be maintained and reported to the Georgia Department of Education as required.

All extended-**year** contracts are contingent upon available funding and need. No contract rights shall be created in extended days or extended years.

An extended-**day** contract shall be provided for certain approved, designated, certified

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

Contract amendments are used to obligate the system and the employee to extended assignments such as extracurricular activities and compensated responsibilities. This is an amendment of the employee's contract that requires the fulfillment of those responsibilities.

### ***Transfers***

Employees may request a transfer to another school and/or position for which they are certified and qualified. Such requests are generally received during the time the system issues Intent Forms annually (January - February) prior to recommendations for employment renewal. All transfers must be approved by the receiving principal/supervisor, the sending principal/supervisor, any Director/Coordinator as appropriate (i.e., Special Education), and the Superintendent. An interview may or may not be required. A request for transfer does not obligate the system to transfer an employee. The Superintendent has the authority to transfer an employee at any time to any position for which the employee is qualified and/or certified at any job site in the system.

### ***Reductions in Force***

See [Policy GAKA – Professional Personnel Lay-Off](#)

### ***Hours of Work***

See [Policy GBRC – Professional Personnel Work Loads](#)

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

Each employee is responsible for signing in as instructed by their supervisor. Your timesheet or sign-in sheet records the hours you work. Any addition, correction, or change on your sign-in sheet must be made between you and your supervisor. Time records are the property of the Haralson County Board of Education.

### ***Overtime***

See [Policy GCRD – Classified Personnel](#)

The Fair Labor Standards Act provisions governing minimum wage and overtime applies to identified non-exempt personnel. Identified non-exempt personnel may only work up to forty (40) hours per week unless specific approval is obtained in writing from the appropriate supervisor. Non-exempt employees who have been specifically approved to work beyond forty (40) hours per week must receive overtime compensation at a rate of one and one-half times their regular hourly wage or a blended rate if working two different jobs for the system. Non-exempt employees may receive "compensatory time" in lieu of overtime pay when a written agreement is arrived at between the employer and employee before the performance of the overtime work. No more than 24 hours of compensatory time may be accrued at any one time. Compensatory time is traded at the rate of 1:1 if taken during the 40-hour week and at the rate of 1.5:1 if taken beyond the work week where it is earned.

### ***Emergency Closing of Schools***

Extreme weather or other conditions may create emergency situations that require schools

to close. The Superintendent or designated representative will decide whether to close schools or adjust schedules. The decision will be made as early as possible and announced on as many local media sources as possible. Additionally, the school system will utilize the Infinite Campus messaging services to try to notify staff and students of any changes. Employees must make up any days missed from school closing because of contract requirements.

### ***Workplace Inspection***

The Haralson County School District reserves the right to search any person entering its property or off-site while performing services or carrying out the school system's responsibilities and to search property, equipment, and storage areas, including, but not limited to, clothing, personal effects, vehicles, buildings, rooms, facilities, offices, parking lots, desks, cabinets, lunches, and toolboxes. Any items an employee does not wish to have inspected should not be brought to work.

### ***Electrical Appliances***

The school system has implemented an Energy Management Program as part of the Board's cost-savings plan. The policies outlined in this plan prohibit the use of microwaves, coffee makers, and hotplates in instructional classrooms. Microwaves and "Dorm" sized refrigerators are allowed in designated areas such as teacher's lounges and teacher workrooms.

Electric heaters are not allowed per the State Fire Marshal.

### ***Children at the Workplace***

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

### ***Personal Safety***

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

### ***Employee After-Care Program***

The Employee After-School Program is designed for the children of anyone employed in the Haralson County School System. This service is offered to watch employee children until the end of the parent's duty day. **Students should be enrolled in the aftercare program at BES, WHES.** Students will not be transported by bus to their parent's school.

### ***Personnel Records***

The personnel file on each employee shall contain all documents required by law and all other items necessary for the administration of personnel employed by the school system, excluding medical records relating to the American Disabilities Act, Family & Medical Leave Act, and Workers' Compensation. Personnel records of employees are confidential. Disclosure of addresses, telephone numbers, duty stations, periods of service, medical histories, associations, family relationships, pay scale assignments, wages, or salaries is

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specifically prohibited as an invasion of personal privacy unless released by the employee. Written open records requests will release only what is required by law.

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

There is only one official "Personnel File" or "Personnel Record" for an employee, and it is kept and maintained at the District Office. Only the Superintendent can direct what items may go into an employee's personnel record, and only the Superintendent may place a letter of reprimand in an employee's "Personnel File." An employee or former employee may examine the contents of their Personnel File by contacting the Director of Personnel.

### ***District Office Files***

It is also the employee's responsibility to keep all files (certificates, etc.) current and notify the personnel department of any changes in name, address, or status.

1. **Certificates** – Certified positions require that employees hold the proper credentials. If you are employed in a certificated position, you must present the required appropriate certificate or satisfactory proof of eligibility for the same to the Personnel Department within the first month of employment. As certificates are renewed, new fields are added, or levels are changed, copies of valid certificates indicating these changes should be forwarded to the district office.
2. **Contracts** – Each certified employee must be under contract. Each employee executes a contract annually.
3. **Withholding Forms** – Each employee must have on file state and federal tax withholding forms.
4. **Teacher Retirement Number**—All certified staff members must participate in the Georgia Teacher Retirement System (TRS). If new teachers do not have a teacher retirement number, they must have a TRS application on file in the Superintendent's office. Monthly deductions are made from the employee's salary.
5. **Loyalty Oath**—Georgia Law requires you to execute a loyalty oath, which is included in the annual contract.
6. **Employment Eligibility**—You MUST furnish any documents establishing your right to work in the United States for review, including a photo ID and Social Security Card.
7. **Security Clearance** – The Haralson County School District requires a criminal background check on all new certificated employees. An acceptable fingerprint is required. This requirement is in accordance with Code Section 20-2-211.1 of the Official Code of Georgia (2022) that all certificated professional personnel shall not be issued a contract of employment for the first time by a local unit unless such person has been fingerprinted and a national criminal record check has been conducted. These records are kept separate from the personnel file and are not a part of "open records."
8. **Insurance Forms** – Applications for insurance and signatures for awareness of Workers' Compensation procedures must be on file.
9. **Experience Forms** – Verification of professional employment and/or military experience form DD214 must be on file.

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10. **Annual Evaluations**—Annual evaluations and any letters affecting an individual's continued employment are kept on file in the district office.

### **Job Vacancies**

When a vacancy or anticipated vacancy is recognized, the system posts the position on the system website and [www.teachgeorgia.org](http://www.teachgeorgia.org). Current employees who are interested in a vacancy and feel they are qualified and can perform the essential job functions should fill out an internal application on the system website to be considered for the position. There is no guarantee, explicit or implicit, that the current employee will get the job or receive an interview. A current employee's interest will receive equal consideration as that of an outside-of-the-system applicant.

### **Job Descriptions**

Each employee shall have a signed copy (electronically or hard copy) of their current job description in their personnel file.

### **Name, Address, and Phone Changes**

Each employee is responsible for keeping the Payroll Department informed of his/her current mailing address and telephone number. To change a name on personnel records, the employee must bring the documents proving the new name to the Payroll Department.

### **Evaluations**

See [Policy GBI—Professional Personnel Evaluation](#)

### **Certified**

All principals, assistant principals, and teachers (except contributing professionals) will be evaluated using the [TKES](#) and [LKES](#) evaluation handbooks.

### **Georgia's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System**

*All pre-pandemic requirements related to TKES and LKES will resume in the 2024-2025 school year.*

### **Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM)**

The (TEM) is the annual evaluation which consists of three components: (1) Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS), (2) Professional Growth, and (3) Student Growth. These three components contribute to the overall TEM for each teacher. Teachers of record shall receive a TEM based on ratings from all three components of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). The weights of each component are as follows:

TAPS – 50%

Professional Growth – 20%

Student Growth – 30%

### **TAPS**

**Flexible Process:** Receives a minimum of 2 observations per year (1 Formative & 1 Walkthrough) and a summative evaluation.

- Any teacher with 3 consecutive years of Proficient ratings on summative evaluation.

**Full Formative Process:** Receives a minimum of 4 walkthroughs, two formative and a summative evaluation.

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Applies to

- Induction Teachers (Years 1-3)
- Out-Of-Field (non-renewable certificates)
- New Position (different cert. than previous year)
- Out-Of-Profession (more than 1 year)
- New to Georgia
- Evaluation Performance of Ineffective or Needs Development (previous 3 years)
- Otherwise does not meet the criteria for Modified evaluation status.

**Administrators will notify teachers when beginning observation rounds.**

- Notification of specific observation times is not required.
- Evaluators have the discretion to honor or deny a teacher's request to reschedule.

### **Professional Growth**

Professional growth goals are TBD by the teacher and admin. Admin will have discretion regarding how well teachers have met their professional growth goals.

### **Student Growth Percentiles**

- **SGP Teachers** – The individual state-provided Student Growth Percentile will be used to determine their TEM Score. Student Growth Percentiles will be generated for EOG/EOG Milestones teachers in math & ELA courses only.
- **Non-SGP Teachers** – The System means SGP will be used.

***No SGPs will be generated for Social Studies or Science courses even if there is a Milestone.***

**Students must attend 90% of the instructional length of the EOG or EOC SGP courses for their data to be included in the growth score for evaluation.**

### **Classified**

Additionally, the Board believes that a program for evaluating classified personnel is an integral component of improving the quality of support and administrative services.

All classified personnel shall have their performance evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or administrator. All such performance evaluation records shall be part of the personnel evaluation file and shall be confidential.

The purposes of the annual performance evaluation are:

1. To identify and reinforce effective practices,
2. To identify areas where staff and professional development can improve service effectiveness, and
3. To identify personnel who do not meet the minimum standards so that appropriate action can be taken.

### ***Statement of Non-Discrimination***

**Federal law** prohibits discrimination in educational programs or activities or in employment practices on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1973); age (Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C.); religion (Section 702, Title VII, 42 U.S.C.); or handicap (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

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### **Contact Information:**

Personnel – Brandi Johnson 770-574-2500 ext. 41241  
Special Education –Gina Smeeton 770-574-2500 ext. 41225  
504 - Jentsie Johns 770-574-2500 ext. 41258  
Title I-A – Brandi Johnson 770-574-2500 ext. 41241  
Title II-A – Brandi Johnson 770-574-2500 ext. 41241

## **Section 3 – Salary and Benefits**

### **Salary Schedules**

All Haralson County Board of Education employees are paid from the current state salary schedule. Experience and training are used to determine the correct placement on the current schedule. Actual years of experience may or may not correspond with placement on the salary schedule. Placement on the Haralson County pay schedule is determined by the actual number of years of allowable experience per Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-2-.05. One hundred twenty days of full-time employment days or more equals one year as relates to movement on the salary schedule. For classroom teachers, the system pays the STATE BASE SALARY.

It is the employee’s responsibility to check their salary for accuracy and report any discrepancies to the Payroll Department. Failure to report such to the Board of Education within the contract year will constitute a waiver of any claim or request for salary adjustment on the part of the employee.

For classified personnel, the Board uses a salary schedule based on related experience and job position. Experience in HCSD for payroll purposes is calculated based on a full-time, full-year position. Ex: 8 months would be 0 years, 1 year 8 months would be 1 year. Creditable experience is determined by the human resources department and previous employer verification. Experience in the same or different job capacity is calculated as follows:

- Transfer from another school system OR private business in the same job description - credit for all full years. Example: para to para...bus driver/aide to bus driver/aide
- Transfer from another system or within HCSD into a different capacity - credit for ½ of the experience. Example: parapro to clerical

### **Salary Addendum**

Salaries for extra-curricular and extra-duty assignments shall be executed during the first month of the school year for those employees assuming these responsibilities. There is no promise or guarantee of a particular extracurricular or extra duty assignment from year to year. Additionally, the superintendent, principal, and athletic directors have the authority to revoke such an assignment when it is believed to be in the best interest of students or the school program. If such a revocation occurs or if the employee is released from the responsibility, appropriate salary adjustments will be made. Pay for these assignments are divided out over the course of the contract period.

### **Tax Information**

When you begin employment, you must complete a Federal W-4 Tax Form and a Georgia G-4 Tax Form. These deductions are entered into the accounting system exactly as you fill them out. If the amounts that are withheld are not to your satisfaction, you may change them by completing a new W-4 and/or G-4 Tax Form. These can be updated through the [Employee Self-Service](#) link on the school district website.

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You can obtain a new W-4 or G-4 Tax Form from the district office Payroll Department. Any changes made have to be turned in to the payroll department by the cut-off date for that month or changes will be made the following month. FICA/Med Tax is calculated and deducted after all non-taxable wages have been deducted from the gross pay. Non-taxable wages include all insurance premiums covered under the cafeteria plan as well as annuity contributions.

### ***Payroll***

Supervisors need to review all forms before they sign them to ensure that accurate information is being submitted. Monthly Leave Reports (with all corresponding backup that includes Leave of Absence forms, Professional Leave/Expense Reimbursement Requests, and Substitute Sign-in/Sign-out Logs) are due to the Payroll Department according to the predetermined cut-off dates. The deadline for turning in paperwork to make any payroll changes (changes in pay, changes in tax exemptions, changes in contracts, etc.) must be received in the Payroll Department by 4:30 p.m. on the cut-off date for the month for the changes to be made that same month. Anything received after this time will be changed on the following month's payroll run, with no exceptions. It is the employee's responsibility to monitor his or her leave balances each payroll period. If the employee feels there is an error on the leave balance for the current payroll period, the employee should contact the employee's school office to resolve the issue by the next payroll cut-off date.

### ***Direct Deposit***

Employee payroll checks will be deposited directly into a bank or credit union account of their choosing. There is no charge for this service.

### ***Garnishments***

Salaries of school system employees shall be subject to garnishments as covered by laws regulating garnishments. However, employees are expected to handle their financial obligations properly and not get into situations where creditors take garnishment action. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged to cover administrative costs.

### ***Benefits***

#### **Social Security & Medicare**

All employees of the Haralson County Board of Education are covered by Social Security and Medicare.

Deductions for this purpose are made from the gross salary at the rate of 7.65% less any Cafeteria Plan benefits (6.20% for FICA and 1.45% for Medicare). These deductions are matched by the Haralson County Board of Education.

#### **Open Enrollment**

The open enrollment period to sign up for voluntary (medical) benefits is set by dates established by the state of Georgia for the Open Enrollment period for state health insurance, usually in October each year. Proper membership forms must be completed and sent to the Payroll Department by deadlines to maintain eligibility. Otherwise, changes in insurance are allowed only within a limited period of time based on a change in family status or qualifying event. Contact Stacey Layton for additional information.

#### **Teachers Retirement System (TRS) of Georgia**

Individuals employed one-half time or more as a teacher, administrator, paraprofessional, clerk, or secretary are required to become members of the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) as a condition of employment. Members must contribute 6% of earnable

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compensation as a payroll deduction to TRS. The Haralson County Board of Education matches this contribution at 20.78%. To be vested and eligible to receive TRS benefits, TRS members must complete at least ten (10) years of service in Georgia schools. Full retirement is at 30 years. With full retirement, employees are eligible for retirement at 60% of the average of their two highest salary years. Unused earned sick leave can also be used as credit toward service for retirement.

### **PSERS**

PSERS stands for Public School Employees Retirement System. PSERS is deducted from paychecks from September through May. The amount withheld is \$4 per month, \$10.00 for new employees. Permanent bus drivers, maintenance, and food service employees are required to have PSERS deducted. A member may retire and elect to receive normal monthly retirement benefits after completing 10 years of service and reaching age 65. To apply for a refund of contributions or to apply for retirement benefits, you will need to come by the district office for the appropriate forms.

### **Insurance**

Employees who work 20 hours or more per week are eligible for benefits. Some plans are funded entirely or in part by the Board, and others are available to employees via payroll deduction. All insurance coverage begins the first day of the month following the completion of one full calendar month of service, subject to the described conditions in the insurance plan. Insurance selections and changes are made during the open enrollment period (mid-October to mid-November) for a January 1 effective date.

The Haralson County Board of Education offers health insurance through the State Health Benefit Plan. Several health insurance options are available. The Board currently contributes \$21,120 for certified employees and \$15,150 for classified employees who have insurance.

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

Life Insurance is also available for you and your dependents. The Board provides \$10,000 of group term life insurance at no cost to the employee. Additional optional life insurance may be purchased. Spouse and dependent life insurance may also be purchased.

Employees may be entitled to workers' compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment during the normal workday and work year. Injured employees must notify their supervisor immediately within 24 hours and complete appropriate forms in a timely manner.

The injured employee must seek treatment from a physician approved by the Workers' Comp Insurance Company. A list of approved physicians is posted in each school system facility. Contact Stacey Layton for additional information and assistance concerning workers' compensation.

### **Annuities**

Haralson County School District offers voluntary contributions to annuities through the cafeteria plans offered to all permanent employees. During open enrollment periods, employees may choose the amount to be deducted from their checks.

### **Flexible Spending Accounts**

Flexible spending accounts enable employees to pay certain non-reimbursed health, dental, and vision expenses and dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars. Employees can set aside designated amounts and file claims for reimbursement. The proper membership forms

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must be completed and submitted to Houze & Associates to establish eligibility.

### **Houze & Associates**

Houze & Associates is the current administrator of the Haralson County Schools cafeteria insurance plan. They offer the following types of insurance:

1. Long and Short Term Disability
2. Supplemental Group Life Insurance
3. Cancer Insurance
4. Dental Insurance
5. Individual Life Insurance
6. Long Term Care
7. Flex-Med and Flex Child Care
8. Vision Insurance
9. Individual Life
10. Group Dependent Life

The new hire packet provides information on the insurance plans. Complete information may be found at <http://www.houze.org/haralson>. Employees may choose plan options during two open enrollment periods, usually in the fall and spring.

### **GAE**

GAE stands for Georgia Association of Educators. To enroll in GAE, you must go through the GAE representative at your school. Dues are deducted from your paycheck from October through July. If you have any questions, please contact your representative at the school or call the regional office at 404-289- 5967

### **PAGE**

PAGE stands for Professional Association of Georgia Educators. In order to enroll, you must sign - up with the PAGE representative at your school. PAGE dues are deducted from your paycheck. If you have any questions please contact your school representative or call the state office at 1-404-292-7243 or this toll free number 1-800-334-6861.

### **Children of Out-of-District Employees**

See [Policy JBCB—Nonresident Students](#)

## **Section 4 - Absences and Leave**

See [Policy GARH - Employee Leaves and Absences](#)

Consistent and regular attendance and punctuality are considered essential requirements for all positions in the school system. While even the most conscientious employee occasionally finds it necessary to miss work, unnecessary absences should be avoided. Principals, department heads, and immediate supervisors are expected to monitor their employees' attendance and take appropriate action when attendance problems occur. Leave is permitted only as specified in Board policy and subsequent procedures. It is in the best interest of the students and the educational process that all personnel be present at their assigned duty stations for each scheduled work day. Employees are warned that falsifying information on leave reports, including claiming personal disability when no disability exists, constitutes fraud and may be used as grounds for disciplinary action. Absences that do not comply with Board policy are prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to and including loss of salary, initiation of dismissal procedures for termination of employment, and/or reporting to the PSC.

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## ***Attendance Procedures***

1. Staff attendance will be monitored by the SIA/Secretary or designee of the school and reported to the Principal regularly.
2. Once a staff member accrues 5 days of leave (not including FMLA or Workers' Compensation), the Principal/Director or designee (which shall not be the SIA/Secretary) shall have a discussion with the employee notating the amount of leave and follow with an email to the employee describing the discussion, a medical note must be submitted after an accumulation of 5 days for any additional absences.
3. Once the employee has reached 10 days of leave (not including FMLA or Workers' Compensation), the CAO will send a letter or email notating the absences. The Principal or director will also receive a copy of the letter.
4. Once the employee reaches 15 days of leave (not including FMLA or Workers' Compensation), the employee will receive a letter as stated in #3 above. In addition, a meeting will be set with either the CAO or the Superintendent to discuss the absences and a future plan. This shall be considered the First Offense regarding a Corrective Action Plan. At this time, it is at the discretion of the Principal/Director to place/not place the employee under a corrective action plan.
5. Once an employee reaches 20 days of leave (not including FMLA or Workers' Compensation), the Principal/Director shall place the employee under a Corrective Action Plan-Second Offense.

## ***Definition of Unauthorized Leave***

Unauthorized leave is defined as non-performance of those duties and responsibilities assigned by the school system and its representatives, including all duties and responsibilities as defined by statutes, rules, and regulations of the State Board of Education, policies of the Board, and administrative regulations of this school system.

Such unauthorized leave may include, but is not limited to, refusal to provide service; unauthorized use of disability, personal, professional, family, vacation, or other board-provided leave; non-attendance at required meetings; and failure to provide supervisory functions at school-sponsored activities. An employee is deemed to be on unauthorized leave at such time and on such occasions as the employee may absent himself/herself from required duties.

## ***Authorized Unpaid Leave***

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

## ***Verification of Leave***

Employees anticipating an absence from duty that requires pre-approval must submit the request on the prescribed "Application for Leave" form in a timely manner as required by system regulations. All required documentation and follow-up reports, including "Application for Leave" forms for payroll posting, are the employee's responsibility and are necessary for the absence to qualify as "Authorized Leave." The Superintendent or the supervisor of the employee may require a physician's or other verification as to an

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employee's claimed reason for absence in any situation in which it is suspected that no valid grounds exist for the employee's claim for absence.

### ***Employment during Leave***

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

### ***Sick Leave***

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

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

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

Full-time professional personnel are eligible for paid sick leave at the rate of one and one-fourth (1 ¼) days for each contract or employment month completed. Sick leave shall accrue to a maximum of seventy-five (75) days. Regular part-time employees working less than 50% are entitled to paid sick leave in proportion to the amount of time worked if they serve in roles specifying their attendance being dictated by a set schedule working with students (for example, classroom teachers). Sick leave does not accumulate from year to year for part-time employees.

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

An employee absent because of illness for three (3) or more days must inform the principal or, his/her designee, or the employee's supervisor, of the extended absence and give the approximate date the employee will be able to resume his/her duties. Upon four (4) consecutive days of absence, the school system can apply Family and Medical Leave Act requirements to the employee's absence commencing on the first date of absence. [See [Policy GBRIG—Family Medical Leave](#)]

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

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

## **Sick Leave Bank**

See [Policy GBRIB \(1\)](#)

## **Bereavement Leave**

In the event of a death in the immediate family of an employee, leave will be charged against the employee's accumulated sick leave. Up to five (5) days of sick leave may be used for absence due to the death of an employee's spouse, children, father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, in-laws, or any relatives living in the employee's residence. Additional days may be requested from the Superintendent under extenuating circumstances.

## **Maternity Leave**

The district considers pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, and recovery therefrom as temporary disabilities for all job-related purposes. A pregnant employee may continue in active employment as late into her pregnancy as she desires, provided she can perform properly the required functions of her job. The Board shall make the final determination of the ability to perform properly. An employee wishing to work to the date of physical disability shall be entitled to the use of all accumulated sick leave credited to her, not to exceed the doctor's estimated length of physical disability.

Paid sick leave will run concurrently with Family Medical Leave.

See [Policy GBRIG—Family Medical Leave](#)

Generally, for the birth of a child, a female may use up to six (6) weeks (30 work days) for natural delivery or eight (8) weeks (40 work days) for Cesarean delivery following the actual birth date. Any "bonding time" beyond the 6-week period following birth (8 weeks for a cesarean) is not eligible for sick leave application. However, leave for "bonding time" may be subject to eligible Family Medical Leave. The 6-week or 8-week period referenced begins the date of delivery regardless of summer or holiday periods.

Before returning to work, a teacher who has been granted maternity leave must present a doctor's statement to the principal and personnel office that she is physically able to perform the required functions of her job.

## **Paid Parental Leave**

The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms:

1. An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:
  - a. The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and
  - b. The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.
2. A qualifying life event means:
  - a. The birth of a child of an eligible employee;
  - b. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
  - c. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.
3. The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12-month period is 240 hours, regardless of the number of

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qualifying life events that occur during such period.

a. The rolling 12-month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.

b. Parental leave may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than eight hours. The smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is a 1/4 day.

c. Any unused paid parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.

d. Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.

4. Paid parental leave under state law shall run concurrently with any leave provided under federal law.

Eligibility to use paid parental leave begins on the date of the qualifying event. Employees must provide documentation of one of the qualifying life events to be eligible.

Types of required documentation for each qualifying life event:

- The birth of a child- a physician's certification form indicating when the birth is estimated to occur and a birth certificate once the child is born.
- The placement of a minor child for adoption-certificate of adoption or related certifying documents and the actual date of the event.
- The placement of a minor child for foster care- GCAC of Georgia license, certificates varying the date the child was placed in the home.

### ***Family Medical Leave***

See [Policy GBRIG – Federal Family and Medical Leave Act](#)

### ***Personal Leave***

A maximum of three (3) days personal leave may be granted to each employee annually. Such leave may be used provided prior approval of the employee's absence is given by the principal/supervisor or his/her representative. Such leave shall be deducted from the employee's accumulated sick leave. Except in the case of emergencies beyond the employee's control, personal leave should be requested at least two (2) working days prior to the proposed leave date. If the absence is to occur on a Friday, a form must be filed with the supervisor at least one week prior to leave. Personal leave is designed to be used for the employee to conduct personal business which cannot be done at other times.

Except during the "critical" times listed below, employees are not required to disclose the specific reason for taking personal leave other than to specify that the absence is personal. Except in extreme emergencies or with the prior written approval of the employee's immediate supervisor, personal leave does not have to be granted at the following times:

- the work day immediately prior to or after a holiday or vacation;
- the first student day of the school year and the following five working days thereafter;
- the last student day of the school year and the preceding five working days thereof;
- pre-planning, conference, in-service, professional learning, and post-planning days;
- other critical days identified by the Superintendent or by the immediate supervisor.

Personal leave may be restricted at the discretion of the Superintendent or principal at any time, but especially in the event three or more leave requests are submitted for the same day. Deductions for any days of personal leave beyond three (3) will be at a prorated portion of the employee's salary. **Use of sick leave as a substitution is not permitted.**

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## ***Vacation Leave***

See [Policy GBRK – Professional Personnel Vacations](#)

## ***Professional Leave***

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

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

Requests for professional leave should be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor at least five working days prior to the requested leave date(s). To be reimbursed for expenses incurred and a credit earned while on professional leave, the employee must have prior approval for the reimbursement and submit the request on the approved system form immediately after the leave (form in appendix).

All reimbursement requests must be submitted along with any required documentation by June 30 for each fiscal year.

## ***Unpaid Medical Leave (Leave after FMLA)***

### **Employees Eligible for Leave Under the Family and Medical Leave Act**

Employees who are unable to return to work due to medical necessity at the end of an approved leave in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act may be authorized for unpaid medical leave (UML) for their personal illness for a period of time up to 365 calendar days from the initial date of the approved medical leave.

Under the UML status, the employee continues as an active employee of the school district with all rights afforded to active employees. However, the employee's previous position will be declared a vacant position and may be filled. Employees on UML will be given the option to make monthly payments to cover the cost of their insurance premiums and other coverages on or before a predetermined day of each month to ensure timely processing. Failure to make these payments will result in cancellation of the benefit for the period of non-payment.

Prior to returning to work, employees on UML will be required to submit a healthcare provider's certification that verifies the employee's ability to return to work and perform the essential functions of his/her position. UML may continue even after medical certification is received depending upon the availability of an appropriate, available position for which the employee is qualified to assume. Employees returning to work from UML will be offered reassigned positions based on the order of receipt of medical documentation that confirms their ability to return to work and the availability of appropriate positions.

Reasonable efforts will be undertaken to assign employees who are able to return to work at any time prior to the end of their approved 365 days of UML status upon receipt of medical certification of the employee's ability to return to work from the employee's health care

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provider. This placement may not necessarily be the position the employee held prior to UML. Persons who are unable to return to work at the end of the UML will be separated from employment.

Classified employees who fail to return to work at the end of the unpaid medical leave will be separated from employment. Certified employees who are unable to return to work may or may not be recommended for a contract for the next school year.

### ***Field Trips***

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

### ***Jury Duty or Witness Leave***

All school system employees shall be allowed a leave of absence without loss of pay and without deduction of any amounts otherwise received as compensation for service as an employee for the purpose of attending judicial proceedings in response to a subpoena, summons for jury duty, or other court order or process which requires the attendance of the employee at the judicial proceeding. The employee must notify his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible after the employee has been served with the summons for jury duty or subpoena to appear in a judicial proceeding. Employees who serve as jurors shall not have jury leave deducted from sick or personal leave. Employees who qualify for this leave may retain any juror or witness compensation. No employee utilizing this leave will be required to pay the cost of obtaining a substitute to serve during his or her absence.

### ***Military Leave***

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

In the event the Governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to active duty as a member of the National Guard, such employee shall be paid his/her salary or other compensation while performing such duty for a period not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one calendar year and not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one continuous period of such state of active duty service.

A request for military leave must be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor and the appropriate personnel administrator promptly upon receipt of orders. A copy of the employee's official military or National Guard orders must accompany the request.

### ***Procedures for Handling Bodily Fluids***

All employees of the school system shall exercise care in handling body fluids, regardless of whether infected persons are in attendance. Soiled surfaces shall be promptly cleaned with disinfectants, such as household bleach (diluted one part bleach to 10 parts water).

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Disposable towels or tissues shall be used whenever possible, and all cleaning equipment shall be disinfected after use. Those who are cleaning should avoid exposure to **open skin lesions or mucous membranes to any body fluids.**

### ***Infectious Diseases***

See [Policy JGCC – Infectious Diseases](#)

## **Section 5 - Public Relations & Communications**

### ***Community***

The Haralson County Board of Education believes that the establishment of goodwill toward the schools is the mutual responsibility of every employee. Haralson County taxpayers support the schools and have a right to know what is going on in our schools. If community members understand why certain things are done, they are much more likely to help solve many problems. Every person should be generous in explaining the principles behind what he or she is doing. The premise that “Good teaching is good public relations” serves our system well. A majority of the public forms its judgment of schools based on what it hears from the children attending them. The teacher’s attitude toward children and their parents helps to determine the attitude of the community toward the schools and toward the teachers.

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

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

School cannot live apart from its community. Good community relations are dependent upon good public relations. Staff members can help by informing the local school principal of any ideas or suggestions for community relations, by telling of any unique or interesting programs going on in the system, and by remembering that public relations is a function of EACH person within the school system. Please remember that when you speak about your school, you are considered the expert; your opinion is highly valued. Professional disagreements will occur, and open discussion with other thoughtful professionals is a valuable component of school improvement. Those disagreements, however, should take place in context, confidence, and, above all, in a professional manner.

### ***Telephone Use***

Haralson County Schools’ telephones and fax machines are designated for school business purposes to serve the interests of our stakeholders and the course of school operations. On occasion, personal calls may be necessary, but there is an expectation that these calls are not excessive and that they are limited to essential business and emergencies that cannot be taken care of at any other time. In this day of the availability of cell phones, employees are urged to use their own personal cell phone to conduct personal business outside of instructional hours. This includes, but is not limited to, accessing internet sites (i.e.,

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Facebook, etc.). Personal long-distance calls on system phones are prohibited.

### ***Parent Relations***

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

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

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

It is critically important that each teacher keep his/her electronic grade book up-to-date. Parents may request conferences with their children's teachers at any time. Parents of students who fail a course for the grading period must have been notified of the student's below-passing performance at least once during the grading period.

Grade information and academic performance are strictly confidential. Students' grades should never be discussed with or made available to anyone other than the students and their parents or guardians.

### ***Rebel Alert (Crisis Communication Call/Text System)***

The school system uses a voice messaging service to communicate with parents and the staff about important happenings. The system (or school) can contact every parent via a telephone message simultaneously within about 5 minutes. Staff members are often contacted via this means as well about important announcements such as school closings and emergency situations. The school must have on file a current and valid phone number for each staff member. Only authorized personnel are set up to send out a message. However, sponsors and teachers can write up a message and have an authorized user send it out. See your principal for more information.

### ***Visitors***

For safety reasons, all schools operate as closed campuses. Parents or guardians are always welcome visitors to our schools. All visitors must report to the main office immediately upon arrival on campus. School staff should vigorously monitor the school building and campus to ensure that no individual or group comes onto the campus or into the building without authorization.

### ***Employee ID Badges***

All Haralson County School District employees should have an ID picture badge. Every

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employee will wear a badge at all times. Lost or misplaced badges should be replaced immediately at the cost of \$10.00 to the employee. For security purposes, administrative consequences for failure to wear the badge may be implemented. Contact the Human Resources Office for arrangements to replace a lost badge.

### ***Surplus Property***

See [Policy – DO – School Properties Disposal Procedures](#)

### ***Facility Modification/Changes***

No modifications, changes, or improvements of any kind, cosmetic or structural, will be made to Haralson County School facilities without the prior approval of the Superintendent. This includes painting hallways, classrooms, windows, relocating cabinets, shelving, etc. When in doubt, consult with the principal.

### ***Distribution of Lists***

A list of students or teachers may not be distributed to persons or organizations outside of the school system without the approval of the Superintendent or designee. Phone numbers and addresses are considered private information and should not be given out to those outside the system without written approval.

## **Section 6 – Certification**

### ***Certificate Responsibility***

The certificate is a most important document as it relates to employment. Professional employees must possess a valid in-field Georgia certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). It is each employee's responsibility to know the status of his/her certification and to keep all provisions current, including requirements to renew the certificate. Important aspects of this responsibility are in-field provisions, expiration date, requirements for renewal, and procedure for renewal. Neither the Haralson County School Board nor its staff accepts responsibility for omissions regarding an individual's certificate. Certification through PSC is ultimately the full responsibility of the employee. The school system, through the district office Personnel Department and the Chief Administrative Officer, will assist teachers with certification questions and issues. The school district is not obligated to request any certification waiver from PSC rules or requirements.

The Haralson County School District does not evaluate transcripts nor make course recommendations. State law mandates that each employee must continue to hold a current in-field certificate. The district must have on file the most recent, valid certificate from each certificated employee. Failure to keep a current certificate may be grounds for termination or nonrenewal of contract. An employee with a nonrenewable certificate must take appropriate and necessary steps to change the certificate to a Clear, Renewable Certificate as soon as possible. Failure to secure a Clear Renewable Certificate may constitute grounds for nonrenewal, termination, or pay adjustment. Teachers may access the PSC website @ [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com). Certification is classified according to type, title, level field, and category.

### ***Types of certification***

- Teaching
- Service
- Leadership
- CTAE
- Permit
- Paraprofessional

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See the GAPSC.com website for specifics on [tiered certification](#).

The level of certification indicates the completion of minimal formal requirements for the field, including earned degrees; these range from 1 to 7.

Certificates must be renewed every five years by completing a background check and the required professional learning for your position and signed off by your supervisor.

Professional Learning funds and or in-house professional development courses may be available beyond school-based professional learning. Contact your direct supervisor and then the Teaching/Learning Department at the District Office.

Teachers can now electronically change the name or address on certificates. Teachers wishing to make such a change should log onto [MyPSC.com](#) and make the appropriate changes/corrections. Changes will be immediate and shown on the next certificate issued.

Teachers without proper certification will be paid on the substitute teacher salary schedule until the payroll office receives appropriate certification. Once certification is received, salary will be recalculated accordingly to include all monies due from the time of the certificate's issue date.

### **GACE**

As a requirement for Georgia Certification as of July 1, 1997, any individual applying for certification in a specific field must post a passing score on the appropriate GACE test. Costs for test packages vary depending on the specific field. For most of the teaching fields, two tests will be required. Test dates, sites, and information are available from the Personnel Department. Currently, no walk-in testing is available. Additional information may be found at <https://www.gace.ets.org/>

### **"Professional Qualifications" Status**

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) requires that all teachers be "professionally qualified."

To be considered "professionally qualified" in Haralson County School District, teachers must be certified to teach by the PSC, must have demonstrated content knowledge of the subject(s) being taught [evidence of specialized training, such as an academic major in the subject and a passing score on an approved subject area exam (i.e., TCT, Praxis II, GACE, or acceptable equivalent)], and be teaching in their field of certification.

In agreement with your contract of employment with the Board, all certified staff must obtain appropriate certification and meet "professionally qualified" requirements. Teachers who do not meet "professionally qualified" requirements must take appropriate and necessary steps to become professionally qualified in the most prudent and timely manner. Failure to become professionally qualified may constitute grounds for non-renewal or termination.

Additionally, paraprofessionals must meet the "professionally qualified" requirements by having completed at least two years (60 semester hours) of college, possessing a college degree, or passing an approved paraprofessional test.

Questions about "professionally qualified" requirements and status may be directed to the Personnel Department or the Chief Administrative Officer.

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## Section 7 - Curriculum & Instruction

### **Field Trips**

See [Policy IFCB - Field Trips and Excursions](#)

A field trip is to be taken only in connection with the approved curriculum in which students are engaged.

Teachers should consider the impact of any such experience in the learning process. It is the responsibility of the individual teacher or sponsor to make all arrangements for field trips. However, such plans must be cleared with the Principal and forwarded to the Chief Academic Officer. All overnight trips must be forwarded to the Superintendent for approval and presentation to the Board of Education before final arrangements are confirmed, students are notified, or funds are encumbered.

Trips should be planned so that there is no conflict with other school or system-wide activities or initiatives. Trips should not be planned during test windows and should be planned in order to be back on campus no later than 2:00 p.m. for the buses to refuel for afternoon routes.

The teacher must complete and submit the Field Trip Request Form to the principal for any field trip. The teacher must contact the proposed place of visitation and make all confirmed arrangements including, but not limited to, date, time of arrival and departure, cost(s) per pupil and/or cost(s) per adult, and any other pertinent information. The teacher must determine transportation costs, admission prices, etc., and include this information on the approval form. No child should be excluded due to their inability to pay. The teacher shall engage students in thorough pre-planning and follow-up activities aligned with the curriculum standards for any field trip.

No student will be permitted to go on a field trip without a permission slip signed by the parent or guardian. It is the teacher's responsibility to see that each student in the class is furnished with a permission slip. The teacher shall make instructional and supervisory arrangements for any student who does not go on the field trip. The teacher is responsible for the conduct of students at all times during trips. Repeated behavior referrals on a student or where there exists a safety risk or danger to others may result in the principal denying that student the privilege of attending a field trip. Denial of field trips is an administrative decision, and parents must be notified if this loss of privilege occurs. Students affected by this decision will have appropriate alternative assignments at school on the day of the field trip. The teacher is responsible for checking student attendance before leaving the school grounds, before departure from the destination, and throughout the trip. Adequate faculty chaperones for the entire trip shall be provided as follows:

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

Overnight and/or out-of-state field trips must be approved by the Board of Education. These requests should be submitted in writing with the approval of the principal in adequate time to be added to the board agenda. Out-of-country trips are not sponsored by the Haralson County School Board. If school employees acting as individuals wish to sponsor such trips outside the school calendar, it must be made clear that these trips are not sponsored by the school or by the Haralson County Board of Education. School time and materials cannot be used in advertising or planning these types of trips.

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## **Grading**

Haralson County Schools supports standards-based grading practices in grades K-2. Numeric grades are used in all classes from grades 3 to 12.

## **Testing**

End-of-grade (EOG) tests are administered in grades 3-8. End-of-course (EOC) tests are administered in grades 9-12 for selected courses. The Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program (GKIDS) is administered to kindergarten students. Work Sampling Online (WSO) is the prekindergarten assessment system. ACCESS is for ELL students. The district testing calendar can be viewed online at [www.haralson.k12.ga.us](http://www.haralson.k12.ga.us).

## **Make-Up Work**

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

For overall academic progress, students are expected to do the work they miss during suspension. Students shall be allowed to make up missed work during an out-of-school suspension. The student shall have at least the same number of days to make up said work plus one day as he/she was suspended subject to the schedule of the teacher(s). For example, if a student is suspended for three days, he/she will have at least three days to make up the work beginning the second day back after the suspension. It is the student's responsibility to find out from the teacher what he/she is responsible for and to make arrangements with the teacher(s). Individual teachers shall have the right to exempt a student from daily grades, which may have limited bearing on the student's final grade average. Students shall not be penalized in their academic grade for the first suspension of a full credit period (semester for grades 9-12 and year for grades 3-8) if the student makes up the work in the time allotted by this policy and arrangements with the teacher. For subsequent suspensions in a full grading period, a student may receive a grade of no higher than "70" on graded work missed during an out-of-school suspension and made up within the time allotted by this policy and arrangements with the teacher(s) except for final examinations and long-term assignments. If the student fails to make up the work, the teacher may assign a grade of "0" for each incomplete assignment. Long-term assignments such as research projects and papers assigned before and due during suspension may be turned in on the day the student returns from suspension without penalty. Long-term assignments made during a suspension are due on the assigned due date.

## **Instructional Materials**

Core instructional materials for each classroom and/or course shall be free to all students and are the property of the Haralson County Schools. The selection of core instructional material, including textbooks, supplementary materials, and reference materials, shall be carried on continuously to keep up with the great expansion of knowledge and the rapid changes in our world today. The materials selection process shall be based on projected teaching strategies and learning activities. A textbook selection committee shall be established in each content area at a time when there is consideration for adapting materials for that area or at a time when a review of materials is appropriate. The committee shall comprise representatives from the school system who would be impacted the most by an adoption.

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## ***Lesson Plans***

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

## ***Multi-Tiered Support Systems (MTSS)***

MTSS is an organizational, systematic, three-tier prevention framework that guides the HCSD implementation of multi-level supports to achieve academic and behavioral success for all students. MTSS is data-driven; screenings are administered to identify and predict students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes or who experience social/emotional needs and/or behavioral concerns that impact learning. Once students are identified, they receive specific and tiered interventions to help the student reach their maximum potential. Students are routinely monitored for progress to determine if the interventions need to be adjusted (intensify, select new, or continue). The MTSS framework incorporates Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Response to Intervention (RTI) and Student Support Team (SST). All students are supported through the HCSD MTSS structure of support and instruction.

## **Section 8 - Professional Learning**

The purpose of professional learning activities is to enhance the capabilities of staff members to provide educational services to the students of Haralson County. Professional learning is also designed to address the needs of school system personnel as identified through the annual personnel evaluation process and to meet other needs as identified. The school system has a professional learning committee to ensure that the activities provided meet the assessed program needs of the school system. Each school should have a professional learning committee assigned to evaluate professional learning opportunities and develop a written plan for the school.

### ***Expense Reimbursement***

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

### ***Travel Regulations and Reimbursement***

Approval from the principal or immediate supervisor must be obtained before a professional employee travels during school time on professional leave, whether or not he/she expects travel reimbursement. If the employee desires reimbursement or travels outside the school system, written approval must be obtained. All employees MUST successfully complete the district's travel module before their expense quote can be approved. Reimbursement for official travel will be made in compliance with Statewide Travel Regulations. An individual will be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred while traveling on approved school system business. It is a regulation of Haralson County School District that employees

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carpool and share rooms whenever possible.

Allowable Travel Expenses:

1. Meals- receipts are not required for reimbursement. Only the maximum allowable will be paid for meals if meals are not provided at the meeting, at the hotel, or by another person
2. Lodging- confirmation required for check request prior to travel
3. Mileage- odometer reading
4. Parking, toll fees, and miscellaneous expenses- **receipt required**
5. Travel by public transportation (plane, train, rental, car, taxi, shuttle)-**receipt required**
6. Meal allowances are \$50 per day

Travel expenses for non-employed chaperones or students do not qualify for reimbursement from the Haralson County Board of Education. They must be paid through individual school activity accounts. Travel allowances are the same as those for board employees. (Your school's bookkeeper can tell you which expenses will be reimbursed from an activity account.)

Haralson County School District will not reimburse for state or county/ municipal taxes on hotel bills. To be exempt from state taxes, the employee must request a district check in the exact amount of the hotel bill at least one month before traveling and take the county/municipal tax-exempt form and the state-exempt form, with the check to the hotel for check-in. These forms should be presented to the clerk when checking in. If the Hotel/Motel will not accept the tax exemption forms, have the attendant sign the bottom of the form & write (will not accept). You must return this form(s) with your travel expense statement to get reimbursement for County and Municipal tax. Detailed hotel bills (showing ALL charges and payments) must be attached to the travel expense statement to be reimbursed. It is requested by the Haralson County School District that rooms be shared when possible. When sharing a room with another person, note his/her name(s) on the expense statement. You may ask the hotel to divide the cost of the room at the time of check-in or note who paid for the room so that we can adjust the travel expense appropriately.

A pre-approved copy of the Professional Leave Request Form must be attached to the expense statement. The expense statement should then be signed by the employee requesting reimbursement, the Principal, the Professional Learning Director, and the Superintendent before being sent to the Accounting Department for processing.

According to Statewide Travel Regulations, the mileage rate is \$0.67 per mile (this is subject to change). To be reimbursed for mileage, the beginning and ending odometer readings must be included on your travel expense statement for the mileage-only form. Allowable miles begin from your work location or your home- whichever is closer to the destination. However, when traveling to or from your home, you will not be allowed to claim the number of miles between your home and your normal place of work. Personal use miles while in travel status are not allowable, such as going to/from restaurants, malls, etc.

The Haralson County Board of Education does not pay travel expenses in advance except for a check written to the hotel. A professional leave form must be approved in advance by all appropriate parties. When traveling overnight, expense statements should be submitted within a week of returning from your trip. Frequent daytime travel must be turned in once a month. A copy of the professional leave form, travel expense statement, and hotel/motel tax exemption forms can be found at <http://www.haralson.k12.ga.us/ProfessionalLearning.aspx>.

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## ***Professional Organizations***

Employees are encouraged to consider membership in professional organizations and associations that support the school system's goals and philosophy. GAE (Georgia Association of Educators) and PAGE (Professional Association of Georgia Educators) offer automatic payroll deductions for membership dues.

## **Section 9 – Students**

### ***Discipline***

See [Policy JCD – Student Conduct](#)

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

### ***Punishment***

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a means of discipline in the Haralson County School District.

Causes of infractions of rules and departures from good behavior should be analyzed, and correction should be sought by improving causal factors before punishment is invoked. Study of individual differences, conferences with students and parents, and assistance from the school administration and specialists within the school system should be the teacher's first thought in attempting to help a student correct behavior patterns that may delay his/her development and which may interfere with the rights of others. Students should not be punished in a way that has a direct effect on their academic standing.

### ***Classroom Environment***

Teaching children to be neat and to have proper respect for public property is one of the duties of the teacher. Teachers should not assume that students should know how to behave and take care of things. Make sure they know this valuable characteristic by teaching them. The teacher is expected to ensure that students are not destructive of school property, including books, materials, equipment, and furnishings.

### ***Display of Flags and Pledge of Allegiance***

The official flags of the United States of America and the State of Georgia are to be displayed conspicuously and appropriately by each school. In the Haralson County School District, students must be given the opportunity to pledge allegiance to the United States flag during a scheduled period of the day. The teacher will either lead the pledge or appoint a student to lead it. Students from various school organizations may lead the pledge each day using the school's public address systems. Students have a right to choose not to pledge allegiance but must not distract from the participation of others. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to monitor the participation of the students within the individual classroom to assure that a sense of decorum is maintained.

### ***Moment of Reflection***

In compliance with Georgia law, at the opening of school on every school day in each public school classroom within the Haralson County School District, the teacher in charge shall

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conduct a brief period of silent reflection for not more than 60 seconds with the participation of all the students. This moment of silent reflection is not intended to be a religious service or exercise but shall be considered an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day. Teachers and administrators shall not suggest or imply that students should or should not use the moment of reflection for prayer, nor shall they deny to any student the right to use it for a moment of silent prayer. Students and/or staff may not, under any circumstances, use the moment for silent reflection to audibly pray singly or in unison.

### ***Investigations and Searches***

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

The Board authorizes reasonable searches of students directed to that end by authorized school officials. Searches based on reasonable suspicion may proceed without hindrance or delay, but they shall be conducted in a manner that ensures that students maintain their personal privacy.

The Board authorizes random searches of board-owned property such as lockers, desks, and other property that may be assigned to students. If called upon to do so, the authorized person conducting the exercise shall be able to explain to the satisfaction of the Superintendent that no bias as to gender, religion, or race entered the selection process.

The administrator of each school, or an authorized representative, possesses the authority to inspect students' persons and personal property. Such search shall be based on a reasonable suspicion of the presence of banned items. If reasonable suspicion exists, student cars brought on campus, student book bags, school lockers, desks, and other school property shall be subject to inspection and search by school authorities at all times without further notice to students or parents. The decision to search a student, personal property, or assigned school property shall be made by the school administration. The search shall be made in the presence of at least one adult employee witness.

### ***Transportation***

Employees are not to transport students in any vehicle other than system vehicles and only under authorized conditions.

### ***Solicitations by Students***

See [Policy JK – Solicitations](#)

All school-related fundraising activities involving students must have the prior written approval of the principal and the Board. There will be no authorized sales during the instructional part of the school day involving students. An approval form for an organized fundraising activity should be obtained from the principal's office. Students are not to be involved in selling merchandise for the benefit of individuals or outside school organizations while on the school campus or on the bus. In order to safeguard their health and safety, students are prohibited from selling items or soliciting contributions, pledges, donations, or orders door-to-door for the school or any school-related organization.

### ***False Accusation***

A student shall not falsify, misrepresent, omit, or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a school employee toward a student. Such false accusations are prohibited both on and off school grounds and hours. Employees

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specifically aware of such accusations should report it to the school principal immediately.

### ***Solicitations of Students***

See [Policy JKA - Solicitations of Students](#)

### ***Child Abuse***

See [Policy JGI - Child Abuse or Neglect](#)

### ***Teacher Authority in the Classroom***

See [Policy JDF – Teacher Authority to Remove Students from Classrooms](#)

### ***Procedure for removal of a student***

The teacher shall file with the school administrator a report of one page or less by the end of the school day on which such removal occurs or at the beginning of the next school day. The administrator will, within one school day after the student's removal from class, send to the student's parent/guardian a written notification that the student was removed from class by the teacher, a copy of the report filed by the teacher, and information regarding how the student's parent/guardian may contact the administrator. If a teacher removes a student pursuant to this policy, the administrator shall discuss the matter with the teacher and the student by the end of the school day on the day the removal occurs or at the beginning of the next school day. If, after such discussions, the administrator seeks to return the student to the teacher's class and the teacher gives his/her consent, the student shall be returned to class. The principal may take disciplinary action as may be warranted. If, however, the teacher withholds his/her consent to such a return, the administrator shall determine a temporary placement for the student and shall take steps to convene a meeting of a placement review committee. An appropriate temporary placement for the student shall be a placement that, in the judgment of the principal, provides the least interruption of the student's education and reflects other relevant factors, including, but not limited to, the severity of the behavior that was the basis for the removal, the student's discipline record, the student's need for support services, and the available education setting; provided, however, that the student shall not be returned to the class of the referring teacher. The placement review committee shall immediately convene following such removal and issue a decision by the end of the third school day following such removal. The temporary placement shall be in place until the review committee considers the matter and a placement determination is made. If the student is served in Special Education, his/her IEP team shall serve as the placement review committee and determine the placement of the student.

Each school shall establish annually one or more placement review committees, each of which is to be composed of 3 members. For each committee established, the faculty shall choose two teachers and one teacher as an alternate. The principal shall choose one member of the certified staff to serve as a member. Neither administrators nor the teacher withholding consent may serve on the committee. The placement committee shall have the authority to return the student to the teacher's class upon determining that such placement is the best alternative or the only available alternative. If the committee does not return the student to the class, the principal may employ any of the following or a combination thereof:

1. Place the student into another appropriate classroom or alternative education program,
2. Impose out-of-school suspension for not more than 10 days
3. Make another placement or disciplinary decision or recommendation, or
4. Implement or recommend any appropriate combination of the above and return the student to the class from which he/she was removed upon completion of the

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disciplinary action.

If the teacher refers a second student under these procedures, that teacher shall be provided professional development on classroom management.

## **Section 10 - Complaints & Grievances**

See [Policy GAE - Complaints & Grievances](#)

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

### ***Reprisals Prohibited***

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

### ***Forms***

Forms for submitting a claim under the provisions of this policy are online at [www.haralson.k12.ga.us](http://www.haralson.k12.ga.us) or the School Board Policies online at [eBoard](#).

## **Section 11 – References**

### ***Haralson County Board of Education Policies***

The Haralson County Board of Education is governed by policies set forth by the Georgia State Board of Education and state law. Haralson County Board of Education policy manual contains rules and guidelines that relate to all aspects of school operations.

All policies in their full text are available on the system website with a link to the GSBA (Georgia School Boards Association) e-Policy website. Go to the [Haralson County Schools website](#) select eBoard, and then Board Policy. On the [GSBA site](#), under the header "Select a Policy Section," there is a drop-down menu to access all Haralson County Board policies. Employees are encouraged to be familiar with the policies and be aware of all implications or changes of policy. Changes in Board policy take official action on the part of the Board of Education. Any changes are recorded in the minutes of the Board and Board highlights/summaries sent out by the district office after a Board meeting. Contact the Office of the Superintendent if you have any questions related to board policies.

### ***Haralson County Board of Education Meetings***

The Haralson County School Board of Education regularly meets the second Tuesday of each month in the BoardRoom at the District Office, 299 Robertson Avenue, Tallapoosa, GA 30176.

A schedule of the meeting dates, places, and times is posted at the front door of the District Office at the above address and online at [eBoard](#). The meeting begins at 6:00 p.m.

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

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# Employee Acknowledgement

I have received information relative to the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and understand that the Haralson County Board of Education mandates my adherence to this policy. I further understand that violating this policy will result in disciplinary action(s) against me.

I understand that any conviction for a drug-related offense must be reported by written notification to the Superintendent of Schools within five (5) calendar days following the court's final disposition.

***I have read and understand the contents of the Haralson County School District Personnel Handbook. Checking this statement on the Target Solutions website, where the HCSD handbook is located, will be the employee's electronic signature.***

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Employee Signature

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Printed Name

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Date

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