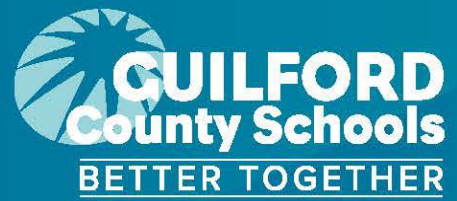




Employee Handbook

Updated July 2024



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**Guilford County
students will
graduate as
responsible
citizens prepared
to succeed in
higher education,
or in the career of
their choice.**

Vision

Transforming learning
and life outcomes for
all students

CORE VALUES

Diversity

We believe the different experiences individuals bring to our schools are strengths. Embracing diverse cultures, perspectives and abilities enables students and adults to feel valued and safe, a key prerequisite for learning and growth. We are committed to providing an environment where students and staff from all cultures and backgrounds can succeed.

Empathy

We are committed to developing a culture where our employees identify with and understand the feelings of our students and parents as well as their colleagues.

Equity

We are committed to creating equitable and inclusive schools where adults take ownership for student learning outcomes and make sure students have what they need to succeed in school and in life. We will acknowledge and dismantle systems, processes and mindsets that perpetuate race, poverty, disability and English language status as predictors of achievement. We will align resources to create equitable opportunities for students and employees. We will eradicate achievement gaps.

Innovation

We are committed to fostering a work environment where the goal is not to manage innovations, but to become innovative. Problems are identified, ownership of those problems is assumed by the adults in the district and everyone works together as agents of the solution until the problems are solved. We will not stop until obstacles are removed, solutions found, and clear and compelling goals are established.

Integrity

We are committed to creating a school district that acts with honesty and forthrightness, holding ourselves to high academic and ethical standards, and dealing with everyone with respect.

Welcome!

Your Employee Handbook for Guilford County Schools

To employees new to our district team, “welcome” and to returning faculty and staff “welcome back”. We look forward to another successful year. We revise the Employee Handbook each year to provide up-to-date information regarding your employment with the school district. We provide you with highlights of the information you need regarding what you can expect from the district and what we can expect from you. Please note that each school may have site-based guidelines not contained in this handbook or official Board documents. Additionally, district-wide divisions and departments (e.g. Payroll) may have their own procedures. Please ensure that understand and observe applicable laws, policies and procedures. Copies of our policies and procedures are available at each school, other work sites and on the school district’s Website.

Please note that Guilford County Schools’ policies and procedures, whether contained in this handbook, are not an employment contract nor are they terms of an employment contract. The school district’s employees (other than employees in positions covered by North Carolina General Statute 115C-325, or employees who have specific employment contracts) are employees at will. This means the employee or the school district has the right to end the relationship at any time, with or without reason.

Please be attentive to changes in policies and/or procedures implemented during the year. Because we always seek to improve the usefulness of this handbook, you are encouraged to send written suggestions or ideas regarding its content to feedback@gcsnc.com.

Please accept our best wishes for a great year and we appreciate your dedication to the students of Guilford County Schools.

Shirley Morrison Ed.D.

Chief Human Resources Officer

Handbook Goal and Confirmation of Receipt

Our goal for this handbook is to answer your questions about employment-related matters, benefits and procedures. Please read it carefully. It is important to note that this handbook is general in its coverage of Guilford County Schools' policies and procedures. Also, please review the published policies of the Board of Education and comply with regulations developed by the district to support these policies. You can find the board policies on the GCS website at www.gcsnc.com. While this handbook summarizes provisions about employment, benefits and related subjects, the information is subject to change and board policies and regulations will always be the governing reference. GCS confirms your receipt of the handbook through the acknowledgment that you have access to it on our website and email.

At Will Employment

North Carolina is an at-will employment state, which means that the district has discretion to end employment. Unless your termination violates a specific law or violates the terms of your contract, the district can terminate you for any reason. This handbook does not create or imply a contract.

Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to define standards of professional conduct. The responsibility to teach, the freedom to learn, and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all are essential to the achievement of these principles. The professional educator acknowledges the worth and dignity of every person and demonstrates the pursuit of truth and devotion to excellence, acquires knowledge, and nurtures democratic citizenship. The educator strives to maintain the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents and legal guardians, and the community, and to serve as an appropriate role model. The educator exemplifies a commitment to the teaching and learning processes with accountability to the students, maintains professional growth, exercises professional judgment, and personifies integrity. To uphold these commitments, the educator demonstrates a:

Commitment to the Student

- Protects students from conditions within the educator's control that circumvent learning or are detrimental to the health and safety of students.
- Maintains an appropriate relationship with students in all settings; does not encourage, solicit, or engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with students, nor touch a student in an inappropriate way for personal gratification, with intent to harm, or out of anger.
- Evaluates students and assigns grades based upon the students' demonstrated competencies and performance.
- Disciplines students justly and fairly and does not deliberately embarrass or humiliate them.
- Holds in confidence information learned in professional practice except for professional reasons or in compliance with pertinent regulations or statutes.
- Refuses to accept significant gifts, favors, or additional compensation that might influence or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

Commitment to the School and School System

- Utilizes available resources to provide a classroom climate conducive to learning and to promote learning to the maximum possible extent.
- Acknowledges the diverse views of students, parents and legal guardians, and decisions; does not proselytize for personal viewpoints that are outside the scope of professional practice.

- Signs a contract in good faith and does not abandon contracted professional duties without a substantive reason.
- Participates actively in professional decision-making processes and supports the expression of professional opinions and judgments by colleagues in decision-making processes or due process proceedings.

Commitment to the Profession

- Provides accurate credentials and information regarding licensure or employment and does not knowingly assist others in providing untruthful information.
- Takes action to remedy an observed violation of the Code of Ethics of North Carolina Educators and promotes understanding of the principles of professional ethics.
- Pursues growth and development in the practice of the profession and uses that knowledge in improving the educational opportunities, experiences, and performance of students and colleagues.

Prepared by the NC Professional Practices Commission
Adopted by the State Board of Education 1997

Standards of Professional Conduct for North Carolina Educators

The standards listed here represent the professional conduct that shall be the basis for Guilford County Schools and the North Carolina State Board of Education review for the performance of educators. These standards shall establish mandatory prohibitions and requirements for all educators and employees of Guilford County Schools (hereby referred to as educators). Violation of these standards shall subject an educator to investigation and disciplinary action by Guilford County Schools or the State Board of Education. Educators shall adhere to the standards of professional conduct contained and represented by these standards. Any intentional act or omission that violates these standards is prohibited.

Generally Recognized Professional Standards

Educators shall practice the professional standards of federal, state, and local governing bodies.

Personal Conduct

Educators shall serve as a positive role model for students, parents, and the community. Because the educator is entrusted with the care and education of small children and adolescents, the educator shall demonstrate a high standard of personal character and conduct.

Honesty

Educators shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties including the following:

- Statement of professional qualifications

- Application or recommendation for professional employment, promotion, or licensure
- Application or recommendation for college or university admission, scholarship, grant, academic award, or similar benefit
- Representation of completion of college or staff development credit
- Evaluation or grading of student or personnel
- Submission of information in the course of an official inquiry by Guilford County Schools or the State Board related to facts of unprofessional conduct, provided, however, that an educator shall be given adequate notice of the allegations and may be represented by legal counsel; and
- Submission of information in the course of an investigation by a law enforcement agency, child protective services, or any other agency with the right to investigate, regarding school-related criminal activity; provided, however, that an educator shall be entitled to decline to give evidence to law enforcement if such evidence may tend to incriminate the educator as that term is defined by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Conduct with Students

Educators shall treat all students with respect. Educators shall not commit any abusive act or sexual exploitation with, to, or in the presence of a student, whether or not that student is or has been under the care or supervision of that educator, as defined below:

- Any use of language that is considered profane, vulgar, or demeaning
- Any sexual act
- Any solicitation of a sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical
- Any act of child abuse, as defined by law
- Any act of sexual harassment, as defined by law and
- Any intentional solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student, or any sexual contact with a student. The term “romantic relationship” shall include dating any student.



Confidential Information

Educators shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information regarding students or their family members that is obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law or professional standards, or is necessary for the personal safety of the student or others.

Rights of Others

Educators shall not willfully or maliciously violate the constitutional or civil rights of a student, parent/legal guardian, or colleague.

Required Reports

Educators shall make all reports required by Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Alcohol or Other Controlled Substance

Educators shall not:

- Be under the influence of, possess, use, or consume on school premises or at a school sponsored activity a controlled substance as defined by North Carolina General Statutes 90-95, the Controlled Substances Act, without a prescription authorizing such use.
- Be under the influence of, possess, use, or consume an alcoholic beverage or a controlled substance on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity involving students or
- Furnish alcohol or a controlled substance to any student except as indicated in the professional duties of administering legally prescribed medications.

Compliance with Criminal Laws

Educators shall not commit any act referred to in North Carolina General Statute 115C-332 and any felony under the laws of the United States or of any state.

Public Funds and Property

Educators shall not misuse public funds or property, funds of a school-related organization, or colleague's funds. Educators shall account for funds collected from students, colleagues, or parents/legal guardians. Educators shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

Scope of Professional Practice

Educators shall not perform any act as an employee in a position for which licensure is required by the rules of the SBE or by Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes during any period in which the educator's license has been suspended or evoked.

Conduct Related to Ethical Violations

Educators shall not directly or indirectly use or threaten to use any official authority or influence in an y manner that tends to discourage, restrain, interfere with, coerce, or discriminate against any subordinate or any licensee who in good faith reports, discloses, divulges, or otherwise brings to the attention of Guilford County Schools, the State Board, or any other public agency authorized to take remedial action, any facts or information relative to actual or suspected violation of any law regulating the duties of persons serving in the public school system, including but not limited to these standards.

Nondiscrimination Policy and Equal Employment

Opportunity

The Guilford County Board of Education believes in the dignity of all individuals and the worth of their labors. To this end, the board will ensure that all applicants for employment and all employees are employed, assigned, supervised, promoted, compensated and terminated in full compliance with state and federal equal opportunity statutes. No applicant for employment or current employee should experience discrimination based on race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, physical handicap, sexual orientation or disability. The policy does not extend any rights beyond those granted by state and federal law.

Concerns in this area should be discussed with your supervisor or with your supervisor's supervisor. If you remain concerned, you should contact the Federal Compliance Officer in the Information/Special Services Division, or the Executive Director of Human Resources or Chief Human Resources Officer responsible for personnel.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAAA Legal Reference: Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; American Disabilities Act, 1991)

In compliance with federal laws, Guilford County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, marital status, parental status or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law. Refer to the Board of Education's Discrimination Free Environment Policy AC for a complete statement.

Direct inquiries or complaints regarding Title IX to:

Guilford County Schools Compliance Officer
120 Franklin Boulevard
Greensboro, NC 27401

Phone: 336-370-8154

Direct inquiries or complaints regarding Section 504 to:

Director of Exceptional Children
120 Franklin Boulevard
Greensboro, NC 27401

Phone: 336-370-8103

General Employee Responsibilities



Compliance with Board Policy

It is your responsibility of to familiarize yourself with policies of the Board. You will be held accountable for compliance with those policies and will be updated on any revisions by the supervisor.

Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct

You are responsible for both integrity and the consequences of your actions. You must exhibit the highest standards of honesty, integrity and fairness. Your conduct should be such as to protect your integrity and/or reputation and that of the district. You shall perform your job in a competent and ethical manner without violating the public trust or applicable laws, policies and regulations.

Corporal Punishment and Force

The board of education believes that a discipline can be maintained without the use of corporal punishment and force and that harsh physical punishment does not improve students' in-school behavior or academic performance. As a result, you are prohibited from using corporal punishment; this also includes student teachers, substitutes and volunteers. While the district prohibits the use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline, you are allowed to use **reasonable** force to control behavior or to remove a person from the scene in the following situations:

1. to quell a disturbance threatening injury to others;
2. to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person or within the control of a student;
3. for self-defense;
4. for the protection of persons or property; and
5. to maintain order on school property, in the classroom or at a school-related activity on or off school property.

(Reference: G.S. 115C-390; Board of Education Policy JD)

Sexual Harassment of Students: Prohibition

You, as an employee of Guilford County Schools are expected to provide learning environments for students that are free of sexual harassment. **You shall not engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with any student enrolled in Guilford County Schools whether or not it is consensual.** Any student who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment by any employee(s) of Guilford County Schools and any student or employee who has knowledge of sexual harassment or inappropriate staff-student relations should report:

1. the facts of the incidents, and
2. the names of all the individuals involved in any material way immediately to the student's principal or to the supervisor of the person reporting the incident. There will be an immediate investigation of the incident.

It is a Class I felony for teachers, school administrators, student teachers or coaches at any age, and other school personnel at least four years older than a student to take indecent liberties with that student during or after the time both were present together in the same school, but before the student ceases to be a student at that school.

School personnel who are not teachers, school administrators, student teachers or coaches, **and** who are less than four years older than the student, who take indecent liberties with a student victim are guilty of a Class A-1 misdemeanor. Consent is not a defense. Legal marriage to the student is a defense to this crime. (Reference: Board of Education Policy GAMAA; G.S. 14-202.4)

License: Certification Renewal

The North Carolina State Board of Education requires all licensed employees to maintain a valid, North Carolina Professional Educator’s License. Each license- holder is responsible for knowing and satisfying license renewal requirements. Failure to renew your license makes you ineligible for employment. You may contact Recruiting and Staffing for additional information.

Scope of Professional Practice

Educators shall not perform any act as an employee in a position for which licensure is required by the rules of the State Board of Education or by Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes during any period in which the educator’s license has been suspended or revoked.

Selection of Instructional Materials

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of using a variety of instructional materials in addition to adopted textbooks, to meet the instructional needs of students. Materials for classrooms and school library media centers will be selected by the appropriate professional personnel in consultation with the administration, faculty, students and the community.

Final purchase decisions are the responsibility of the Superintendent or his/her designee. If instructional materials and/ or activities contain content, language or context(s) that may be sensitive to students or parents, approval of the site administrator is required prior to use.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy IFA: Administrative Procedure IFA-P)



Confidentiality

During the course of work, you may become aware of confidential information about Guilford County Schools’ business, including but not limited to information regarding Guilford County Schools’ finances, software and computer programs, suppliers, and knowledge, skills and abilities of personnel. You may also become aware of similar confidential information concerning Guilford County Schools’ students. It is extremely important that all such information remain confidential. If you, without authorization, copy, remove (whether physically or electronically), use or disclose confidential information, you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. You shall not use confidential information obtained in the course of employment for pecuniary benefit or allow another employee to do so.

Public Funds and Property

As a GCS employee, you shall not misuse public funds or property, funds of a school-related organization, or colleague's funds. Employees shall account for funds collected in the course of their duties and shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

Gifts

As an employee, you shall not accept gifts from any person or group desiring to do business with the school system except for nominally valued instructional products or advertising items that are widely distributed. This is not intended to prohibit the receiving of nominal or appropriate gifts by school personnel from students and parents.

Conflicts of Interest

The Guilford County Board of Education recognizes the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest. All business district transactions should be lawful and must respect generally accepted fair trade practices. As an employee you should refrain from engaging in inappropriate business-related behavior. You shall not:

1. engage in selling goods or services to the Board.
2. engage in or have a financial interest in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties or responsibilities in the school system.
3. engage in any type of private business during the employee's school day or at school site.
4. engage in work of any type where the source of information for a customer, client, or employer originates from school system data.
5. accept gifts from any person or groups desiring or doing business with the school system, except for nominally valued instructional products or advertising items, which are widely distributed.
6. provide employee directories to anyone who wishes to use them for pecuniary purposes.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAG)

Outside Employment

Your responsibilities with Guilford County Schools are prioritized over any outside employment. Outside employment is generally not allowed when it prevents you from performing responsibilities in an effective manner or when it raises a question of conflict of interest with the outside employer. An employee of Guilford County Schools, you shall not engage in selling goods or services to the public school system and shall not engage in or have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties and responsibilities in the school system. No staff member shall engage in any type of private business during school time or on school property.

Goods Used by the Schools: You may not serve as an agent for any manufacturer, merchant, dealer, publisher or author of any merchandise to be used in the Guilford County Schools. No school employee may receive any gift, reward or promise of reward for recommending or procuring the use of any goods by the Guilford County Schools.

Private Business Interest: No staff member shall engage in any type of private business during school time or on school property.

Identification Badges

Badge Display and Replacement

You must visibly display your Guilford County Schools photo identification badge while on any property owned or leased by the board during school hours or at any time you are acting in the course and scope of employment with the Board. You receive your badge upon your employment. Your badge remains the property of Guilford County Schools; if you leave employment, you are required to return your badges to your supervisor. You can replace a lost badge for the cost of \$5.00 by calling the Benefits Department at 370-8348.

Event Admission with Badge

As an employee, you have free admission to most middle and high school athletic events upon presentation of your identification badge. Free admission is for **you only**. You may be required to present an additional photo identification for admission. This does not apply to admission to state play-off contests, which are controlled by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect/Reporting Information to Outside Agencies

If you suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse or neglect, you have a legal responsibility and duty to report the case immediately to the principal, designee or supervisor, and Central Office. When a principal, designee or supervisor receives a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, the report must be communicated immediately to the Department of Social Services (DSS) and Central Office. This is mandatory.

In the absence of the principal or designee, or where that authority refuses to comply with the North Carolina Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law, you shall immediately make an oral report to DSS. Once the suspected abuse or neglect is reported, school employees should refrain from further investigation. If the child needs medical attention, the reporting employee should inform the child protective services investigator when making the report. Information regarding suspected child abuse or neglect should be shared only among appropriate school staff asked to assist in the investigation by DSS.

Copyrighted Materials

Guilford County Schools requires that you be knowledgeable of and adhere to all provisions of current Federal copyright law, Title 17 of US Code, and Congressional “fair use” guidelines. The district recognizes and supports the limitations on unauthorized duplication and use of copyrighted materials in all formats, as well as contractual and licensing agreements pertaining to the instructional use of all formats, including electronically transmitted materials. Willful or serious violations are in violation of expected standards of behavior may result in disciplinary action in accordance with board policy. The legal and insurance protection of the district will not extend to you if you unlawfully copy or unlawfully use copyrighted materials.

(Reference: *Title 17* of US Code; Congressional “Fair Use” Guidelines)

Criminal Records Check: Employees and Substitutes

The district has an obligation to provide a safe place for learning, so if you are a rehired, newly hired or substitute, the district will conduct a criminal record check. The district also may conduct random criminal record checks on current employees including substitutes.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBDC; Administrative Procedure GBDC-P)



Criminal Records Check: Volunteers

The district depends on the generosity of volunteered time. If you are interested in volunteering at a specific school, please contact the school's office. Reasonable background inquiries and checks are required for all volunteers (interns, student teachers, tutors or similar roles) who may have unsupervised contact with students. To volunteer, you must complete a Volunteer Registration. As a GCS employee, if you would like to volunteer at a school or event, you are also required to register. If you would like to volunteer, but do not know where to start or which schools could use assistance, please contact GCS District Relations at 336-370-8353. The district's Human Resources Division will review the results and notify the principal and volunteer coordinator of the results and recommendations. Individuals who provide false information, may be denied the privilege to volunteer.

You cannot volunteer without a completed background check and an approved recommendation from the district. This includes volunteering for field trips. If you registered online for the previous school year, you should update your registration and resubmit the application.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBDC)

Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace

Guilford County Schools is committed to a safe and healthy work environment, free of the presence of alcoholic beverages or unlawful controlled substances. The district prohibits you from possessing, using, manufacturing, dispensing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, and from the use, sale, distribution or possession of drug paraphernalia.

You are also prohibited from unlawfully possessing, using, manufacturing, dispensing, selling, distributing or being under the influence of alcohol. This policy is in effect: (a) during school hours, (b) while on any property owned or leased by the Board, (c) at any time during which you are acting in the course and scope of your employment with the Board, and/or (d) at any other time that your violation of this policy has a direct and adverse effect upon the performance of your job.

This policy does not include the lawful and proper use of drugs prescribed by a doctor or over-the-counter medications; however, you shall not report to work or engage in normal duties, if drugs prescribed by a doctor or over-the-counter medications visibly and/or knowingly impair you. Failure to observe this policy may result in further disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Testing

The district reserves the right to test you for drugs and alcohol if your duty is to drive a vehicle, repair vehicles or equipment, and provide armed security. This policy extends to other persons in similar safety positions any time prior to or during employment. The district reserves the right to test you upon reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use. If you refuse to submit to a diagnostic test to detect alcohol and/or drug use or refuse to submit to search procedures after reasonable suspicion is established, you may be suspended immediately pending consideration of a decision to terminate employment.

Violations

If you violate this policy, you will be subject personnel action including, but not limited to: 1. termination of employment, 2. the requirement that the employee satisfactorily participate in an Administration-approved drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation, 3. suspension, with or without pay, 4. conditional continuation of employment, or 5. any combination of these actions.

Facilities, Equipment and Property, including Intellectual Property

Equipment essential in accomplishing job duties is often expensive and difficult to replace. When using property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Employees shall notify the principal/supervisor if any equipment, machines, or tools appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of loss, damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. Principals/supervisors can answer any questions regarding an employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment.

Employees are prohibited from any unauthorized use of Guilford County Schools' intellectual property, such as audio and video tapes, printed materials and software. Employees must be in compliance with copyright laws. Improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment can result in discipline, up to and including dismissal.

Further, Guilford County Schools is not responsible for any damage to employees' personal belongings unless the employee's principal/supervisor provided advance approval for the employee to bring the personal property to work.

Changes in Employment Records

It is your responsibility to update a change in name, address, and telephone number changes as well as additional educational degrees. Prompt notification will help maintain accurate employment records for pay, leave, salary verification and other purposes. You may do this through the Employee Self-service portal on the GCS Website.

New Employees: Electronic Employment Documents

All permanent part-time/full-time employees are required to complete an electronic employment and benefits packet. Your packet is emailed once the candidate's employment has been finalized. The packet must be completed and submitted by the deadline per the instructions provided.

Attendance and Punctuality



School Calendars

The Guilford County Board of Education adopts a school calendar each year. The calendar may be adjusted for inclement weather or other emergency situations. You may find the district calendar as well as the calendars for each school on the GCS Website.

Punctuality

You perform an important function with the district. Operating effectively takes cooperation and commitment from everyone. Attendance and punctuality are very important. Unnecessary absences and lateness are expensive, disruptive and place an unfair burden on your fellow employees, students, and principal/supervisors. The district expects excellent attendance from every employee; Excessive absenteeism or tardiness will result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

It is recognized, however, that there are times when absences and tardiness cannot be avoided. In such cases, you are expected to notify your principal/supervisor as early as possible, but no later than the start of the work day. Asking another employee, friend or relative to give this notice is improper and constitutes grounds for disciplinary action. If you are a teacher needing a substitute, you must use the substitute teacher's procedures established by Guilford County Schools.

Absences

Notification of Supervisor

Guilford County Schools and its students depend on your contribution and performance of your duties each workday. When you are absent or delayed for any reason, you must notify your supervisor of the inability to report to work by the scheduled time, using procedure designated by him/her. If you fail to provide timely notification, a salary deduction may be made for time not worked (non-exempt employees). An immediate supervisor may approve up to five (5) consecutive absences. The second-line supervisor may approve up to 10 (10) consecutive absences.

Unapproved Absences

Your timely and daily attendance is important to the success of the district. Unsupported absences or departures from your work site without authorization pose a barrier to the district's ability to perform effectively. It is unacceptable and can be considered sufficient cause for discharge. The appropriate supervisor or the Human Resources Department may require at any time, a statement from a medical doctor or other acceptable proof that you were unable to work. This documentation is required for absences of more than five (5) consecutive days. At no time are you required to provide confidential medical information to your supervisor.

Automated Substitute Employee Management System (AESOP)

Guilford County Schools uses an automated substitute employee management system (AESOP) which tracks the reporting of specific school-based employee absences and calls substitute employees when needed. If you

are a school-based employees, with the exception of custodian and child nutrition staff, you are expected to enter each absence into this system by telephone or through AESOP Internet access, regardless of whether a substitute is required or obtained. Employees receive training at their respective work sites to properly access AESOP and report absences. The requirement to report absences via AESOP does not relieve you of any additional absence reporting required by the principal or supervisor.

Closing of School

In case of school cancellation, delayed opening and/or early dismissal of school or a shift to remote learning due to emergency and/or hazardous conditions, the following regulations shall govern all employees. The official notice will be put on the district's website and will also be shared via telephone, social media, and other district communication channels, to the extent possible. Television and radio stations will be notified, when necessary, early on the morning(s) of hazardous conditions.



Calendar

When the school schedule is disrupted by inclement weather or an emergency situation, the district will ensure that students receive the state-required minimum instructional hours with the following priorities:

1. Shift to district-wide remote learning, if possible, for up to five (5) days to maintain students' access to learning during inclement weather or emergency situations
2. Waive the time so long as the district meets the state instructional hour requirement
3. Schedule additional make-up days in the school calendar

In the case of remote learning, cancellations or schedule changes that affect a subset of schools, any calendar or schedule modifications needed to meet state minimum requirements will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Employee Reporting on Remote Learning Days and School Closure Days

On-site essential employees are staff members who must report to their worksite in person even during inclement weather or other emergency situations due to the nature of their work responsibilities. In the event of an emergency situation, on-site essential employees will be notified according to division procedures, and an employee's designation as "on-site essential" may be dependent on certain types of emergency conditions or situations. Depending on safety conditions, one of three plans for employee reporting will be part of the remote learning or closure announcement.

Plan A - All employees must report to their scheduled work site.

Plan B – All on-site essential employees must report to their scheduled work site. Employees may report to their scheduled work site. With the approval of the manager, employees may request a remote work location that has required technology and internet access available to complete the work assignments.

Plan C – All on-site essential employees must report to their scheduled work site. Employees should not report to their scheduled work site and should work from a remote work location that has required technology and internet access available to complete the work assignments.

Employee Leaves on Remote Learning Days

If school is remote for the day, employees shall report to work according to the plan communicated by the district. Remote learning days are instructional days. However, employees who do not require a substitute may request approval for unscheduled vacation, personal leave or leave without pay according to work site procedures. Unscheduled leaves may not be taken unless approved by the employee's manager. Making up time is not an option for instructional days that are conducted remotely.

If one of the stated leave options is selected, the employee must follow school or department procedures to inform the principal/supervisor of the employee's request and secure approval. Managers are authorized to make approval decisions based on employee safety and the best interest of students.

Employee Leaves on School Closure Days

On days that the Superintendent closes schools with no remote learning, all employees have the option to work. If buildings are closed due to safety concerns, employees whose jobs are not typically able to be performed remotely may work with their managers to identify tasks to complete remotely if they choose not to take leave.

Employee options for leaves will be determined based on the two employee categories defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

- **Exempt employees** are not eligible for overtime. In GCS these employees are paid on a monthly pay cycle.
- **Nonexempt employees** are eligible for overtime if working over 40 hours in a week. In GCS these employees are paid on a bi-weekly pay cycle.

Exempt employees

If schools are closed for the day (with no remote learning), exempt employees shall report to work at the normal starting time or select one of the following options:

- take unscheduled vacation, if available, in accordance with Section 3 of the [NC Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual](#)
- arrange to make up time with principal/supervisor
- take unscheduled personal leave, if available, in accordance with Section 5 of the [NC Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual](#)
- take leave without pay.

If a leave option is selected, the exempt employee must follow school/department procedures to inform the principal/supervisor of the employee's intentions.

Non-exempt employees

If schools are closed for the day (with no remote learning), non-exempt employees shall report to work at the normal starting time or select one of the following options:

- use previously earned compensatory (comp) time, if available
- take an unscheduled vacation, if available, in accordance with Section 3 of the [NC Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual](#)
- arrange to make up time with principal/supervisor by the end of the current workweek (11:59pm on Friday)
- take leave without pay.

If a leave option is selected, the non-exempt employee must follow school/department procedures to inform the principal/supervisor of the employee's intentions.

Delayed Start and Early Dismissal

Any changes in the time for employees to report to work will be announced by the Superintendent at the time of the school cancellation announcement. If school opening is delayed for students, teachers and school-based non-administrative instructional employees are expected to report at least fifteen (15) minutes before the time designated for students to arrive; this time (delayed opening) will not have to be made up. All other employees are expected to report at the regular work time except for bus drivers and child nutrition employees whose schedule for delayed openings is to be set in advance by the supervisor. Unless otherwise announced by the Superintendent, if school is dismissed early, teachers and other school-based employees will be dismissed fifteen (15) minutes after all students have departed. This time will not have to be made up. A principal or their designee must remain at the school until notified by the executive director of transportation or their designee that all of their students who ride school buses assigned to their schools have been delivered to their afternoon destination. Central office personnel will be dismissed at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Employees Working after Hours

If you are an ACES group leader/clerk and or other employee who works after-school hours must follow the guidelines above.

Make-up Time

Make-up time must be within the guidelines of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). If you are a non-exempt employee, you may not work more than 40 hours per work week. (Please refer to "Overtime" section of this handbook.)

(Reference: North Carolina G.S. 115-C-316(2); Administrative Procedure AFC-P)

Technology



All technology resources employed by Guilford County Schools should be used in a responsible, legal and ethical manner. Guilford County Schools' Internet connection exist in the belief that the information and interaction available are valuable additions to educational resources.

As a user, you are required to follow all standards, policies, and procedures related to the use of technology in Guilford County Schools. You are responsible for you actions and activities involving the network. Some examples of unacceptable users are: circumventing safety configurations, modifying setup policies, modifying settings on machines, attaching unauthorized devices, etc. Incidents and violations of the AUP policy by employees will be referred to the Human Resources Division for review.

The Technology Policies, Procedures and Standards Manual provides policies for using all technology resources in a responsible, legal and ethical manner. Examples of issues addressed in the manual include, minimum standards for networked computers, relocation of equipment, computer donations, personally owned software, email accounts for non-employees, password resets, use of email and approved software lists.

Requests for Service

Requests for approved technology services may be submitted to Technology Services through the school or department's technology contact person and the web-based Help Desk Ticket System. Any application not pre-approved requires review and approval of the TARC. The complete Technology Policies, Procedures and Standards Manual and the Staff Laptop Guidelines can be found on the GCS Website.

Workplace Health and Safety



Administration of Medication to Students

The Guilford County Board of Education recognizes that under certain circumstances it will be necessary for students to take medication during school hours or after school hours while participating in extra-curricular activities or tutorials. The General Statutes permit public school employees, when given the authority by the Board, to administer medication prescribed by a doctor upon written request of the parent/guardian. The Board authorizes school system personnel to administer medications in the case of a student who has a chronic health problem, or a student with an unusual health problem where emergency measures may be required.

School staff may administer medication to students at school only if the health care provider deems it necessary for the medication to be given during the school hours and if a parent/guardian requests it in writing. Medication shall be administered in accordance with the health care provider's instructions and established procedures. The school will assume no liability for students who self-medicate or for the transportation of medication to and/or from school. The school and its personnel and the Board of Education will assume no liability for complications or side effects of medications when administered in accordance with the instructions provided by the parent/guardian and health care provider.

A student with asthma or a student subject to anaphylactic reactions, or both, may possess and self-administer medication as prescribed for treatment, during the school day, at school sponsored activities or while in transit. The student must demonstrate to the school nurse, or the nurse's designee, the skill level necessary to use the asthma medication and any device that is necessary to administer the medication. The student's parent or guardian must provide written authorization including medical verification as outlined in JGCD-P.

Communicable Diseases: Employee Safety

Our goal as a district is to provide a safe and secure environment for you and all students, maintaining a balance between the need to protect the rights of you and our students, and the need to control the spread of serious communicable diseases and conditions. We address situations of employees with communicable diseases or conditions on a case-by case basis. If you are diagnosed with a serious communicable disease that may pose a significant risk of transmission in your current position, you must report this to your immediate supervisor, who should contact the Director of Benefits immediately.

For more information, contact the Benefits Department.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBRAB)

Health Certificate

Upon initial employment, you and employees who have been separated from public school employment more than one school year must file a completed Guilford County Schools/North Carolina Public Schools "Health Examination Certificate". This certifies freedom from any communicable disease, including tuberculosis or any disease, physical or mental, which would impair your ability to perform your job duties prior to reporting to work. Health Certificates are available on the Guilford County Schools Website. The board, superintendent or

his/her designee may require you to take a physical examination if it is deemed necessary and it is believed to serve the health and safety of you, the district's employees and/or students.
(Reference: G.S. 115C-323)

Tobacco, E-Cigarette and Vaping-free Environment



The use of tobacco, e-cigarette and vaping products is a health, safety and environmental hazard for students, employees, visitors and school facilities. In addition, the Board recognizes that it has an obligation to promote a healthy learning and working environment, free from unwanted smoke and vaping chemicals for the students, employees and visitors in the school system. You, nor visitors are permitted under any circumstances to use tobacco or vaping products in or on the grounds of any facility owned or leased or contracted by Guilford County Schools. For the purposes of this policy, tobacco and vaping

product is defined to include cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, hookah pens, e-hookahs, vape pipes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco, tobacco products or inhaled non-prescription products. Tobacco use includes smoking, vaping, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products.

Weapons on Educational Property

The Board of Education practices prohibits unauthorized weapons on educational property. Educational property includes any school building or bus, school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field or other property owned, used, or operated by any board of education for the administration of any school. It is a violation of District policy to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any gun, rifle, pistol, or other firearm of any kind on educational property or to a curricular or extracurricular activity sponsored by a school.

It is a felony for any person to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine, or powerful explosive as defined in G.S. 14 284.1, on educational property or to a curricular or extracurricular activity sponsored by a school. It is misdemeanor for any person to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any BB gun, stun gun, air rifle, air pistol, bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slingshot, leaded cane, switchblade knife, blackjack, metallic knuckles, razors and razor blades (except solely for personal shaving), firework, or any sharp pointed or edged instrument except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools used solely for preparation of food, instruction, and maintenance, on educational property. Any person who in violation of state law brings a firearm or other weapons onto school property, possesses a weapon on school property, or encourages or enables another to bring or possess any weapon on school property will be reported to law enforcement authorities. The policy specifically excludes the following:

- (a) a weapon or explosion used solely for educational or school--sanctioned ceremonial purposes, or used in a school--approved program conducted under the supervision of an adult whose supervision has been approved by the school authority;
- (b) a handgun in a closed compartment or container within the person's locked vehicle or in a locked container securely affixed to the person's vehicle if the person has a concealed handgun permit valid under state law or is exempted by state law from needing a permit to carry a concealed handgun (the person may unlock the vehicle to enter or exit the vehicle provided the handgun

- remains in the closed compartment at all times and the vehicle is locked immediately following the entrance or exit);
- (c) firefighters, emergency service personnel, North Carolina Forest Service personnel, and any private police employed by the school board, when acting in the discharge of their official duties;
 - (d) law enforcement officers.

Duty to Report: Workplace Safety

The health and safety of employees and students are of critical concern to Guilford County Schools. Guilford County Schools is committed to comply with all health and safety laws applicable to our mission. To this end, you shall ensure that work areas are kept safe and free of hazardous conditions. You are required to be conscientious about workplace safety, including proper operating methods, and recognize dangerous conditions or hazards.

You shall report any unsafe conditions or potential hazards your supervisor immediately. You should report any suspicion of a concealed danger present on Guilford County Schools premises, or in a product, facility, piece of equipment, process or business practice for which the system is responsible to your supervisor immediately.

Periodically, Guilford County Schools may issue rules and guidelines governing workplace safety and health, as well as the handling and disposal of hazardous substances and waste. You should familiarize yourself with these rules and guidelines, as strict compliance will be expected.

You must report any workplace injury, accident or illness to your principal/supervisor or administrator as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury or accident.

Workplace Violence

Guilford County Schools is committed to providing a safe workplace. Our goal is to minimize the risk of personal injury to employees and damage to Guilford County Schools and personal property. Employees are specifically discouraged from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual. However, employees are expected and encouraged to exercise reasonable judgement in identifying potentially dangerous situations and to notify the principal/supervisor of suspected problems.

Troubled individuals often exhibit one or more of the following behaviors or signs. Be vigilant to recognize:

- Over-resentment, anger and hostility; extreme agitation; making ominous threats such as bad things will happen to a person, or a catastrophic event will occur.
- Sudden and significant decline in work performance.
- Irresponsible, irrational, intimidating, aggressive or otherwise inappropriate behavior reacting to questions with an antagonistic or overtly negative attitude.
- Discussing weapons and their use and/or brandishing weapons in the workplace; overreacting or reacting harshly to changes in Guilford County Schools policies and procedures
- Personality conflicts with co-workers; obsession or preoccupation with a coworker or supervisor; attempts to sabotage the work or equipment of a co-workers.
- Excessively blaming others for mistakes and circumstances; demonstrating a propensity to behave and react irrationally.

Prohibited Conduct

You shall not use threats, threatening language or any other acts of aggression or violence. It will not be tolerated. A threat includes any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, any attempt at intimidating or instilling fear in others, menacing gestures, flashing of weapons, stalking or any other hostile, aggressive, injurious or destructive action undertaken for the purpose of domination or intimidation. To the extent permitted by law, employees, students and visitors are prohibited from carrying weapons onto any Guilford County Schools premises.

Procedures for Reporting a Threat

It is important for Guilford County Schools to be aware of any potential danger in its schools or worksites. You shall report any potentially dangerous situations, including threats by co-workers, immediately to the principal/supervisor. Reports of threats are confidential to the extent maintaining confidentiality does not impede the system's ability to investigate and respond to the complaints. All threats will be promptly investigated. You will not be subject to retaliation, intimidation or disciplinary action as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline. Violation of the policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

If you are the target of a threat made by an outside party, you should follow the steps detailed in this section. Our goal is to take every effective step it can to protect you, students and guests from the threat of a violent act by an employee, a student or by anyone else.

Protect Our Students Act and Reporting Misconduct

In 2023, the General Assembly enacted S.L. 2023-128, also known as the "Protect Our Students Act". This act requires superintendents, assistant superintendents, associate superintendents, personnel administrators, or principals who know or have reason to believe that an employee has engaged in misconduct resulting in dismissal, disciplinary action, or resignation to report the misconduct to the State Board of Education within five days.

In addition to the state requirements, Guilford County Schools mandates that any employee who knows or has reason to believe that an employee has engaged in misconduct involving a student must report the allegations. Furthermore, any adult aged 18 or older who knows or should reasonably know that a juvenile has been or is the victim of a violent offense, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse in North Carolina must immediately report the case to the appropriate law enforcement agency in the county where the juvenile resides or is found.

"A student" is defined as "a person enrolled in kindergarten, or in grades one through twelve in any school within six months of any violation" of the statute. This means that a teacher, school administrator, school safety officer, or coach who engages in sexual conduct with a student that is prohibited by the statute while the student is enrolled in school or within six months of having been enrolled, for example, after graduation, is deemed to have violated the statute.

Any staff member who suspects child abuse or neglect by a teacher, GCS employee, parent, other adult, or any student must immediately contact the Department of Social Services (DSS) at 336-641-3795 (Greensboro and High Point) and notify the school principal. If a GCS employee is involved in an allegation of misconduct, the school principal must immediately

notify the school's SRO or School Safety Office, Human Resources, and the Title IX Coordinator. It's important to note that it is considered a felony if an employee knows or has reason to believe that another employee has engaged in misconduct and fails to report this information appropriately

Communication

Email and Electronic Transmissions Capabilities

Technology and the Internet offer staff members the resources from thousands of computers and millions of individual people all over the world. You may have access to email, information and news, advertisements, discussion groups and university and government libraries around the world.

Business Use

Guilford County's email, office communications and Internet capabilities are to enable you to more efficiently perform your duties, to support research and education and to extend the resources of Guilford County Schools. To that end, all uses of electronic transmission capabilities must support the goals and educational philosophy of the school district.

No Expectation of Privacy

You should be aware that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy with regard to your use of, and transmission of information over, district-owned computers and computer networks. The school district reserves the right to monitor use and transmission and to take appropriate disciplinary action if it can be reasonably determined that you have violated acceptable use standards.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy EFE)

Social Media

The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. To this aim, Guilford County Schools has adopted the following guidelines to provide direction for instructional employees, students and the district community when participating in online social media activities. Whether you choose to participate in an online network, or any other form of online publishing or discussion is your decision. Information produced by you as a GCS employee is a reflection on the entire District and is subject to the District's Acceptable Use Policy. Personal postings, even if marked private, may also be subject to relevant GCS policies and procedures, as well as to relevant local, state and federal laws.



User-created content online designed in a collaborative environment where users share opinions, knowledge and information with each other. Tools include, but are not limited to, (a) blogs, (b) Wikis, (c) social networking sites, (d) photo and video-sharing sites, (e) social bookmarking, (f) podcasting and Vodcasting.

Personal and Professional Responsibility

Guilford County Schools encourages district employees with a personal online presence to be mindful of the information they post. Your online behavior should reflect the same professional and personal standards of honesty, respect and consideration that you use face-to-face and in work-related settings. Please note that even if you delete personal information, it still may be stored on the Website's server. Information that is marked "private" rarely is private on the Internet. It is very easy for "friends" to copy and paste information about you and send it or forward it to others, for example. There is no realistic expectation of privacy on the Web.

Security and Privacy Settings

You should also ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at GCS and your role as a public school/State employee. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the appropriate security settings for any Social media (personal or professional) that you may use. Be sure that the settings are such that any personal content may only be viewed by your intended audience.

Be aware that, even if your privacy settings are set properly, it is still possible for anyone who you have allowed to see your profile to copy and paste text and send it to someone else. It is also easy for others to "tag" or identify you in photos that they publish with or without your knowledge and permission. Similarly, if you enable settings such as Facebook's ability to allow "friends of friends" to view your content, it is extremely likely that unintended viewers will have access to pictures and other personal content.

Student Communications

It is inappropriate for you to use email, text messaging, instant messaging or social networking sites to discuss with a student activity not related to school. Appropriate discussions would include the student's homework, class activity, school sport, club, or other school-sponsored activity. You should send electronic communications with students simultaneously to multiple recipients, not to just one student, except where the communication is clearly school-related and inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (for example, emailing a message about a student's grades).

"Friending" and "Following"

Your engagement with students in personal social-networking friendships on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or other social networking sites is prohibited. It is strongly discouraged with parents or guardians of students. The District recognizes that because of the tight-knit community of GCS, you may have students or parents of students who are family members or close personal friends; however, the District cautions you against engaging in such social-networking friendships with these individuals. Use your official, school- or work-related page(s) instead.

A recommended response to inappropriate "friend" requests on your personal pages is: "If you are a student or parent requesting to be my "friend," please do not be surprised or offended if I ignore your request. As an employee of Guilford County Schools, district procedures and practices prohibit me from friending students or and discourages me from friending parents on my personal pages. Please friend our school's (and/or classroom's, department's, Guilford County Schools' Facebook pages, etc.)"

District Image

Material that you post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community must reflect the professional image applicable to your position and not impair your capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents/guardians or impair the your ability to serve as a role model for children.

While social media can be a powerful communication tool and an educational tool for students and parents, you are responsible for content you publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy. Social media in the classroom is an extension of your physical classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom is inappropriate online. Teachers who use social networking to interact with students and/or parents in an educational manner or as a communication tool must find ways to interact without giving students and parents access to personal information and posts.

When contributing online do not post confidential student information. Do not post pictures of any students on your personal sites. Use a GCS provided email as your email contact for official or school-related pages. Do not use your GCS provided email as a username or email contact for personal pages.

Please remember that all GCS policies and procedures, as well as relevant local, state and federal laws (copyright, fair use, Family Education Right to Privacy Act, personnel statutes, criminal statutes, etc.) apply to social media communications.

Statements to the Media

All media inquiries regarding Guilford County Schools and its operation should be referred to the Communications Department. Only the Superintendent, the Chief of Staff, or designee is authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to Guilford County Schools or its operations. Any employee wanting to write and/or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of Guilford County Schools must first obtain approval from their principal/supervisor and the Director of Communications.

Employee Relations

Reporting Alleged Violations of Law or Ordinance

As a Guilford County Schools employee, you are expected to observe and obey all laws and ordinances, as well as all policies and procedures of our Board of Education.

Duty to Report

If you are charged with or arrested for any violation(s) of a criminal, or serious traffic vehicular law (e.g. vehicular homicide, hit and run) or ordinance, or any such law classified as a felony or for which a conviction could lead to incarceration, you must report this in writing to the administrator of your department, office or school to which you are assigned **no later than the next scheduled business day**.

It is your responsibility to keep your administrator informed of the judicial process in your matter. Upon judicial action, you must report the disposition and pertinent facts in writing to the administrator no later than the next scheduled business day following adjudication.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBDC)

In cases involving your hospitalization and/or incarceration (jail) involving the stated violation, you must report the alleged violation within 24 hours after release. The report must include all pertinent facts concerning the alleged violation(s). Following receipt by the administrator, the confidential report will be forwarded no later than one scheduled business day, to the Executive Director for Human Resources or administrative designee for review. After review, the Executive Director will provide recommendations as to what action, if any, is appropriate. Failure to truthfully and timely report charges, as noted above, may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination of Staff: Prohibition

Reporting

The Guilford County Board of Education believes that all employees are entitled to work in environments free of harassment, bullying and discrimination. If you believe you have been the victim of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination in the course of your work with the district, you are encouraged to report the alleged acts, including the facts of the incident(s) and the name(s) of the individual(s) to your immediate supervisor in a timely manner.

Discrimination

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age or disability. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.



Harassment and Bullying

Harassment or bullying behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or threatening communication that either places a student or employee in fear of personal harm or creates a pervasively hostile work or educational environment. A hostile work or educational environment means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as harassment or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe and pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that the conduct creates an abusive, intimidating, hostile or offensive work or educational environment. A hostile work or educational environment must be created by pervasive or persistent harassment or bullying but can also be created by a single incident if that incident is determined to be sufficiently severe.

Harassment and bullying include but are not limited to negative or antagonistic behavior that appears motivated by an individual's differentiating characteristic such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental., physical, developmental or sensory disability. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal taunts,
- Name-calling and put-downs,
- Epithets, derogatory comments or slurs,
- Lewd propositions,
- Exclusion from peer groups,
- Rumor spreading,
- Extortion of money or possessions,
- Implied or stated threats,
- Assault,
- Impeding or blocking physical movement,
- Offensive touching,
- Physical interference with normal work or school behavior,
- Visual insults such as the creation or display of derogatory posters or cartoons.

While it is not easy to define precisely what types of conduct constitute sexual harassment, examples of prohibited behavior include but are not limited to:

- Deliberate unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature,
- Suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats,
- Sexual grooming,
- Continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations,
- Repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body,
- Sexually degrading words used toward or to describe an individual,
- Sexual assault,
- Sexual violence,
- The display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials.

Acts of verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, sexual grooming, intimidation or hostility based on sex, which do not involve actual physical sexual activity, may be determined serious enough to create a hostile work or educational environment if determined to be sufficiently severe or pervasive. Should this behavior cause the victim to view the conduct as bullying or harassment and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassment, a complaint should be filed.

Human Resources Intervention

If your immediate supervisor is directly involved or if you prefer discussing the concern with someone in Human Resources, you should report your concern to the Chief Human Resources Officer or the Executive Director for Human Resources. If members of the board, the superintendent or any senior staff members are involved, you should report your concerns to the board attorney. An immediate investigation of the claims will take place and upon evidence of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, will take appropriate disciplinary action.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAMA)

You, students, volunteers and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. It is the policy of Guilford County Schools to prohibit the intentional or unintentional discrimination, harassment or bullying of any student or employee. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement if such action is warranted or required by law.

Reporting for a Student

You are required to report any actual or suspected violations of this policy concerning students and encouraged to report any situation concerning your own or other employee's suspected discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Complaints

The Board believes that complaints should be handled as close to their origin as possible and resolved by the individuals closest to the complaint. If you have concern and the situation cannot be resolved at this level, you shall continue through your department's chain of supervision. If the issue remains unresolved, you may contact the Human Resources Division. It is the Board's intent to provide the means for resolving each complaint in a fair and impartial manner.

If you want to file a complaint against another employee, you shall make an effort to discuss and attempt to resolve the problem directly with the employee or their supervisor. If discussion with the supervisor does not resolve the problem or if the complaint is against your direct supervisor, then you shall discuss and attempt to resolve the problem with that individual's immediate supervisor. The Board prohibits retaliation against any person who reports an act of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, or files a complaint.

Grievances: Employees

Guilford County Schools encourages you to constructively attempt to resolve differences workplace conflict through open communication because it is usually more effective. The board supports administrators to actively attempt to address employees' concerns. If you have a concern, you should attempt to resolve it through discussion with your supervisor first. If your issue is not resolved, you should communicate to his/her supervisor. If these attempts are not successful, you may contact the Human Resources Division.

If you have a grievance against the school district or against another employee within the district, you must have the opportunity for an orderly presentation and impartial review of your grievance. You may have representation at any formal step in the grievance process. You can find more information in the board policies or from the Human Resources Division.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAE; Administrative Procedure GAE-P)

Personnel Files

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a personnel file for each employee that contains any complaint, commendation, or suggestion for correction or improvement about the employee's professional conduct, except that the Superintendent or designee may elect not to place in a teacher's file (i) a letter of complaint that contains invalid, irrelevant, outdated, or false information or (ii) a letter of complaint when there is no documentation of an attempt to resolve the issue. The complaint, commendation or suggestion must be signed by the initiating person and will be placed in the employee's file only after five days' notice to the employee. Any denial or explanation relating to the complaint, commendation or suggestion by employee will be placed in the file.

Removal of Information

You may petition the Guilford County Schools Board of Education to remove any information from your personnel file that you think invalid, irrelevant or outdated. The Board may order the Superintendent to remove that information if it finds the information is invalid, irrelevant or outdated. Requests regarding personnel files should be directed to the Human Resources Division.

File Review

If you would like to review your personnel file, contact the Human Resources Division to schedule an appointment. Every employee may have access to his/her own personnel file (with the exception of pre-employment data) during working hours, provided reasonable notice is given.

(Reference: G. S. 115C-307(e); 115C-325 (b); 115C-319, 320 and 321; Board of Education Policy GAK; Administrative Procedure GAK-P)

Suspension or Dismissal of Classified Staff

Guilford County Schools may suspend, demote or dismiss a classified employee for reasonable cause including, but not limited to, the following:

- Absence without notification
- Abuse of leave privileges
- Violation of the district's drug free workplace policy
- Discourteous, offensive, racial, discriminatory or abusive conduct or language toward other employees, students or the public
- Dishonesty or theft
- Intentional violation of school system policy or conviction of a felony
- Falsifying any information supplied to the school system including, but not limited to, information supplied on application forms, employment records or any other school system records
- Inefficiency in the performance of duties
- Insubordination including, but not limited to, refusal to do assigned work, or failure to follow a reasonable request made by the employee's principal/supervisor
- Unexcused absence or tardiness
- Failure to possess a valid driver's license when it is a requirement of the position
- Classified employees required to hold North Carolina commercial driver's licenses who have a verified positive test for a controlled substance or who have a positive alcohol test result or upon presenting reasonable suspicion, refuse to be tested for alcohol or controlled substances

Suspensions, demotions and dismissal are documented in writing. All classified employees are "at will" employees.

Exit Interviews

Guilford County Schools values feedback and offers employees leaving the district the opportunity to participate in an exit interview. The purpose of an exit interview is to help us identify gaps in our processes, better attract and retain talent and reduce turnover—essentially to gain feedback on your experience as an employee. This helps us determine if there are areas for improvement, whether it is onboarding, recruitment, or experience within the specific school or site you are leaving.

If you leave the district's employment, it is not a requirement that you participate in a formal exit interview with Human Resources Department staff; however, if you request an exit interview to provide feedback to the district, you will be given that opportunity. The district may also request the interview of selected personnel upon separation from employment.

If you desire an exit interview, please indicate that on the resignation form or contact your HR Coordinator at (336) 378-8806.

Employment, Compensation and Evaluation



Employee Classifications

Permanent Employee

A permanent employee is defined as an individual employed with the expectation of ongoing employment if present needs and funds continue.

Temporary Employee

A temporary employee is hired for a specified length of time to perform a specific job. Temporary employees hired for less than six full pay periods generally do not earn benefits and does not participate in the retirement system.

Full-time Employees

Full-time employees are employed to work at least 30 hours per week and are eligible for full benefits.

Full benefits include:

- Option to enroll in all insurance plans offered by the school system
- Leave days accrued for annual, sick, etc., as appropriate for position and years of service
- Paid holidays as indicated on the school calendar
- Leaves of Absence, as appropriately eligible
- Teachers and State Employees' Retirement System
- Voluntary participation in 401(k) and/or 403(b) retirement savings plans
- Workers' Compensation Insurance
- General Liability Insurance
- Longevity

Part-time Employees

Part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week, but less than 30, are eligible for pro-rated (partial) benefits.

Pro-rated benefits include:

- Health insurance may be purchased by paying the employee and employer's cost
- Prorated leave days accrued for annual and sick
- Prorated paid holidays as indicated on the school calendar
- Leaves of Absence, as eligible
- Voluntary participation in 403(b) retirement savings plan
- Workers' Compensation Insurance
- General Liability Insurance

Classified Employees

Classified employees are employees who do not require licensure issued by NCDPI and are “at will” employees. Classified employees may be designated exempt or nonexempt consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act and may be paid on either an hourly or yearly wage. Classified positions include, but are not limited to: office support, maintenance, bus drivers and transportation support, child nutrition employees, and paraprofessionals.

Licensed Employees

Licensed employees are employees who require an educator license issued by NCDPI.

Substitute Teachers

Substitute Teachers are employed only on an as needed basis and are not considered to be full-time permanent employees. Substitute teachers are considered at-will employees. This means that either the substitute or Guilford County Schools has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason.

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes 96-8(10)e, substitute teachers shall not be considered unemployed for days or weeks, including summer months or when school is not in session, when not called to work.

Employee Volunteers

Employees may volunteer to work at school events, provided the work is clearly at the employee’s option, is in a different capacity from the employee’s regularly assigned duties and is performed on an occasional or sporadic basis. Classified employees who are nonexempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act shall not be approved to coach on a voluntary basis if the employee’s regular duties or responsibilities are the same or of similar nature as the duties of a coach.

Recruitment and Selection of Employees

It is the policy of the board to provide all applicants with equal employment opportunities and to provide current employees with training, compensation, promotion and other benefits of employment without regard to an individual's real or perceived race, color, sex, religion, creed, political belief, age, national origin, linguistic and language differences, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, socioeconomic status, height, weight, physical characteristics, marital status, parental status, or disability except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Recruitment

Guilford County Schools goal is to hire the most qualified candidates for each position. The district actively seeks candidates from local, as well as regional and national colleges and universities. Additionally, the district recruits candidates through non-traditional routes, such as lateral entry and other alternative licensure programs. The board is also committed to diversity. To further this goal, the recruitment and employment program is designed to attract a diverse pool of qualified applicants.

We evaluate candidates on their merits and qualifications for positions. Vacancies are publicized on the district's website so that you may learn of promotional opportunities. If you are interested in and qualify for a vacancy, you should follow the application procedure for that position.

Selection

The district selects candidates for employment based on assessed ability to fulfill duties identified in the job description as well as performance standards established by the board. Each candidate, prior to being recommended for hire or assigned to a permanent position will be subject to a reference check, a criminal record check and other processes required by the superintendent in an effort to assure that only the most qualified individuals are hired.

Student Teachers/Administrative Internships

The district supports the preparation of individuals who desire to be educators. We work collaboratively with educational agencies to prepare prospective teachers, administrators, and others for working with students because we believe that a collaborative team approach for educator preparation is most effective. We also believe that it is important to promote equity for all students and our collaboration reflects this priority.

Teachers and administrators must meet minimum state requirements as well as local expectations to serve as cooperating teachers or supervising administrators. Requirements include, but are not limited to the following:

1. completion of three years of successful teacher/administrator experience,
2. a license in the subject area of the student teacher or in administration for administrative internships,
3. Demonstration of highly effective performance as defined by the Superintendent/designee and
4. demonstration of high ethical standards in compliance with the North Carolina Professional Code of Ethics and District School Board policies.

Additionally, the district strives to provide student teachers and administrative interns with placements and experiences working with diverse students and communities that are representative of our District.

Classified Employment

The Human Resources Division sends letters of appointment to classified staff upon employment with the district. **Interim letters of appointment** are also sent to classified employees who fill positions that (1) are temporarily vacant, (2) work with a single student (interpreters only), (3) are specially funded for a duration. If you are a classified employee, you are an "at will" employee. "At will" provides that you can be dismissed from employment for any reason (that is, without having to establish "just cause" for termination), and without warning, as long as the reason is not illegal.

Assignment and Transfer

Classified

Sometimes the reassignment and transfer of classified staff is necessary. You or administration may initiate a transfer. The salary impact of a transfer will depend on whether the move is a promotion, a demotion or lateral transfer.

An approved, self-initiated transfer for classified employees may occur at any time. You are not required to submit any documentation to the Human Resources Division in order to transfer and may make direct contact with principals or other administrators regarding vacancies. The actual date of transfer is determined by both the losing and gaining administrators, but the date should not exceed 60 days after the transfer has been approved by the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee. If the transfer is a promotion, then the move must take place within fourteen (14) calendar days.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GCM)

Assignment and Transfer: Licensed

Sometimes the reassignment and transfer of licensed staff is in the best interest of children. You may initiate a transfer or the administration may initiate it. The salary impact of a transfer will depend on whether the move is a promotion, a demotion or lateral transfer. Generally, self-initiated transfers of licensed employees are avoided during the school year except under limited conditions relative to criteria, exemptions, and notice for transfer.

- a. The employee transfer period is established by Human Resources based upon the date when position allocations are confirmed and staffing projections have been finalized for the upcoming school year. If you desire a transfer, you must complete the appropriate online application provided by the Human Resources Division.
- b. Transfers for the upcoming school year occur during the transfer period established by Human Resources, and is published for all licensed personnel.
- c. Principals/supervisors should access the *Licensed Employee Transfer Only* pool of interested internal candidates through the GCS online application. Principals/supervisors should interview at least one transfer applicant (if available) for each vacancy.
- d. If a principal plans to nominate a transfer candidate, he/she should immediately notify the sending principal/ supervisor of that decision.
- e. To ensure school stability, no school shall lose more than 5% of its current licensed staff in one year due to self-initiated transfers without the consent of the Superintendent or Chief Human Resources Officer.
- f. In the case of unusual or extenuating circumstances, you may request a transfer by providing a written explanation in support of your request to the appropriate school support officer. The Chief Human Resources Officer will review the request with the School Support Officer and advise the employee of the appropriate discretion.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBM-P)

Employment of Substitutes

Substitutes for teacher and teacher assistants must have 48 semester hours of coursework or an Associate's Degree with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 to qualify. As an approved substitute, you must work in the classifications for which you are approved; for example, if you are approved to substitute for a teacher assistant, you cannot substitute for a teacher without additional approval as a substitute teacher. If you are a current non-exempt employee, and are also approved to substitute, you may not exceed the 40-hour work week provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Licensed: Substitutes are required for licensed personnel absences for positions that deliver direct instructional services to students. The principal must request a substitute in writing to the Chief Human Resources Officer (c/o the Director of Staffing Operations) in order to employ substitutes for school counselors and media specialists. Teacher Assistants may be employed as substitutes in accordance with specified procedures.

(Reference: Administrative Procedure GBRJA-P; North Carolina Public Schools Financial Procedures Manual)

Classified: Substitutes for all classified personnel may be employed on the recommendation of the principal/supervisor and with the approval of the Chief Human Resources Officer (c/o the Director of Staffing Operations) or through approved procedures to cover absences for a specified period of time.

(Reference: Administrative Procedure GBRJB-P)

Only substitutes approved by Human Resources may work as a substitute employee.

Contact the Recruiting and Staffing Office at 378-8820 or 370-8382, for additional information.

Re-employed or Volunteer Retired Employees

Employees who have retired from the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System may be considered for re-hire to a part-time position or a temporary (less than six months) full-time position. It is the retiree's responsibility to ensure that all NC teachers and State Employees Retirement System requirements for working after retirement are met.

Retiree Volunteers

"Retirement" means the termination of employment and the complete separation from active service after a specified period of time with no intent or agreement, express or implied, to return to service. In order for a member's retirement to become effective in any month, the member must render no service, including part-time, temporary, substitute, or contractor service, at any time during the six months immediately following the effective date of retirement. For purposes of this, service as a member of a school board or as an unpaid bona fide volunteer in a local school administrative unit shall not be considered service."

Employment of Retirees Subject to the Earnings Cap

Retirees employed under this section must meet certain conditions:

1. The individual must have ended employment with the school system in good standing.
2. Retirees must have been retired at least six months.
3. It is the responsibility of the retiree to contact the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System to determine the earnings cap and monitor their earnings upon re-employment to ensure they do not exceed the earnings cap.
4. Appointment will be made on an interim basis for no more than one year at a time.
5. The hiring administrator must provide a written justification to support the recommendation to hire.

Salary

Retirees are paid according to salary schedules established for the position or the district's licensed substitute rate.

Benefits: Cap on Hours Worked to Preserve Retiree Medical Coverage

Retirees working full-time thirty (30) or more hours per week will not earn benefits unless they cancel their retirement benefits. Retirees in the North Carolina Teachers and State Retirement System may only work fewer than thirty (30) hours per week for Guilford County Schools in order to maintain retiree medical insurance. It is the retiree's responsibility to manage the average hours cap to preserve his/her retiree medical benefits.

Retirees who work more than thirty hours per week risk losing retiree medical coverage and becoming liable for medical expenses paid during the period in which he/she worked full time as a rehired retiree.

Retirees working part-time, 20 hours per week but less than 30 hours may earn pro-rated part-time benefits (e.g. leave) from the school system and continue to receive retirement benefits.

Job-sharing for School Employees

To allow job sharing, the board of education must designate one or more positions as job-sharing positions. An employee in a job-sharing position is a person who:

- a. is employed by a local board of education less than-full- time, and
- b. is sharing a position with one other employee of the same job classification.

Job-sharing provisions apply to both certified personnel and non-certified personnel.

Reemployed Retirees in Job-Sharing Positions

Because the benefits for staff employed in job-sharing positions include retirement, retirees can only be employed in temporary job-sharing positions. Retirees employed in temporary job-sharing positions do not earn leave benefits.

Salary

If you are in a job-sharing position, you will be paid pro-rata based on the salary schedule for the position. Experience for certified personnel is credited at the rate prescribed in the Licensure Policy. For non-certified employees, experience credited for salary purposes follows local policy. Service rendered by a school employee in a job-sharing position will be credited at the rate of one-half year for each regular school year of employment.

Benefits

If you are in a permanent job-sharing position and work at least 20 hours per week, you will receive paid legal holidays, annual vacation leave, sick leave and personal leave on a pro-rata basis. You also receive service credit under the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System as provided in G.S.135-4(b) and insurance benefits as provided in G.S. 135-40.2. You earn retirement credit at a rate of one-half year of retirement credit for each regular school year of employment. Your participation in the State Health Plan is an optional benefit. If you elect to participate in the State Health Plan, the district unit pays a percentage of the Plan's total non-contributory premiums and you pay the balance.

(Reference(s): G.S. 115C-302. 1; G.S. 115C-316; G.S. 135-4(b); G.S. 153-40.2; NCGA 2003, S.B. 701 and NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

Employment of Relatives

It is the policy of Guilford County Schools avoid placing any new employee or fill any vacant position with an employee who would be under the direct supervision of a member of that employee's immediate family. Immediate family includes the employee's spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, grandson, granddaughter, stepmother and stepfather. Should two employees at a particular site enter into one of the familial relationships listed above when one is in a supervisory or evaluative role over the other this constitutes a conflict of interest one employee will be reassigned as soon as reasonably possible.

Evaluation

The Guilford County Board of Education places a high priority on both engaging and assisting you to develop throughout your term of employment. The evaluation process involves the assessment of our performance. The performance evaluation is a continuing process for the purpose of identifying strengths and areas for growth of the individual and improving the quality of work.

Classified Personnel

If you are a classified employees, you are an at-will employee and should be evaluated at minimum once every fiscal year; however, if you receive ratings that are all at or above "satisfactory" levels, the formal evaluation may take place every two years as long as your performance continues to meet "satisfactory" levels. Your supervisor must document the satisfactory performance during alternate years by completing the "Certification of Classified Employee Performance" form. Your evaluator may conduct an appraisal at any time deemed necessary. Both you and the evaluator must sign to indicate that the employee has read the completed evaluation form.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GCI)

Licensed Personnel

You can find specific procedures that comply with North Carolina laws and State Board of Education regulations regarding the evaluation of licensed personnel in Board of Education Policy GBI.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBI; Board of Education Policy GBDB; G. S. 115C-333)

Performance Growth Plans

Licensed Employees

A performance growth plan or action plan refers to any written strategy to help an employee improve or gain greater competence. This includes monitored and directed growth plans. North Carolina General Statute 115C-333 and Board of Education Policy GBIA require a Performance Growth Plan for any licensed employee who receives a rating of "below standard", "unsatisfactory", "developing" or "not demonstrated" on any function of the employee's performance evaluation, unless the Superintendent recommends dismissal, demotion or non-renewal of the employee. Under state law, teachers are required to enter into the Superintendent's plan for professional development.

Limitations on Appeal: A performance growth plan or action plan cannot be appealed:

1. The placement on a plan of a licensed employee who receives a rating of below standard, unsatisfactory, developing, or not demonstrated is required by statute.
2. The ratings received on an evaluation result in the placement of an employee on a growth plan.
3. The fact that an administrator does not meet every requirement set forth in a growth plan provided that there has been substantial compliance.

(Reference: G.S. 115C-307 (e); G.S. 115C-333; Board of Education Policy GBIA)

An individual Growth Plan will be developed and reviewed at least annually. Beginning teachers must be rated "proficient" on all North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards on the most recent Teacher Summary Rating Form in order to be eligible for the Standard Professional 2 License.

(Reference: North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process)

Classified Employees

Performance Plan: If you are a classified employee who receives an overall performance rating below "satisfactory" level on his/her performance evaluation, you must participate in a performance improvement plan designed to improve your performance in the deficient area(s).

Any employee may respond in writing to the evaluation and have the response placed in his/her personnel evaluation file.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GCI)

Payroll and Salary Administration

Pay Plan Administration

In addition to the State Teacher's Salary Schedule, there are locally adopted salary schedules for positions employed by the Board of Education. Guilford County Schools' Pay Plan recognizes experience as the basis for pay increases within the established pay range.



Paydays

Pay Schedule: Employees are paid either monthly on the 15th of the month or the last day of the month, or semi-monthly on the 15th and last day of the month. Each paycheck includes earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. **Contact the Payroll Department at 336 370-8370 for additional information on pay dates.** In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a weekend or bank holiday, employees' bank accounts will be credited on the revised pay date.

Direct Deposit Required: All employees including substitutes are required to enroll in the Direct Deposit Program. You must complete the Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement for Automatic Deposit or Payroll Card Enrollment Form. After the Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement is received and processed, a test transaction is made from Guilford County Schools' account and the employee's bank account; as a result, please allow six to eight weeks before deposits can be made directly to your account.

View Paycheck Information: You may view your paycheck information (paystubs) online, by visiting the GCS Website's Employee Self-service link. Any questions or requests for the Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement should be directed to the Payroll Office at 336-370-8367.

Payroll Deductions

Federal and State income taxes, social security tax and retirement contributions, tax liens, etc. will be payroll-deducted as required by law and the board of education. No other payroll deductions from your pay for contributions to charitable or other organizations will be made without your prior approval and in accordance with locally established procedures.

Income Tax Withholding Forms: You may get federal (form W-4) and state (form NC-4) from the payroll office, Benefits Department or the Guilford County Schools Website for the purpose of changing income tax withholding information. Changes in exemptions and deductions may be made at any time during the year.

12 Month Pay Option - State Employees' Credit Union Summer Cash Account: Ten- and 11-month employees

may choose to enroll in the State Employees' Credit Union Summer (SECU) Cash Account as a structured method to save for summer "reserves". The Summer Cash Account is available to all SECU members who work fewer than 12 months per school year. During the working months, payroll deductions are made from your checks, forwarded to SECU and deposited in your Summer Cash Account. Funds from your Summer Cash Account (including earned interest) will be automatically transferred into your requested SECU checking or share accounts during the non-working month(s). You can receive more information on the SECU Summer Cash Account from any of the SECU branches.

12 Month Pay Option - Guilford County Schools 12 Month Pay Option: Ten-month employees may choose to enroll in the Guilford County Schools' 12-month pay option by completing the 12-month pay option form from their schools/departments, to be completed and submitted to the Payroll by 5:00 pm on the first teacher workday (traditional calendar).

Hiring Rate/Starting Salary/Salary Adjustments

Teacher and/or State Salary Schedules: Teachers and other staff paid on the teacher and/or state salary schedules are placed on the schedule and step-certified by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction based on years of experience and degree(s) held. The district provides a local supplement to these salaries.

District Level Licensed Salary Schedules: Employees assigned to these schedules are paid in accordance with the degree and experience level on their North Carolina educator license. Each schedule indicates rates for Bachelor's degree level, Master's degree level and Six-Year/Advanced degree level and Doctorate degree level. All district level positions requiring an educator license are assigned to one of these schedules.

Master Salary Schedule (for Non-licensed positions): New employees assigned to the Master Salary Schedule who sufficiently verify previous work experience may receive credit for experience in accordance with provisions for experience criteria.

Bus Driver Salary Schedule: New employees assigned to the Bus Driver Salary Schedule who sufficiently verify previous work experience may receive credit up to the maximum of the Bus Driver Salary Schedule in accordance with the provisions for experience criteria.

Salary Corrections: Employees are encouraged to monitor their pay vouchers to assure proper placement on the appropriate salary schedule. Errors in salary placement (underpayments and overpayments) will be corrected upon discovery. Salary adjustments will be effective retroactively, to the date the error occurred. However, under no circumstances will a retroactive salary adjustment be made for more than twelve (12) months prior to discovery. All adjustments will be made effective on the first day of the appropriate pay period.

Co-Curricular Supplements: Exempt employees and community volunteers (non-faculty) may receive a nominal fee for **performing co-curricular activities such as coaching or activity sponsorship at the discretion of the principal**. With the receipt of a nominal fee, a separate agreement must be completed for each activity. For more information, please refer to the co-curricular guidelines on the GCS website.

Longevity: Employees on the District level licensed salary schedule and classified, regular full-time and part-time employees (20 hours or more a week) are eligible for yearly longevity payments after completing 10 years of State of North Carolina service. **As of the 2014-15 school year, teachers and instructional support no longer earn longevity benefits. The NC General Assembly incorporated these funds into the salary schedules to**

provide higher salaries at each step. As of the 2017-18 school year, school-based administrators (principals and assistant principals) no longer earn longevity benefits.

Longevity payment is made the last working day of the employee's anniversary month. The payment is calculated according to a scale based upon annual state salary and years of qualifying service:

<u>Years Completed</u>	<u>Longevity Percentage</u>
10 but less than 15	1.50%
15 but less than 20	2.25%
20 but less than 25	3.25%
25 or more years	4.50%

Establishing Longevity: Upon hire, an employee's longevity date is established with the district based on verifiable, qualifying state service. New employees must complete the State of North Carolina Service-Employee's Record (Form 103) provided during New Employee Orientation. Employees with qualifying state service must send the NC State Service Transfer Form to their last employer for completion.

Longevity and Leaves of Absence: Eligible employees on leaves of absence receive longevity payments upon return from leave.

Questions regarding longevity should be directed to Human Resources Operations.

Licensed Employment



Contracts for Licensed Employees

Teacher One-year Contract*:

To receive a one-year contract, a teacher must:

- a. hold a valid, initial or continuing North Carolina Professional Educator's License;
- b. have met all required North Carolina State Board of Education content area exams;
- c. be employed in a continuing position for six months or more

One-Year Contracts are subject to annual renewal/non-renewal based on the Principal's recommendation.

Teacher Two-Year Contract*

To be recommended for a two-year contract, a teacher must:

- a. have been employed by the Board as a teacher for at least three consecutive years;
- b. have received a rating of at least "proficient" on all standards on the two most recent annual evaluations;
- c. not be on a monitored or directed growth plan, mandatory improvement plan, or corrective action plan currently and not have been on any such plan at any time during the current or previous school year;
- d. not have received any of the following during the current or previous school year: a demotion, a suspension without pay, or a reprimand, warning, or disciplinary action that is documented in the teacher's official personnel file; and
- e. not have other relevant performance or conduct information in his or her personnel file that would support a decision to disqualify the teacher from a multi-year contract.

Teacher Four-Year Contract*

To be recommended for a four-year contract, a teacher must:

- a. have been employed by the Board as a teacher for at least five consecutive years;
- b. meet the criteria for a two-year contract; and
- c. possess at least one of the following qualifications:
 - have received a rating of at least "accomplished" on vast majority of the standards on the evaluation instrument in the most recent annual evaluation;
 - be National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certified, or similarly certified by another nationally respected, performance-based process and professional organization.
 - demonstrate effectiveness with different/all student subgroups during the past two years using one or more validated assessments of student or teacher performance;
 - be licensed in an area in which the school system is experiencing difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified applicants or that is otherwise in high demand, as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

*Teacher = All Licensed Teachers and Support Staff such as Counselors, Media Specialists, Psychologists,

Social Workers, Speech Language Pathologists and Curriculum Specialists

Career Contracts

Career contracts and career status (tenure) will remain in effect if the teacher obtained the status in Guilford County Schools prior to the 2013-14 school year.

Interim Contracts

Issued to Licensed Employees in the following circumstances:

- Employed in a temporarily vacant position;
- Does not hold an initial or continuing North Carolina Professional Educator's License (i.e. validated license, Lateral Entry or Provisional License);
- Retirees who are employed less than 30 hours/week;
- Employed less than 100%;
- Employed for less than 6 months.

Interim contracts are for a specific period of time, not to exceed one school year.

Administrative Contracts

Principals and assistant principals, as well as certain directors and supervisors who have not attained career status under the provision of North Carolina General Statute 115C-325 will be issued initial two-year contracts and are eligible for extensions of four (4) years according to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute 115C-287.1.

If any licensed employee believes that he/she has not been issued the correct contract or the correct number of years of probationary status, it is the employee's responsibility to advise the Recruiting and Staffing office, so that any discrepancy can be reviewed and appropriately resolved.

As an eligible instructional licensed employee, you will be issued a contract upon employment with Guilford County Schools. Changes to teacher contracts are under consideration by the state legislature. We will communicate approved changes will be communicated with licensed employees as soon as it becomes available.

Important: *If any licensed employee believes that he/she has not been issued the correct contract, it is the employee's responsibility to advise the Director of Staffing, so that any issue can be reviewed and appropriately resolved.*

(Reference: G.S. 115C-325 and G.S. 115C-287.1)

License Guidelines

Requirements

State law requires that all employees in licensed positions hold appropriate licensure for their subject(s), grade level(s) or professional assignment(s). "Appropriate" may mean a regular five-year license or a provisional license or endorsement valid only for the school year specified. As a licensed employee, it is your responsibility to maintain a valid license in the area of assignment. If you hold a license that is due to expire during the year, you must furnish documentation of completion of the required renewal credits, Praxis test scores, semester hours of coursework, etc. to the Staffing Office.

Disclosure of Criminal Convictions

If you hold an expiring license, you must provide information on any conviction of a felony or crime other than a minor traffic offense since the first N.C. license was issued. You must complete the online state-mandated form providing this information and submit it to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for the license extension to be valid.

Renewal Guidelines

The number of continuing education units (CEUs) required to renew a Continuing North Carolina Professional Educator’s license is 8.0.

Chart of Renewal Guidelines

Credits required to Renew Continuing licenses expiring on or after June 30, 2019
<p style="text-align: center;">Grades K-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Academic Subject Area – Aligned to NC Prof. Teaching Standard 3 and 4• 3 Literacy - As defined in GS 115C-296• 2 Digital Learning Competencies
<p style="text-align: center;">Grades 6-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Academic Subject Area - Aligned to NC Prof. Teaching Standard 3 and 4• 2 Digital Learning Competencies• 3 General
<p style="text-align: center;">Administrators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Executive's Role - Align with the expectations of the North Carolina School Executive Standards 2, 4, and 5, focused on the school executive's role as instructional, human resources, and managerial leader• 2 Digital Learning Competencies• 3 General
<p style="text-align: center;">Student Services Personnel (Counselors, Media Specialists, Social Workers, Psychologists and Speech Language Pathologists with a Teaching Area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Professional Discipline Area (Licensure area/Subject area)• 2 Digital Learning Competencies• 3 General

Note: The definition of teacher includes instructional support personnel. Subject to change based on NC State Board of Education policy updates

For detailed information, refer to policy **TCP-A-005** on the NC Public Schools website www.ncpublicschools.org.

Earning Credit

You may earn credit for attending locally sponsored workshops, college and university courses, activities offered by various outside organizations and locally approved "independent study" activities. **Prior approval is required** to earn renewal credit for **all** activities offered by any entity other than Guilford County Schools, including colleges, State Department of Public Instruction, universities, technical schools and community colleges. "Prior approval" means that you must request approval **before** the beginning date of the activity.

Professional Learning and Leadership

Professional Learning and Leadership: GCS Sponsored Activities

The Guilford County School system encourages employees to use all available opportunities for professional development. Specialized training sessions, in addition to renewal credit opportunities, are made available to employees of the district.

GCS-Sponsored Activities

Individual schools or various divisions within Guilford County Schools often conduct staff development activities that award Continuing Education Units CEU's to employees who participate in these courses. In these cases, the Office of Professional Development must approve the workshop before renewal credit can be offered. Requests should be made four weeks prior to the start date of the workshop.

Standards

Workshops must meet the following standards:

1. To receive credit, a workshop must have a minimum of five (5) clock hours of direct training by an instructor. (.5 CEUs will be granted)
2. Workshop meeting times should be a minimum of two (2) hours per session. CEU's are only granted for up to 6 hours of staff development per day.
3. For all-day workshops, a one-hour lunch break must be provided to all participants. It is not acceptable to reduce or eliminate the lunch break to release participants early from the workshop.
4. For a 10-hour course, only one (1) of the 10 hours can be an outside assignment.
5. Hours of credit for online courses are determined collaboratively by the online design team and the Office of Professional Development.
6. Course content and instructional activities should be designed in a sequential manner to achieve outcomes for a specific population.
7. The course must be led by qualified personnel and directly supervised by the sponsoring school or department. Credit is granted on the basis of course completion.
8. **No partial credit is given to any workshop participant.** Participants who miss more than 30 cumulative minutes of any workshop are not eligible for credit.
9. Participants must obtain a PD
10. Participants will receive a Performance Matters-Professional Learning account



with 1-2 weeks of being hired. The platform uses single sign on.

Participants who attend, but do not register before the last day of the course, will not receive CEU credit.

Approval

Each School has a course requester (usually a CF) and a level one approver (Admin). The course requester creates the course in Performance Matters and the Level One Approver reviews the course for accuracy and alignment to school improvement plans.. Once approved at Level One, the course is sent to the Professional Learning office for final approval. Participants will not be able to register for the course until it's approved at level two and released to the course catalog. Course approval submissions should be completed four (4) weeks prior to the start date of the workshop.

Digital Learning Competency Approval

In order to receive DLC credit for a course, you must get approval from the Blended Learning Department. The approval form can be found on the Blended Learning webpage by clicking on Digital Learning Competencies on the left hand side of the page and then click on Creating a DLC PD.

Registration and Credit

Upon approval, the workshop will be posted on the Professional Development website. Participants should register for the approved GCS workshop prior to the start date of the workshop. Instructors are responsible for printing the attendance sheet, noting participant credit, signing the workshop roster and submitting it to the Office of Professional Development, at Laughlin, 7911 Summerfield Road, Summerfield, NC 27358, within three (3) working days after completion of the workshop. Upon receipt of the roster, attendance will be marked and CEU credit posted for the participants. Documentation can also be emailed to profdev@gcsnc.com. If documentation is emailed or faxed, the original should be kept by the employee.

Beginning Teachers and Professional Support

Guilford County Schools New Teacher Support Program focuses on building the capacity of its beginning teachers to promote high achievement among students. It provides a comprehensive induction program, called *Right Start*, to ensure that new professionals have the support to become the most effective teachers possible.

Right Start

Right Start includes an orientation, professional development seminars, and ongoing support at the beginning teachers' schools. Right Start orientation consists of pre-service workshops—an introduction to Guilford County Schools, including curriculum, policies and procedures, professional development, North Carolina teaching standards, and the North Carolina evaluation process. Orientation is followed by ongoing professional development. Beginning teachers receive continuous support at their schools by an induction coach, a lead mentor, and an assigned mentor.

Beginning Teacher Support Program

The Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) is a three-year program that extends professional education preparation and offers the support necessary for an individual's professional growth.

Required Participation: If you are a teacher who did not receive a continuing license prior to January 1, 1998 and have less than three years of appropriate service (generally public school service) in your areas of initial licensure you are required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

Out-of-State Applicants: If you are an out-of-state applicant, you are not subject to BTSP requirements if your North Carolina license results from reciprocity or completion of a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), approved education program, and if you have three or more years of appropriate experience. Not all states have NC reciprocity, and not all out-of-state colleges and universities are NCATE approved. If you are an out-of-state applicant with less than three years' experience, you must participate in BTSP.

Individuals Renewing Licenses: If you renew your expired license, you do not have to participate in BTSP if you have three or more years of appropriate experience at the time of license renewal. Without this experience, you are subject to BTSP requirements.

Mentor Support: Year I, Year II, and Year III beginning teachers (BT) in Guilford County Schools are assigned a Mentor/Support Team, consisting of the principal/supervisor (or designee) and a trained mentor, usually from the same subject area or grade level. A minimum of six consecutive months of participation is required per school year for the "year" to count toward fulfillment of the BTSP requirement.

Continuous Professional Growth Requirement: If you are an initially licensed teacher, you are required by the state to show continuous professional growth as determined by each school district. Guilford County Schools requires that you document your continuous professional growth on your professional development transcript logs. Workshops and courses must be approved through the Professional Development Website and must be taken within the fiscal year of July 1 to June 30.

Completion of BT requirements in one teaching area satisfies the BT requirements for all other teaching areas. Once continuing licensure is earned in one teaching area, additional teaching areas do not require a BT experience. If you are an initially-licensed teacher who is assigned to subject areas in which you hold a provisional license, you may not earn a continuing license until the specific license provisions have been satisfied. If you are an initially-licensed teacher who needs additional assistance beyond that provided by assigned mentors, contact the Office of Induction and Success at 665-8000.

Continuing Professional Licensure (Standard Professional II License) will be granted when you, as a BT have successfully completed the required professional growth as prescribed by the LEA, licensure requirements, and three years of teaching, and when the designated local official has notified DPI that there is no knowledge related to the character or conduct to deny licensure to teach in North Carolina.

Professional Learning and Leadership: Non-GCS Courses

All events that are not sponsored by GCS must receive prior approval. To request prior approval to earn renewal credits for attending a **NON-GCS** course, workshop, seminar, conference, etc., you should request approval via the GCS Professional Development website before attending an event for CEU credit. Failure to obtain prior approval, may disallow CEU credit. Requests should be made three weeks prior to the start date of an event. CEU credit cannot be awarded for any course with less than five (5) hours of instruction.

Requests should be made three (3) weeks prior to the start date of an event. CEU credits may not be posted if you do not get prior approval for the event. The Office of Professional Development will review the request, and if it is not approved for credit, you will be informed by GCS email. If the request is not approved, notification will be sent within two to three (2-3) weeks upon receipt of the request.

To receive credit, a copy of the Certificate of Completion giving the amount of contact hours and/or CEUs must be submitted to the Office of Professional Development at Laughlin Professional Development Center, 7911 Summerfield Road, Summerfield, NC 27358. Documentation can also be emailed to profdev@gcsnc.com. The original document should be kept by the person requesting credit.

1. College Credit: Submit **Transcript (or copy)**. Only university/college transcripts will be accepted.
2. Non-College Course: Submit a copy of the **Certificate of Completion** and **Agenda** if CEU credit is not printed on the certificate.
3. Conference: Submit a copy of the **Certificate of Completion, Conference Syllabus, and SS-4** form that can be downloaded from the GCS Professional Development website.

Credit is recorded until the appropriate document is submitted to the Office of Professional Development.

Professional Learning and Leadership: National Board Certification

CEU credit is earned for the completion of National Board Certification. If you are a teacher, you may choose to use the CEU's for the current renewal cycle or "bank" them for the next renewal cycle. In order to receive credit, you must submit a copy of the congratulatory letter from NBPTS to the Staffing Department and indicate if the renewal credits are to be applied to the current renewal cycle or the next cycle. You **may not** use a portion of the NBPTS CEU credit for the current renewal cycle and "bank" a portion for the next cycle. Completion of the process for National Board Certification is acceptable to complete renewal requirements for your next renewal cycle, even if the you do not achieve national certification.

You may direct questions concerning **licensure renewal** to the Staffing Department at 378-8806, and questions concerning the **renewal credit approval process** to the Office of Professional Development at 336-665-8003.

Refer to the GCS Professional Development website for additional information.

Employee Non-renewal and Separation



Retention and Non-renewal of Non-tenured, Licensed Employees

The most important aspect of attaining excellence in education is the quality of the teaching staff and the administrative staff. In striving for excellence, the district seeks to employ and reemploy teachers and administrators who possess, have exhibited, and continue to strive for excellence in their preparation for, performance of, and contribution toward the educational process. Achievement of a proficient rating on the North Carolina Teacher and Administrator summative evaluation is the expected standard of performance for teachers and administrators in this school system; however, proficient performance is not assurance to any teacher or administrator of rights to employment or reemployment. Teachers and administrators are accountable for striving for a summative rating of distinguished on all performance. Performance and contribution to the education process as measured by appraisals factors in decisions to employ and reemploy teachers and administrators.

Basis for Nonrenewal

The board, upon the superintendent's recommendation, may refuse to renew the contract of any non-tenured teacher for any cause it deems sufficient, provided that the cause may not be arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, or for personal or political reasons, or because the teacher engaged in activities that are protected by the United States Constitution or the North Carolina Constitution. For more information, please refer to § 115C-325.

Notice of Nonrenewal

The superintendent shall notify teachers of any recommendation not to renew teachers' employment in accordance with State statute. (Reference: G.S. 115C-325)

Resignation: Classified Employees

A classified employee is required to submit a written resignation notice at least **fourteen (14) calendar days** prior to the effective date. If you do not provide sufficient notice, that fact will be included in your employment record and may harm your future reemployment possibilities.

If you are resigning during the summer months, you must provide a notice of at least fourteen (14) days prior to start date for employees for the next school year. Administrative employees should provide at least sixty (60) calendar days written notice prior to the effective date of the resignation. All resigning employees should indicate on their resignation forms if they will be moving directly to another North Carolina LEA or state agency. A resignation accepted by the superintendent or his/her designee, may not be withdrawn by the employee. (Reference: Board of Education Policy GCO)

Resignation: Licensed Employees

The Superintendent or his/her designee is authorized to accept resignations from employees on behalf of the Board. All resigning employees should indicate on their resignation forms if they will be moving directly to another North Carolina LEA or state agency. Once a resignation is accepted by the Superintendent, it may not be withdrawn by the employee. When it becomes necessary for a licensed employee to cancel his/her contract or terminate employment, a written resignation notice should be received at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the effective date in accordance with General Statute 115C-325(0). Administrative employees should provide at least sixty (60) calendar days written notice prior to the effective date of the resignation. In addition to jeopardizing future reemployment possibilities, failure to provide a timely notice may constitute grounds for license revocation.

If you are resigning during the summer months, you must provide a notice of at least thirty (30) days prior to start date for employees for the next school year.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBO)

Resignation: Medical Benefits

1. If you are paid fewer than 12 months in a year, have made contributions for the non-work months, **and** your employment terminates at the end of the school year, you will continue to be covered by medical insurance through the end of the period for which premium contributions have been made, **with the understanding that if you are not employed by another State-covered employer under this Plan at the beginning of the next academic year, the you will refund to Guilford County Schools the amount of the employer's cost paid for them during the non-paycheck months;**
2. If you are a 10-, 11- or 12-month employee and are terminated before the 16th of a calendar month you medical insurance ends at the end of the month; if employment is terminated on the 16th or later in the month and you have made the required contribution for any coverage in the following month, that coverage will be continued to the end of the calendar month following separation.
3. Medical premium overpayment for the summer months will be refunded in the final payout.

Resignation: Communication

Separating employees will receive a:

1. **Separation Letter:** detailing the effective date of the separation; notice to return GCS property and other relevant information.
2. **COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) Notification:** notifying eligibility to continue certain medical benefits after separation.

Resignation and Leave Balances

Following a resignation, the distribution of leave balances is as follows:

1. **Contact Payroll:** If you resign and are directly hired by another North Carolina public school system, sick leave, annual leave, eligible bonus leave and personal leave balances must be transferred to the hiring school system. You must contact the Payroll Department (336) 433-7190 and request the transfer of leave balances to avoid payment for annual leave.
2. **Leave in Case of Transfer between LEAs:** If you resign and are transferring to another NC LEA or to a state agency, and the new employment is obtained within 31 calendar days from the date of separation (as reported by the resigning employee), sick leave, annual leave, eligible bonus leaves and personal leave balances must be transferred to the hiring school system.

3. **Annual Leave in Case of Transfer to/from Other State Agencies:** Leave may be transferred to and from a state agency or institution, community college, public university, technical institute, or from and organization covered by the State Personnel Act (e.g. some county agencies of mental health, public health, social services, or emergency management) if the agency is willing to accept the transfer. All or any portion of the unused leave may be accepted.
4. **Non-acceptance of Credit:** If the receiving agency refuses to accept credit for unused annual vacation leave or bonus leave, you will be paid in a lump sum for up to 30 days or 240 hours of accumulated annual vacation leave and for the bonus leave.
5. **Banking of Leave:** If you separate and are not immediately rehired in another North Carolina school system, the sick leave and personal leave are kept in a “bank” for 60-63 months (based on your months of service) and payment is made for annual leave days. Reinstatement of sick and personal days must follow the provisions of G.S.115c-336.
6. **Charter Schools:** There is no provision for public school employees to transfer leave to or from charter schools

Resignation and Final Payout

1. **Unused Leave:** If you separate, you must be paid in a lump sum for accumulated annual vacation leave, not to exceed a maximum of 30 days or 240 hours, and for bonus leave upon separation from service. Separation from service includes resignation (unless the employee is transferring to another LEA or state agency), dismissal, reduction-in-force, death, service retirement, beginning long-term disability benefit or change to temporary status.
2. **Timing:** To ensure an accurate final payout of leave balances, the Payroll Department pays out any eligible leave balances the month after your last regular pay date, for example: if the termination/retirement is in May, you will receive the leave payout at the end of June. This delay allows time for final reporting of leave usage to be received and processed by Payroll.
3. **Leave Deficit:** If the you are overdrawn with respect to leave, a deduction in the appropriate amount must be made from the final payout.
4. **Retirement:** A deduction for retirement must be made from all lump-sum payments of annual vacation leave. Receipt of lump-sum leave payment and retirement benefits is not considered to be dual compensation.
5. **Overpayment and Funds Owed to Guilford County Schools:** Guilford County Schools will deduct any overpayments or funds owed to the district from a final payout as allowed by law.

Unemployment

If you leave GCS and apply for unemployment compensation, GCS provides the required information to the Division of Employment Security regarding your separation. Generally, 10-month employees by statute are **not considered unemployed during the summer months or when school is not in session. In addition, short-term substitutes are not generally eligible for unemployment compensation when there is no work available.**

The Division of Employment Security determines your eligibility for unemployment compensation and it your responsibility to ensure that you provide truthful and accurate information during the application process. It is advisable to contact the Division of Employment Security for information regarding rights and responsibilities. It is a Class A felony to improperly obtain more than \$400 in unemployment benefits.

Employee Benefits

The Benefits Department provides support to all GCS employees and their covered dependents. Its goal is to give courteous and timely care to every employee situation. Self-service options are also available for your convenience. To help us prepare for the meeting and serve you better, we request appointments for the items marked by asterisks:

- Leave Planning*
- Disability Planning*
- Benefits Enrollment Assistance
- Life Insurance Claims*
- Accommodation Requests
- Retirement*
- Workers' Compensation



Employment Definitions

Permanent Employee

A permanent employee is a person employed with the expectation of permanent employment to fill a position that is to be permanent if present needs and funds continue, or employed for at least six full consecutive monthly pay periods to replace one or more employees who are on leave of absence without pay; and may be full-time or part-time.

Full-time, Regular Employee

A full-time employee is a person employed at least 30 hours per week and eligible for full benefits. (This definition does not necessarily apply to Visiting International Faculty or retirees returning to work.)

Full benefits may include:

1. Insurance plans offered by the district
2. Financial plans offered by the district
3. Leave days (sick, annual etc.)
4. State Teachers' and Employees' Retirement System
5. Longevity payments
6. Leave of absence
7. NC State Employees Credit Union
8. General liability insurance

Full-time Employee (Not Eligible for Benefits)

This category of an employee is an employee who regularly work 30 hours or more per week, but who are otherwise ineligible for standard/full benefits.

Part-time Employee

A part-time employee is a person employed at least 20 hours per week, but fewer than 30; eligible for pro-rated (partial) benefits. This does not necessarily apply to Visiting International Faculty or retirees returning to work.

Pro-Rated (partial) benefits may include:

1. health insurance may be purchased paying the employee and employers' cost
2. leave days (sick, annual etc.) earned on a pro-rated (partial) basis for years worked
3. longevity payments
4. leave of absence
5. NC State Employees' Credit Union
6. tax-deferred annuities 403 (b) programs
7. general liability insurance

Interim Employee

An interim employee is a person employed on a temporary basis to fill a position for a designated period of time and/or is employed to replace an employee on leave. This can be full-time or part-time.

Temporary Employee

A temporary employee is a person employed less than 20 hours per week, or employed in an interim position for less than six (6) full consecutive monthly pay periods.

Employee Discounts - GCS 4 Le\$\$

Businesses throughout Greensboro and the surrounding counties are showing their appreciation and support by offering GCS employee discounts. Enjoy great perks at retail stores, parks, and apartments, sporting events and other venues by regularly checking GCS 4 Le\$\$, formerly Employee Express.

Employment/Salary Verifications

The Benefits Department also assists you with salary and employment verifications. Salary verifications (for loans, mortgages, social services, etc.) generally require a **48-hour turnaround** for active and recently-separated employees. For employment verifications requiring documentation of job history, please allow **5-10 business days for processing**.

Enrollment in Benefits

Enrollment Deadline

Benefits-eligible employees are required to complete the enrollment process to elect their benefits. If you do not enroll within 30 days of your hire date, you will have to wait until annual enrollment before you can enroll.

Benefits Online Enrollment

All new hire benefits enrollment is online through the following websites: (1) North Carolina State Health Plan www.shpnc.org – (2) Flexible Health Plan (dental, vision, life etc.) www.markiii.com. Each website is equipped with video and written instructions to assist with enrollment. The Benefits Department is available to help you if you need special assistance and if you are changing benefits elections due to a qualifying life event.

Employee and Dependent Data (Legal/Government Names Only)

Employees should enroll using their legal names and those of their dependents. Generally speaking, this is the name under which you file your tax return, or the name reflected on your social security card. You must also provide accurate social security numbers for yourself and each dependent. Failure to do this may result in the inability of the IRS to confirm required medical insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act, jeopardize continued insurance coverage and subject you to an IRS penalty.

Changes in Employee Benefits Status and Qualifying Events

Benefit Election Status Changes

Certain benefit changes for pre-tax health or dental insurance and flexible benefits (vision and cancer) are regulated by federal and state agencies. This means that **you may not make mid-year changes to plans in which the premiums are paid on a pre-tax basis**. If one of the following qualifying events occurs during the plan year, you may be allowed to change (add, terminate, increase or decrease) current election(s) in pre-tax benefits. **The change must be completed within 30 days of the event** and must be the result of one of the events below; the changes requested must be consistent with the change in status.

Qualifying Events for Medical Plan

You are a timely enrollee for **health** coverage if you apply for coverage and/or add or remove dependents within a 30-day period following any of the qualified life events listed below:

1. You are newly hired;
2. Your marital status changes due to marriage, death of a spouse, divorce, legal separation, or annulment;
3. You obtain a dependent through marriage, birth, adoption, placement in anticipation of adoption, or foster care placement of an eligible child;
4. A significant change (at least \$50 per month) in the health premium benefits in the plan covering spouse and/or dependents;
5. You or your dependents experience an employment status change that results in the loss or gain of coverage under another health benefit plan, and each of the following conditions is met:
 - a. You and/or your dependents are otherwise eligible for coverage under the State Health Plan; and
 - b. You and/or your dependents were covered under another health benefit plan at the time this coverage was previously offered and you declined enrollment due to the other coverage; and
 - c. You and/or your dependents lose coverage under another health benefit plan due to i) the exhaustion of the COBRA continuation period, or ii) the loss of eligibility for that other coverage for reasons including, but not limited to, divorce, loss of dependent status, death of the employee, termination of employment, or reduction in the number of hours of employment, or iii) the termination of the other plan's coverage, or iv) the offered health benefit plan not providing benefits in your service area and no other health benefit plans are available, or v) the termination of employer contributions toward the cost of the other plan's coverage, or vi) meeting or exceeding the lifetime maximum, or vii) the discontinuance of the health benefit plan to similarly situated individuals;
 - d. You or your dependents become Medicare eligible;
 - e. Your dependent ceases to be an eligible dependent (dependent child turns 26);
 - f. You, your spouse, or your dependents commence or return from an unpaid leave of absence such as Family and Medical Leave or military leave;

- g. You receive a qualified medical child support order (as determined by the plan administrator) that requires the plan to provide coverage for your children;
- h. If you, your spouse or dependents experience a cost or coverage change under another group health plan for which an election change was permitted, you may make a corresponding election change under the Flex Plan (e.g. your spouse's employee significantly increases the cost of coverage and as a result, allows the spouse to change his/her election) (not applicable to the Health FSA);
- i. If you change employment status such that you are no longer expected to average 30 hours of service per week but you do not lose eligibility for coverage under the State Health Plan (e.g. you are in a stability period during which you qualify as full-time), you may still prospectively revoke your election provided that you certify that you have or will enroll yourself (and any other covered family members) in other coverage providing minimum essential coverage (e.g. the Market place) that is effective no later than the first day of the second month following the month that includes the date the original coverage is revoked;
- j. You may prospectively revoke your State Health Plan election if you certify your intent to enroll yourself and any covered dependents in the Marketplace for coverage that is effective beginning no later than the day immediately following the last day of the original coverage that is revoked;
- k. You or your dependents lose coverage due to loss of eligibility under Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and apply for coverage under this Plan within 60 days; or
- l. You or your dependents become eligible for premium assistance with respect to coverage under this Plan under Medicaid or CHIP and apply for coverage under this Plan within 60 days.

Note: Obtaining third-party, non-group coverage (e.g. Marketplace/"Obamacare") outside of annual enrollment under the Affordable Care Act is not a qualifying event.

In addition, eligible surviving spouses and any eligible surviving dependent child of a deceased retiree, teacher, State employee, member of the General Assembly, former member of the General Assembly, or Disability Income Plan beneficiary are considered timely enrollees if they were enrolled at the time of the member's death and elect to continue coverage within 90 days after the death of the former State Health Plan member.

Qualifying Events for Flex Plans

You are a timely enrollee for **flex** coverage if you apply for coverage and/or add or remove dependents within a 30-day period following any of the qualified life events listed below:

1. Marriage
2. Divorce - Legal Separation - Annulment
3. Death of spouse
4. Birth or adoption of child
5. Placement of child in foster care
6. Termination or commencement of employment by spouse or covered children
7. Change from part-time to full-time, or full-time to part-time employment status by employee or spouse
8. The taking of an **unpaid leave** of absence by either the employee or spouse
9. Attainment of limiting age, change in student status or marriage of dependents
10. Entitlement of Medicare or Medicaid by employee, spouse; or dependent required, by court order, to provide coverage for child(ren)

Deadlines

Completion of benefits enrollment must occur within 30 days of employment or the qualifying life event (except as specifically described above) in order to enroll in coverage for the current plan year. If you do not enroll when first eligible must wait until the next annual enrollment period if you are still eligible. Proof of prior coverage, if applicable, must be submitted to the Benefits Department. Retirees and surviving spouses are not required to experience a qualifying event if they wish to un-enroll themselves or their dependents from the Plan; they may un-enroll at any time.

If you add dependent coverage, you are required to present eligibility documentation upon making a benefits change prior to the 30-day enrollment window. If you do not provide the appropriate documentation within the specified time, it may result in loss of coverage for the dependent(s).

Employee Error

It is your responsibility to ensure that dependents and other covered family members are eligible for coverage and that necessary changes in coverage are made in a timely manner. The IRS does not allow mid-year changes to plans with pre-tax premiums (without a qualifying event) due to employee error. **Employee error is not a qualifying event.** GCS will generally not reimburse you for premiums paid when you fail to terminate coverage in a timely manner. This includes premiums paid for dependents who have aged out of coverage, ex-spouses, etc.

Deadline for Change in Benefits

When a status change (qualifying event) occurs that changes coverage needs, you must go to www.shpnc.org within 30 days of the event and enter the plan change. Documentation to verify the change must be sent to the Benefits Department immediately—no later than thirty days after the qualifying life event.

Change of Address, Telephone and Name

Change Requests

Employees may make updates to their address and phone number online through the Employee Self-Service link located under the 'Staff' tab on the Guilford County Schools Website.

Name Change

Guilford County Schools requires that payroll and benefits documents reflect your legal name. Generally, this is the name you use when filing annual tax returns. If you legally change your name, you must complete a name change form, available from the Benefits Department. You must also provide appropriate documentation (marriage license, new social security card, court order, etc.) to process a name change. Depending on the position and the nature of the change, e.g. change in beneficiary or name change on teaching license, other forms may be required. Name changes must be made in writing on the appropriate forms.

Insurance

The information provided in this handbook is intended to be general in nature and for illustrative purposes only. The plan document and summary plan description for each plan serve as the legal authority for that plan. Benefits are subject to change.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)

Effective January 1, 2015, the district began offering coverage to employees (and their dependents) who regularly work 30 hours or more per week the opportunity to enroll in adequate and affordable coverage under its employer-sponsored plan.

Dependent Children and Age Limitations

It is your responsibility to ensure that dependent children who age out of a plan's eligibility or otherwise become ineligible (e.g. no longer a full-time student), are removed from coverage with a written request or appropriate form sent to the Benefits Department. GCS is not responsible for reimbursement of premiums due to failure to remove a dependent in a timely fashion (within 30 days).

Health Insurance

All permanent full-time employees of Guilford County Schools are eligible for group insurance provided by the State Health Plan and administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield. The insurance provides coverage for covered hospital and medical expenses. The plans are the 80/20 plan, the 70/30 plan (Preferred Provider Plans or PPOs), and the High Deductible Health Plan. The annual enrollment period for health insurance is determined by the State Health Plan;



however, it is typically in October of each year. Plan design, premiums and options are subject to change each plan year. For comprehensive information, visit the State Health Plan Website at www.shpnc.org.

Insurance coverage requires premium contribution from you. Premiums are typically deducted from your salary each payday. If you work a ten-month schedule and only receive ten paychecks directly from GCS, you also have an additional premium deduction (escrow) each payday to cover the two summer months during which no deduction can be taken.

Employee Responsibility for Premiums While on Leave without Pay: If you are an active employee and do not receive a paycheck for some reason, for example, leave without pay, you are responsible for making timely premium payments each month. Premiums must be paid in full for all insurance coverage in force. Partial payments are not accepted. It is your responsibility to pay the designated premiums if applicable each month regardless of receipt of a monthly invoice.

By state and IRS policy, failure to make full and timely payments will result in the termination of your insurance coverage. If insurance is cancelled due to non-payment of premiums, you will be unable to re-enroll in the coverage unless you experience a qualifying life event, return to work or re-enroll during annual enrollment.

Employees Returning from a Leave of Absence: Upon returning from an unpaid leave of absence, you have 30 days from your date of return to make changes in insurance.

Dependent Coverage: Eligible employees may elect to have a spouse and/or children covered by the same plan by paying a set monthly premium. **Children can be covered for health insurance only up to age 26 regardless**

of student or marital status providing the child is not eligible for other employer-sponsored health benefit coverage.

We generally collect your benefits premiums through payroll deduction one month in advance as a pre-tax deduction. For employees who paid in ten (10) installments, a monthly escrow is also deducted to cover the cost of health insurance premiums during the summer months. Permanent part-time employees working a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week may purchase health insurance if they pay the total premium (employee and employer costs).

Premiums: Currently, **all health plans** require an employee contribution to premium for employee-only coverage. (The premium may be contingent upon completing a tobacco use attestation.) Coverage for dependents requires employee contribution equal to the cost of the coverage.

Claims: Claims under the State Health Plan should be filed as soon as possible after services are received. It is the employee's responsibility to file claims. Some providers may file claims for you. Claim forms are available on the State Health Plan Website.

Plan Changes: You can generally make changes online health and/or dental plans during the annual enrollment periods. Changes in current coverage options may be made with a documented "qualifying event" if the changed enrollment is completed within thirty (30) days of the event. "Qualifying events" include but are not limited to: birth of a child, change in marital status, etc. See Benefit Election Status changes. Contact the Benefits Department with questions concerning health insurance and speak with any insurance representative or contact the NC Smart Choice Blue Options PPO Plans' customer service at 1-888-234-2416. The State Health Plan requires documentation for all qualifying life events and you must upload the documentation when you make the enrollment change or submit that documentation prior to the end the 30-day period to the Benefits Department.

(Reference: The State of North Carolina Comprehensive Health Benefit Plan)

Dental Insurance

The district offers permanent full-time employees optional dental coverage. Premiums are **employee-paid**. Three dental plans are available and eligible employees may enroll in only one (1) plan.

Direct Reimbursement Plan: With the Direct Reimbursement Plan, you pay the bill and submit the claim with a copy of the receipt, to the Plan Supervisor for a fifty (50) percent reimbursement. Claim forms are located on the Guilford County Schools Website.

Ameritas Standard Plan: The Ameritas Standard plan allows the claim to be submitted to the insurance company; you pay the remaining fee.

Ameritas PPO: The Ameritas PPO allows you to visit a network of dental providers who charge negotiated (reduced) rates for covered services. **Visiting a network provider** can offer additional savings for covered employees and dependents.

Dependent Coverage: You may elect cover a spouse and/or eligible children by the same plan by paying a monthly premium. Unmarried children up to age 26 are eligible for coverage. It is the employee's responsibility to terminate coverage when a dependent is no longer eligible for the plan. GCS will not reimburse you for premiums paid when you do not terminate a dependent upon reaching the age of 26.

Enrollment: The annual enrollment period for dental insurance is usually October of each year. The effective date of coverage is January 1. Once you are enrolled, no changes in coverage options may be made during the plan year unless you experience a benefit election status change/qualifying event. Additional information is available from the Benefits Department or on the GCS Website.
(Reference: The Guilford County Schools Website)

Flexible Benefits

Guilford County Schools' permanent full-time employees are offered flexible benefits plan. This plan offers you an opportunity to save money by paying for eligible non-reimbursed medical expenses, dependent care expenses, dental, supplemental hospital, cancer insurance and vision insurance with pre-tax dollars.
(Supplemental disability insurance and whole life insurance are offered only on an after-tax basis.)

The annual enrollment period for flexible benefits is October of each year. The effective date of coverage is January 1. Once you are enrolled, no changes in coverage options may be made during the plan year unless you experience a benefit election status change/qualifying event. Additional information is available in the Benefits Department. The plan year for the Flexible Benefits program is January 1 through December 31 of each year. The Plan Document and Summary Plan Description for the GCS Flexible Benefits Plan are located on the Guilford County Schools Website. Note: You must re-enroll in flexible spending accounts (medical and dependent care) each year. Other flexible benefits plans carry over from year to year. The flexible benefits plan is chosen through a competitive bid process and is periodically subject to change.

(Reference: Guilford County Schools Flex Benefits Plan Document, Guilford County Schools)



Term Life Insurance

The Guilford County Board of Education provides all basic group term life insurance coverage in the amount of \$5,000 to permanent full-time employees. You may elect to purchase additional coverage for yourself, a spouse and/or eligible children with premiums payroll-deducted.

Children up to age 26 are eligible for coverage. Coverage above \$150,000 for a new employee and coverage above \$30,000 for the spouse must be approved by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company after submission of a statement of health. It is your responsibility to notify the Benefits Department in writing as soon as your child turns 26 years of age to have them removed from coverage.

If you desire additional coverage after the initial election is completed, you must be approved by Metropolitan Life. There is no annual enrollment period for term life insurance. The term life insurance plan has an "Accelerated Benefits Option" feature, which may allow partial benefits if a medical doctor diagnoses you with a terminal illness. You may change beneficiaries and lower coverage at any time. To increase coverage, you must complete a "Statement of Health" be approved by the life insurance carrier. You may make changes to term life coverage during annual enrollment. You may change your beneficiary at any time. You should review and update you beneficiary periodically.

If you remain in active service beyond the age of 70, the combined amount of basic and optional insurance reduces based on a published schedule. More information is available in the Benefits Department.

Whole Life Insurance

Whole Life insurance is available through our flexible benefits program. This plan features guaranteed: level premiums, cash values and reduced paid-up life insurance at retirement. Coverage is portable and can be purchased on employee, spouse, children and grandchildren.

Comprehensive Legal and Identity Theft Protection

Guilford County Schools offers full-time employees a comprehensive legal plan that provides nationwide coverage and includes services such as will preparation, motor vehicle services, mortgage document assistance and IRS audit assistance. The Identity Theft Protection plan offers free credit reports, continuous credit monitoring and identity restoration. The plan year is January 1 through December 31 of each year. Annual enrollment is generally held in October of each year.

Insurance: Removing Children from Coverage

Dental and Life Insurance

If you have chosen to insure your children with dental and/or life insurance may do so until the child turns 26. For more information, contact the Benefits Department. It is your responsibility to notify the Benefits Department when a dependent is ineligible for coverage. Removal of child's coverage executed by paper form. Forms are located on the Guilford County Schools Website, under "Forms and Handbooks".

Health Insurance

Adult children, who have reached the age of 26 must be removed from the plan at www.shpnc.org. It is your responsibility to notify the Benefits Department when a child or spouse is no longer eligible for coverage.

Insurance: Continuation of Coverage Following Separation from Employment (including COBRA)

Health, Dental, FSA and Vision

Continuation of group health, dental insurance coverage, the medical reimbursement flexible spending account and vision insurance may be available to you, your spouse and/or dependents under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA-Health Insurance) and the Public Health Service Act (PHSA-Dental Insurance) as required by federal law. Qualifying events are governed by these COBRA regulations.

You pay for continuation of this coverage at full cost of the group rate(s), plus an administrative fee, as allowed by federal law. If you separate from employment, you will receive a termination letter from the Benefits Department, explaining termination of benefits and your rights, if any, under COBRA under separate cover.

Life Insurance: Term Life Continuation

Continuation of term life insurance coverage is available for the you or your family through conversion or portability. Information is provided at separation.

Life Insurance: Whole Life Continuation

Continuation of whole life insurance is available through direct billing. Information provided at separation.

HIPAA: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

The HIPAA Act is a federal law that was passed in 1996, with additional guidelines issued December 4, 2002. A portion of this federal law is called the "Privacy Rule." Through the Privacy Rule, the federal government seeks to protect and keep private an individual's personal health information (PHI). Our covered benefits plans are HIPAA compliant. PHI cannot be released to others without your written authorization. Authorization forms can be downloaded from the State Health Plan (see below) and are available from the Benefits Department. An excellent source for additional HIPAA information can be found on the State Health Plan Website at www.shpnc.org.

Liability Insurance

All employees of Guilford County Schools are covered by the Board of Education's School Professional Legal Liability Insurance Policy. Each claim has a \$1,000,000 limit of liability and an aggregate limit of \$1,000,000. The program covers legal liability for an act, error or omission in services rendered in the discharge of school district duties. The school system also carries general liability insurance coverage.

The NC General Assembly's 2011-12 Appropriations Act directed the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to implement a new Excess Educator's Legal Liability policy covering all employees, including new hires, tutors and volunteers. Through the policy, responses are provided to claims for professional activities on a member insured in the course and scope of his or her duties as an employee of a NC education agency or accredited public school district, state education agency or charter educational institution. Coverage is automatic and is in excess of that currently provided by the District e.g. commercial general liability, errors and omissions, employment practices liability and any other valid and collectible insurance.

For more information, including a copy of the policy please see below:

1. <http://www.professionalliabilitync.com> or
2. Chartis insurance at 800-849-0200 or contact@professionalliabilitync.com.
3. <http://www.professionalliabilitync.com/claims/> (claims information)

NC HealthSmart Wellness Programs

The NC HealthSmart Wellness Programs are online tools to help employees manage their personal health. Visit www.shpnc.org and click on NC HealthSmart. The NC HealthSmart Website includes:

1. Health Risk Assessment (HRA) survey
2. Personal Action Plan based on your HRA results
3. Lifestyle improvement programs
4. Health information references for any health or medical question



Workers' Compensation

Provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act are applicable to all paid employees. Workers' Compensation provides medical benefits and a weekly compensation benefit equal to 66 2/3 percent of the employee's

average weekly earnings for the year prior to the work-related injury or illness, up to a maximum established by the Industrial Commission each year.

Documentation

If you are injured on the job, you must report the injury to your immediate supervisor **immediately** following the accident. The employer's "Report of Injury to Employee (Form 19)" **must** be completed immediately online by the principal/supervisor or other designee, giving all of the pertinent detail of the work-related accident or illness. The completed "Employee Statement" (Statement B) **must** accompany the Form 19. Forms are available on the Key Risk and Sedgwick Websites. You should be given an authorization form (for medical treatment), which also includes a list of approved medical facilities to be used for the first or initial visit and the Form 19 by your supervisor/principal.

Medical Treatment

If an injury requires medical attention, you must be seen first by a medical doctor at a medical facility approved by our Workers' Compensation carriers. If you decide not to use an approved facility, the payment for the medical service you receive may be delayed or denied. Any treatment needed after the first or initial visit can only be authorized by the Workers' Compensation carrier. If you are injured on the job in a compensable accident requiring medical or therapy visits during regularly scheduled working hours in order to reach maximum medical improvement, you will not be charged leave for time lost from work for required treatment. Paid time should be limited to reasonable time for treatment and travel; any excess time will be charged as vacation/bonus or sick leave or leave without pay.

Compensation

Eligible employees receive the Workers' Compensation weekly benefit after the required waiting period of seven (7) calendar days (including Saturday and Sunday), effective on the eighth day of the disability. During the seven-day waiting period, you may choose to use available sick leave, annual leave or bonus leave—in this order. You may also take leave without pay for the seven (7) day waiting period. While on workers' compensation leave, you are in "pay status" and will continue to receive total state service credit. The weekly benefit may be supplemented with the use of partial sick or vacation/bonus leave earned prior to the injury. This can provide an income approximately equal to your take-home or net pay.

Additional Benefits

If your injury results in disability of more than 21 calendar days, the Workers' Compensation weekly benefit is allowed from the date of disability. While on Workers' Compensation leave, you continue to accumulate vacation and sick leave if you earned this leave while working. Leave days earned while on Workers' Compensation leave will be added to your leave account upon return to work. Absences due to a workers' compensation covered injury or illness will count as part of your Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitlement for that year.

If you are absent for more than ten (10) days due to a workers' compensation compensable injury or illness, you must also complete a "Request for Leave of Absence" form. Failure to complete this form may result in incorrect payment. Please refer to the Leaves of Absence section for more requirements and information.

You are responsible for facilitating correct and timely processing of medical/prescription services by informing all concerned parties (GCS Benefits Department, the pharmacy and the Workers' Compensation carrier) of the status of the claim. Notification of these parties ensures that bills are paid in a timely manner. Transportation costs may be eligible for reimbursement.

Important: *Workers' Compensation claims should not be with a health insurance carrier. All treatment, tests, equipment or prescriptions must have prior authorization before the appropriate carrier can pay them. Failure to follow Industrial Commission guidelines could jeopardize eligibility for Workers' Compensation benefits.*

Returning to Work and Light Duty Work

To return work after a workers' compensation injury or accident (as well as any medical leave of absence), you must submit a physician's release to the Benefits Department for approval prior to your return to work. Only the Benefits Department can authorize your return to work; your principal or supervisor cannot. Requests for accommodation or modified duty will be handled on an individual basis depending on the assigned position, the nature accommodation and what serves the best interest of your safety and health and interest of students as well as the district.

(Reference: The Provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act G. S. 115c-337; State Personnel Manual Employee Benefits and Awards section 6)

Episode of Violence

Any permanent full-time employee who suffers an injury and is disabled while engaged in the course of his or her employment may receive full salary if the injury or disability arose from an episode of violence and the employee did not participate in or provoke the violence. The employee meets the definition of permanence by having been in full payroll status for six (6) consecutive months.

The salary can continue for one year, the continuation of the disability, or the time during which the employee is unable to engage in his or her employment because of the injury, whichever period is shorter. While receiving regular salary under this provision, the employee is not eligible to receive weekly salary benefits under Workers' Compensation. However, the employee may receive medical, hospital, drug and related expense payments from Workers' Compensation if applicable. The employee is not required to use any paid leave (sick, annual, personal, etc.) if the approved absence is due to an episode of violence.

An employee who has experienced an episode of violence must complete the same forms as in a Workers' Compensation claim. Refer to the Workers' Compensation section.

Miscellaneous Benefits

Employee Assistance

You and covered dependents may receive counseling services through the covered employees' health insurance plan. You may access services directly from licensed providers and file a medical claim or make payment arrangements as a private payer. All assistance is confidential—between the employee and the counseling service provider.

Savings Bonds

The U.S. Department of Treasury stopped issuing paper savings bonds through payroll deduction. If you are interested in savings bonds, visit www.treasurydirect.gov and create an account. Treasury Direct can debit your personal bank account.

Social Security

All employees participate in the social security system. The district also contributes to social security as your employer. Benefits may include retirement, pensions, disability payments and survivor's insurance. The tax rate for contributions is determined annually.

401(k)

All full-time employees are eligible to participate by payroll deduction in the 401(k) program administered by the State of North Carolina through Prudential Retirement. Contact the Benefits Department for information and enrollment forms. Information may also be obtained from the Prudential Retirement Website at www.prudential.com/ncplans or call 1-866-627-5267.

403(b) Annuities

All employees earning a consistent monthly income are eligible to participate in the 403(b) Plan available through payroll deduction. The 403(b) plan is administered by a third party administrator, TCG Administrators. Participants in the 403(b) Plan are assessed an administrative fee of \$1.50 per month via payroll deduction. For additional information call 1-800-943-9179.



457 Deferred Compensation Plan

All permanent employees are eligible to participate in the State of North Carolina 457 Deferred Compensation Plan administered by Prudential. A 457 plan is similar to a 403(b) plan where contributions are made through payroll reduction, occur on a pre-tax basis and accumulate tax-deferred until withdrawn. The minimum monthly contribution is \$20. For more information, call 1-866-627-5267.

State Employees' Credit Union

All employees, except individuals employed through contracted services, may join the North Carolina State Employees' Credit Union. Upon obtaining membership, your spouse, children and parents may become members. In addition, substitutes paid by Guilford County Schools are eligible to obtain membership in the credit union. Information is available from the State Employees' Credit Union's Website: www.ncsecu.org and from the Benefits Department.

Information regarding amusement park discounts is available from the State Employees' Credit Union Website at www.ncsecu.org.

Retirement System

Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System

All permanent full-time employees are required to join the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System. Eligible employees contribute 6% of gross salary (pre-tax) to the Retirement System. Guilford County Schools makes a contribution as established by the North Carolina General Assembly for each permanent full-time employee. Monthly benefits at retirement are based upon the employee's four (4) highest consecutive years of salary, years of state service and/or age at retirement.

Employees Hired On or Before July 31, 2011

After five (5) years of creditable service, an employee hired prior to August 1, 2011 is considered "vested" and may be eligible for benefits from the retirement system. Full, unreduced retirement benefits may be received at age 65 with five years of service; age 60 with 25 years of service, or at any age with 30 years of service. Reduced benefits may be received at age 50 with 20 years of service or age 60 with five years of service.

If an employee was hired before October 1, 2006 and meets the age and service requirements for full or reduced retirement, the employee may be eligible for free health insurance depending on the plan selected. For employees first hired on or after October 1, 2006:

1. Full coverage as retired employees requires 20 or more years of retirement service credit.
2. Employees with 10 years but less than 20 years of retirement service credit will be eligible for coverage under the Plan on a partially contributory basis (50/50).
3. Retired teachers, State employees and members of the General Assembly with less than 10 years of retirement service credit are eligible for coverage under the Plan on a fully contributory basis if first hired on or after Oct 1, 2006.

Employees Hired On or After August 1, 2011

The NC General Assembly reduced the creditable service requirement for vesting for active employees hired on or after August 1, 2011 to five (5) years from the previous ten (10) years of creditable service.

Retirement Effective Dates

All retirements are effective the first day of the month. Licensed employees are asked to sign a resignation form and to give a 30 calendar day notice, so as to provide a smooth transition. Classified employees are asked to sign a resignation form and to give a 14 calendar day notice. Principals and administrators are asked to sign a resignation form and to give a 60 calendar day notice.

Beneficiaries

It is extremely important that permanent full-time employees designate beneficiaries with the retirement system. If the beneficiaries are not on file upon death, benefits transfer to your estate.

Change of retirement beneficiaries is possible at any time prior to retirement and under certain option provisions after retirement. If you have less than ten (10) years of service, the beneficiary(ies) can be changed through ORBIT, the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System's secure Website. If you have more than ten (10) years of service, the beneficiary (ies) must be changed by completing Form 2RC "Designating Beneficiary(ies) for Retirement System Contributions" and Form 2DB-"Designating Beneficiary(ies) for the Death Benefit".

Refund of Retirement Contributions

If you terminate employment with the State, you may request a refund of contributions (penalty assessed) or a rollover of contributions into an IRA (no penalty assessed) as an alternative to a monthly pension. You should complete Form 5 "Withdrawing Your Retirement Service Credit and Contributions". Form 5 should not be completed until the date of your termination—not earlier. The refund is not available until sixty (60) days after the effective date of resignation or termination per State Law. If you are an interim employee, you may not

withdraw your funds during the months of June, July, August or September. Interim employees may apply for withdrawal of funds after October 1.

Death Benefit

A death benefit between \$25,000 and \$50,000 is payable to a designated beneficiary after you have completed one year (365 days) as a contributing member of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System. The amount paid is determined by your annual salary. Your retirement contributions are also paid to the designated beneficiary. The death benefit remains in place for 180 days following an employee's resignation.

ORBIT

The online retirement system portal is provided by the NC Retirement System. Active employees may register and gain access to current account information as well as perform calculations for retirement planning.

Visit www.myncretirement.com to register. For more detailed information, refer to the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System's Website: www.myncretirement.com.

(Reference: State Board of Education Policy, "Your Retirement Benefits: Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina")

Employee Disability: A comprehensive short-term and long-term disability income plan is provided by, and at the employer's expense for permanent full-time employees who are members of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System and meet certain state service requirements. Please note: donated leave may not be used beyond the 60th day of disability.

Short-term Disability: The short-term disability plan is available to disabled employees with at least one year (365 days) of contributory retirement service within the last 36 months. It begins on the 61st day of disability and provides monthly income equal to 50 percent of one-twelfth of the annual base salary, local supplement (if applicable), and longevity for up to 365 calendar days, with a maximum of \$3,000 per month. Short-term disability benefits may be extended for as many as 365 days beyond the original short-term period if approved by the State Medical Board.

You are required to provide in a timely manner, completed:

1. Form 701 Request
2. Form 703 Earnings Report
3. Form 7A Medical Report of Disability Eligibility Review
4. Any additional documents and information that may be requested by the Benefits Department to supplement, clarify or reconcile information to make a determination.

Long-term Disability: The long-term disability income plan begins after the short-term plan ends for the totally and permanently disabled permanent full-time employee with five years of contributory retirement service. The five years of service must be within the previous eight years. The long-term disability plan provides monthly income equal to 65 percent of one-twelfth of the annual base salary, local supplement (if applicable), and longevity, up to \$3,900 per month until you qualify for unreduced retirement benefits. Long-term benefits, however, are coordinated with Social Security disability payments and Workers' Compensation benefits. If you are a permanently disabled employee, you may choose to apply for retirement disability if eligibility requirements are met. Contact the Benefits Department for details.

You are required to provide in a timely manner, completed:

1. Form 701 Request
2. Form 703 Earnings Report
3. Form 7A Medical Report of Disability Eligibility Review
4. Form 704 Request for Additional Benefits
5. Any additional documents of information that may be requested by the Benefits Department to supplement, clarify or reconcile information to make a determination.

For more detailed information refer to the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System Website: www.myncretirement.com. Click on Benefits Handbook under Retirement, and then click on Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System Booklet.

(Reference: Disability Income Plan of the State of North Carolina, www.myncretirement.com.)

Holidays

General Holidays

Holidays are determined by the State Board of Education. The local board of education determines when holidays are scheduled in the school calendar. Guilford County Schools develops and adopts employment calendars for ten-month and twelve-month employees each year that include the appropriate holidays. Paid holidays are granted only to employees who are in the position on the day on which the holiday is scheduled or in pay status for one-half or more of the workdays of the month. Temporary employees are not entitled to paid holidays.

Religious Holidays

Absence from work for bona fide religious holidays may be allowed for a maximum of two days in any one school year with prior approval from the Superintendent or his/her designee. Bona fide religious holidays generally are considered to be those holidays that appear on the National Conference of Community and Justice "Interfaith Calendar." Any other request will require appropriate documentation. Written requests should be submitted to the Chief Human Resources Officer at least two (2) weeks in advance of the proposed absence.

Absence for these religious holidays will be with full pay; however, the employee must agree to make up the amount of time for which his or her absence has been excused. The time must be made up at a time agreed upon by the employee and his or her immediate supervisor. Absences will not be granted for bona fide religious holidays which fall on days that the school system is not in operation.

(Reference: Financial Policy and Procedures Manual)

Leaves and Absences

Attendance

Guilford County Schools' employees are encouraged to use available leave benefits options when necessary. However, you should carefully consider the impact that the absence(s) will have on the overall instructional program and on the achievement of students. Even the best substitute employee cannot provide the high level of continuity of service provided by the regular employee. Every employee absence diminishes the overall quality of the instructional program. Unused accumulated sick leave and/or annual vacation leave can significantly enhance an employee's financial entitlements at retirement or upon separation from employment with the school district. More detailed information is contained in the publication, "Guilford County Schools Employee Guide: Leaves and Absences," available on the Guilford County Schools Website.



Short-Term Leaves of Absence

A leave of absence for a period of up to ten (10) workdays will be considered a short-term leave of absence. A short-term leave of absence may be with or without pay.

Short-term leave of absence with pay: The appropriate supervisor has authority to approve a leave of absence with pay for a period of up to ten (10) days for appropriate reasons. Paid leave (annual leave, eligible miscellaneous bonus leave, sick leave, personal leave and extended sick leave) will be used in accordance with state regulations and may be advanced up to the amount that will be earned within the current fiscal year with the approval of the employee's supervisor.

Short-term leave of absence without pay: The appropriate supervisor has authority to approve up to five (5) days of leave without pay for appropriate reasons. The appropriate supervisor's superior has authority to approve up to an additional five (5) days of leave without pay for appropriate reasons. A full day's salary reduction will be made for each day you are absent.

Long-Term Leaves of Absence

A leave of absence for a period exceeding ten (10) workdays will be considered a long-term leave of absence. A long-term leave of absence may be with or without pay. Guilford County Schools requires the employee to use available paid leave before going on leave without pay. Sick leave, annual leave and personal leave may not be advanced when an employee is requesting a long-term leave of absence. Only leave which is earned until such time as the employee goes off the payroll may be used. **Employees may be eligible for a leave of absence, but ineligible to Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. Employment protection under the FMLA does not eliminate the district's ability to address prior performance issues through disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.**

Paid Leave: Annual leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, sick leave, personal leave, and extended sick leave will be used in accordance with state regulations. During the period of paid leave, employees continue to earn full benefits.

Long-term Leave of Absence with Pay: The Benefits Department has authority to approve a leave of absence with pay for a period exceeding ten (10) workdays for the allowable reasons listed below.

Long-term Leave of Absence without Pay: The Benefits Department has authority to approve a leave of absence without pay for a period exceeding ten (10) workdays for the allowable reasons listed below.

Allowable reasons for which long-term leave of absence may be requested are:

1. **Military leave**, for active duty;
2. **Parental leave**, for the birth or adoption of a child or placement of a foster child for a period of up to twelve (12) calendar months;
3. **Medical leave**, for personal illness or temporary disability that prevents an employee from performing his or her usual duties, for a period up to twelve (12) calendar months in excess of sick leave provisions;
4. **Family medical leave**, in order to provide care for an immediate family member who is critically ill, for a period up to twelve (12) calendar months;
5. **Educational leave**, if the employee is enrolled in a full-time program at a college or university, in accordance with Board of Education Policy GBRL, for a period up to twelve (12) calendar months;
6. **Qualifying Exigency leave**, when eligible employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent (the military member or family member) is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty). For Regular Armed Forces members, the Final Rule defines “covered active duty or call to covered active duty status” as duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country.

For a member of the Reserve components of the Armed Forces (members of the National Guard and Reserves), “covered active duty or call to covered active duty status” means duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country under a federal call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation.

NOTE: The “Armed Forces” is defined as the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard.

7. **Military Caregiver** leave for an employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a Veteran or other covered service member recovering from a serious medical injury or illness sustained in the line of active military duty. In order for the care of a Veteran to qualify as Military Caregiver Leave, the Veteran must have served in active service within five (5) years preceding the date on which he or she needs care
8. Leaves under #2, #3, #4, #6 and #7 are also given in conjunction with FMLA, the federal Family Medical Leave Act

Benefits Continuation While on Leave without Pay: Employee Responsibility

GCS offers insurance coverage to all eligible employees. This coverage may require a premium payment from the employee. Premiums are typically deducted from an employee’s salary each pay day. Employees who work a ten-month schedule and only receive ten paychecks directly from GCS also have an additional premium deduction (escrow) each pay day to cover the two summer months during which no deduction can be taken.

When an active employee does not receive a paycheck for some reason, for example, leave without pay, the employee is responsible for making timely premium payments each month. Premiums must be paid in

full for all insurance coverage in force. Partial payments are not accepted. It is the employee's responsibility to pay the designated premiums, if applicable, each month regardless of receipt of a monthly invoice.

By State and IRS policy, failure to make full and timely payments will result in the termination of insurance coverage. If insurance is canceled due to non-payment of premiums, an employee will be unable to re-enroll in the coverage unless he/she experiences a qualifying life event, returns to work or re-enrolls during annual enrollment.

Employees returning to work after an unpaid leave of absence has 30 days from his/her date of return to make changes in insurance.

Absences of More Than Ten Days

A request for a leave of absence form must be completed and submitted to the Benefits Department if the absence is for more than 10 days. These absences must be approved by the Benefits Department. The exceptions to this procedure are: military leave (for annual training and annual physical), the use of extended sick leave, and the use of voluntary shared leave. The "Request for Leave of Absence" form (HUM-F001) must be completed for each of these exceptions even if the absence is 10 days or less. The appropriate documentation for the type of leave requested must also be submitted to the Benefits Department for approval. **Employees may be eligible for a leave of absence, but ineligible to Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. Employment protection under the FMLA does not eliminate the district's ability to address prior performance issues through disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.** Employees should be mindful of the following:

1. **Incomplete and Untimely Documents:** Incomplete and untimely leave documents will delay the processing of a leave requests, voluntary shared leave and other decisions. In order to ensure timely and accurate pay, the **Benefits Department must receive complete and accurate leave documentation by the 23rd of the prior month for employees paid mid-month and by the 5th of the month for employees paid at month-end to ensure processing for the next pay period. Leaves are only processed after receipt of all accurate and complete documentation.**
2. **Compliance with Policies and Procedures:** An employee on an approved leave must comply with the District's procedures for requesting leave/approved absence and provide additional documentation as requested. Falsification of this form or any supporting document may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including denial of leave and dismissal.
3. **Processing Priority:** Timely and bona fide urgent requests for leave with accurate and complete documentation supporting the leave will be given priority processing status in determining leave time available and approval. The Benefits Department is unable to expedite requests that are delayed due to untimely submission or incomplete/inaccurate documentation. **If there is a conflict in information submitted, the Benefits Department reserves the right to use dates provided in supporting documentation, e.g. physician's statement as the dates of the leave.** The employee is responsible for ensuring that supporting documentation is correct. The employee is responsible for ensuring that the Benefits Department receives supporting documentation from a 3rd party, e.g. a physician.
4. **Accrued Leave:** Each employee is responsible for knowing the status of his/her available (unused) leave. This information is available through the last pay period via the self-service portal. An employee requesting leave is responsible for ensuring that adequate leave is available or be prepared to take leave without pay. The Benefits Department is unable to verify leave balances or the amount of donated leave needed for full pay via phone or email.

5. **Voluntary Shared Leave:** Voluntary shared leave may only be **used during the 60-day waiting period for short term disability for an employee’s own medical condition.** Leave donations from GCS employees must be accurate, complete and received by the Benefits Department on or before the **23rd of the month for employees paid mid-month** and the **5th of the month for employees paid at month-end to ensure processing for the next pay period.** Leave donations from other agencies require verification and will be processed upon verification and on the same schedule. Employees donating leave should send the donation forms directly to the Benefits Department. The Benefits Office determines the number of days eligible employees are able to receive and donate based on policy. **Donated leave must be received no later than 30 days after the end of the leave.** Employees may not use GCS resources, e.g. email, for solicitation for voluntary shared leave.
6. **Protected Medical Information:** All medical information related to this leave should be sent to the Leave Specialist or Workers’ Compensation Specialist in the Benefits Department. Employees are not required to discuss protected medical information, including the specific nature of a medical leave with his/her supervisor.
7. **Return to Work:** Employees must return to work as indicated on the leave documents. **An employee on medical leave must submit a release to return to work notice from his/her provider to the Benefits Department for approval** as soon as possible—preferably at least 5 days prior to the return to work:
 - a. Any restrictions must be approved by the Benefits Department in writing prior to the return to work.
 - b. The Benefits Department is the only Department that can approve the return to work.
8. **Adjustments to Leave Dates:** If an employee needs to extend the leave, he/she is responsible for providing appropriate documentation, preferably at least 5 days prior to the original leave ending date. Failure to return to work as expected and without notice may result in action affecting employment—up to and including interruption of pay and dismissal. Return to work without prior written approval by the Benefits Department may result in a **delay of pay.**
9. **Employees Paid in Advance** (e.g. certified employees): An employee in a position for which he/she is paid in advance is not eligible for resuming the advance pay until he/she physically returns to work. This is to prevent possible overpayment. Employees must return to work **by the 23rd of the month if paid mid-month and by the 5th of the month if paid at month end to ensure being paid in advance at the next scheduled payroll.** Employees returning to work after these dates will resume the paid-in-advance schedule at the next practical payroll.
10. **Continuation of Benefits (All Employees):** If a leave is unpaid, the employee is responsible for all miscellaneous deductions made through payroll deduction, including such items as health, dental, life insurance, cafeteria benefits, etc. unless they are declined while on leave. In the event of leave without pay, the employee should make arrangements with the Benefits Office to maintain coverage and pay as billed for benefits received while on leave. Unpaid premiums will result in termination of benefits.
11. **Work While on Leave:** Employees on medical leave are discouraged from working. It is expected that an employee on leave ensure that the supervisor and colleagues filling in during the absence have information necessary to provide continuity in the performance of duties, e.g. grades,

instructional materials, lesson plans, etc. The Benefits Department must approve employment and volunteer assignments while on any leave of absence.

Death in Family

Employees may use sick leave for time off for bereavement for death in immediate family.

Leave without Pay

Guilford County Schools requires the employee to use available paid leave before going on leave without pay. An employee may be granted a leave of absence without pay for periods as granted in the discretion of the Superintendent and in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted by the School Board. Extended leaves of absence may be granted in accordance with local rules and regulations. Whenever possible, employees will give advance notice of requests for leave of absence as documented in the "Employees' Guide: Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Website under Human Resources/Forms and Handbooks. The Board may determine when the leave will begin or end, based on a consideration of the welfare of the students and the need for continuity of instruction.

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

Other Employment While on Leave

Except for specific authorization found in the state disability plan, **it is not the practice of the school district to authorize a leave and allow employees to accept other employment.** Employees should consider this limitation prior to requesting leave. Any exceptions to this practice should be requested by the employee at the time leave approval is sought. Any employee on an approved leave of absence should request approval from the Benefits Department prior to accepting other employment. The request will be reviewed and a letter of notification will be mailed to the employee. **If an employee is receiving short-term disability and working at another job, name of employer, gross and net earnings and date of payment must be reported to the Benefits Department.**

Return from Long-term Leave of Absence

When an employee returns to work from an approved long-term leave of absence without pay, the school district will attempt to place that employee in his/her original position if possible. However, in cases when this is not possible, the employee will be placed in an equivalent position at another location within the school district. An employee returning to work from a medical leave (for self) must provide a note from the medical provider releasing the employee to return to work. An employee returning to work after an absence of one year or more must submit a new North Carolina Health Certificate to the Benefits Department. If insurance benefits were canceled while on leave of absence, it is the employee's responsibility to re-enroll. An employee can call the Benefits Department for more information and assistance in enrolling in insurance benefits.

Sick Leave

Sick leave is earned by all permanent employees at the rate of one (1) day for each monthly pay period they are working or on paid leave for one-half or more of the workdays in the pay period (pro-rated for part-time - 50 percent or more). This leave may be used for personal illness, injury, temporary disability, illness or death in the immediate family, or employee medical appointments.

Approval: For periods of ten (10) working days or less, employees must complete a "Leave Request" (form FIN-FO17) available in the school/department office to request/document the absence. The immediate site supervisor is authorized to approve requests from employees for use of accumulated sick leave for up to ten (10) consecutive days. Requests for more than five (5) consecutive days must be accompanied by a doctor's

statement. The appropriate supervisor or the Human Resources Department may require, at any time, a statement from a medical or other acceptable proof that the employee was unable to work. For periods of more than ten (10) working days, employees must complete a "Request for Leave of Absence" (form HUM-F001) also available in the school/department office and the GCS Website. The Benefits Department has authority to approve requests from employees for use of accumulated sick leave for a period exceeding ten (10) workdays.

Charging: As of July 1, 2021 annual leave, sick leave and other types of leave will be measured in one-hour increments, instead of using whole, half or partial days. There is one exception: Teachers who require a sub will still use leave equivalent to half or whole days, except on optional workdays when they may request to use leave in hourly increments. It may only be taken within existing guidelines for personal illness, or an illness or death in the immediate family as defined by the State Board of Education. Unused sick leave can be added to length of service for pension computation at retirement. Effective October 1, 1989, sick leave balances are restored for employees who separate from service and return to employment in a permanent status within 60 months (63 months for teachers).

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual; Guilford County Schools Employee Guide: Leaves and Absences)

Extended Sick Leave (Teachers and Media Specialists Only)

Eligibility: Permanent full-time or part-time classroom teachers and media specialists, who are absent due to their own personal illness or injury in excess of their accumulated sick leave and available annual leave will be allowed extended sick leave of up to twenty (20) workdays throughout the regular term of employment.

Deductions: Employees on extended sick leave receive full salary less the required substitute deduction. This deduction is mandatory whether or not a substitute is employed. The standard deduction is \$50 a day. In order for a new employee to be eligible, he/she must have reported to work.

Approval: If the absence is 10 days or less, the employee must complete the "Request for Leave of Absence" form; (HUM-F001) available in the school/department office and the GCS Website. If the absence is for more than 10 days, a Request for Leave of Absences form (HUM-F001) must be completed. Both forms require medical documentation. This information must be submitted to the Benefits Department for approval. Requests to use extended sick leave should be made no later than five (5) days after the extended sick leave begins. If this is not possible, employee must provide written justification to the Director of Benefits. Extended sick leave is not available beyond the waiting period for Worker's Compensation Leave (7 days) and Short-Term Disability Leave (60 days).

Voluntary Shared Leave (Donated Leave)

The purpose of voluntary shared leave (donated leave) is to provide economic relief for employees who are likely to suffer financial hardship because of a prolonged absence or frequent short-term absences caused by a serious medical condition. The serious medical condition must be documented by a medical doctor, and follow the definition and guidelines as set forth in the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993.

Eligibility: Only permanent full-time or part-time employees who have exhausted all accumulated paid leave (sick leave, annual leave, miscellaneous bonus leave if applicable) are eligible to receive donated leave. An employee need not exhaust personal leave and the 20 days of extended sick leave to be eligible for voluntary shared leave.

An employee who is eligible to receive benefits from the State of North Carolina Disability Income Plan and/or a private supplemental disability insurance policy is not eligible to receive donated leave. Voluntary shared leave may be used during the required sixty (60) day waiting period for the Disability Income Plan or any applicable waiting period under a private policy.

The following two (2) conditions must be met before an eligible employee can request Voluntary Share Leave:

1. Must be absent for more than five (5) consecutive days or a series of more than five (5) days over a period of six (6) months **due to the same medical reason.**
2. Must be absent due to a serious medical condition (as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993) of self or immediate family member.

Requests: Employees may apply for donated leave by completing three forms:

1. "Application for Voluntary Shared Leave" (form HUM-F021)
2. "Request for a Leave of Absence" (form HUM-F001)
3. "U.S. Department of Labor" (forms WH-380E and WH-380-F).

Forms are located in the Benefits Department and on the GCS Website. The "U.S. Department of Labor" form is used to document a serious medical condition. Submit forms to the Benefits Department.

Application may also be made by a third person acting on the employee's behalf if the employee is unable to make application. The application must include a doctor's statement, and an authorization for release of medical information signed by the person who is suffering the medical condition (or parent or guardian of a minor). This release may also be signed by any legally authorized party.

Employees may not use the GCS email system or other GCS technology to request donated leave. An employee and/or supervisor may not use mass solicitation (group solicitation of GCS employees) outside of his/her own work location. Employees are discouraged from distributing any medical information, including his/her own, as the district is unable to ensure confidentiality. Employees not complying with this policy may be denied use of donated leave and face disciplinary action.

Leave Donation: Any eligible employee in the school system may donate annual vacation leave to any approved employee in the same school system. Family members may donate annual vacation leave, miscellaneous bonus leave or sick leave to immediate family members in the same school system, another N. C. school system, community college or state agency as defined by the State Board of Education. Effective January 1, 2011, sick leave may be donated to an employee of a public school system (LEA). A public school employee cannot donate more than five days of sick leave per year to any one, non-family member.

Employees of a school system may donate annual vacation leave to the immediate family of a co-worker if the co-worker's immediate family member is eligible for donated leave and works in another school system, state agency or community college. In order to donate leave an employee must complete a "Authorization to Donate Leave" (form HUM-F020) and submit it to the Benefits Department. The form may be obtained from the Benefits Department or the GCS Website.

Timelines: Requests to use voluntary shared leave and requests to donate leave must be received in the Benefits Department before the leave begins or before the employee returns to work. If this is not possible, employee must provide written justification to the Director of Benefits. Anyone who would like more

information should contact the Benefits Department. Donated leave must be received no more than 45 calendar days after the end of an authorized leave in order to be used.

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual, Guilford County Schools Employee Guide: Leaves and Absences)

Personal Leave

Personal Leave is earned only by permanent full-time or part-time classroom teachers and media specialists. All such full-time instructional personnel earn personal leave at the rate of .20 days for each full month of employment not to exceed two (2) days per year. Part-time personnel earn at a prorated share, the rate for full-time employees.

Accumulation: Personal leave may be accumulated without any applicable maximum until June 30 of each year. Eligible employees may carry forward to July 1 a maximum of five (5) days of personal leave; the remainder of the personal leave will be converted to sick leave on June 30. At the time of retirement, accumulated personal leave may be converted to sick leave for creditable service towards retirement.

Use: Personal leave may be used only upon the authorization of the employee's immediate supervisor. Personal leave may not be taken on the first day the employee is required to report for the school year, on a required teacher workday, or days scheduled for State testing, or on the day before or the day after a holiday or scheduled vacation day, unless the request is approved by the principal. On all other days, if the request is made at least five (5) days in advance, the request will be automatically granted subject to the availability of a substitute teacher, and the employee cannot be required to provide a reason for the request. With the approval of the supervisor, a teacher can use Personal Leave without a substitute teacher deduction on an optional workday.

Eligible employees using accrued personal leave will receive full salary less the required substitute deduction, except for using personal leave on non-protected teacher workdays. Eligible employees using accrued personal leave on non-protected teacher workdays will receive full salary. To use a personal leave day, the employee must complete a "Leave Request" (form FIN-017) available in the school/department office.

Transfer: Employees may transfer personal leave days between local school administrative units. The local school administrative unit will credit an employee who has separated from service and is re-employed within 60 months from the date of separation with all personal leave accumulated at the time of separation. Local school administrative units will not advance personal leave. See "Use of Personal Leave Chart" in the Appendix. (Reference NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual; Guilford County Schools Employee Guide- Leaves and Absences; HB 15; HB 2436-Section 26.21a)

Annual Leave (Vacation)

Guilford County Schools values the contributions, health and well-being of each employee. The purpose of paid annual vacation leave is to allow and encourage all employees to take time off from work. G.S. 115C-316 requires that the first ten (10) days of annual leave earned by 10- or 11-month employees during any fiscal year be scheduled for use in the school calendar adopted by the local Board of Education.

Annual vacation leave will be earned as follows:

Vacation Leave Accrual Rates

Years of State Service	Leave Days per Period	12 Month Full-time Accrual	Maximum Carryover
< 5	1.17	14 days (112 hours)	30.000
5 < 10	1.42	17 days (136 hours)	30.000
10 < 15	1.67	20 days (160 hours)	30.000
15 < 20	1.92	23 days (184 hours)	30.000
≥20	2.17	26 days (208 hours)	30.000

Leave Accumulation: Annual vacation leave may be accumulated without any applicable maximum until June 30 of each calendar year. On June 30 accumulated annual vacation leave in excess of 30 days will be converted to sick leave so that only 30 workdays of annual vacation leave are carried forward to July 1 of each year. An employee with more than 30 days of annual vacation leave who separates from employment prior to June 30 is not eligible for this conversion and will be paid a maximum of 30 days or 240 hours.

Employees are eligible to request additional available annual vacation leave during each year for a stated purpose. State and local regulations determine when annual leave may be taken. Annual leave must be authorized by the immediate supervisor and the employee must complete a "Leave Request" (form FIN-F017) available in the school/department office to request/document the absence. Guilford County Schools requires annual vacation leave to be used in one-half or whole day units.

All full-time and part-time permanent employees who work or are on paid leave (including paid holidays and when on Worker's Compensation) for one-half or more of the workdays in a monthly pay period, earn annual vacation leave based on the length of total State of North Carolina service. Annual vacation leave for a part-time permanent employee will be computed on a pro-rata basis.

Instructional Personnel and Bus Drivers: In 2012, the legislature amended the law permitting **instructional employees** and bus drivers who work 11 or 12 months in a year-round or extended year and require substitutes to use annual vacation leave on days students are in attendance with prior approval of the principal or supervisor.

Bus Drivers: Bus drivers who work less than 20 hours per week and who are not otherwise entitled to earn vacation as described above are entitled to earn one day per year (equal in length to one regular workday for each driver) if:

1. They are employed to drive a regular daily route (i.e., they are not substitute drivers), and
2. They were employed as regular drivers the entire previous school year.

Bonus Vacation Leave

Special 2017-2018 Annual Bonus Leave

Any full-time permanent employee eligible to earn leave and employed on July 1, 2017 shall receive 3 days of annual leave. Unused leave may be carried over but has no cash value at termination.

Prior Bonus Vacation Leave Eligibility

Bonus vacation leave was received in three special distributions during the 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 school years. In each of the three special distributions, eligible employees in permanent full-time, 12-month positions received bonus vacation leave. The leave was received pro-rata if employed less than full-time and/or less than 12 months. Unused bonus leave granted in 2012 expired on June 30, 2013 and was not eligible for carry over.

Bonus vacation leave balance is tracked separately and carries forward each year until used or paid out at retirement or separation. It is not included in the 30-day limit of the annual vacation leave that can be carried forward on June 30th each year and does not roll into sick leave. Bonus vacation leave may be donated under the same rules and provisions as annual vacation. Bonus vacation leave can be used under the same circumstances and provisions as annual vacation leave.

An employee who transfers between local administrative units or to or from a state agency must have all unused bonus vacation leave transferred to the new school system or state agency. Upon separation from employment, any unused bonus vacation leave balance will be paid out at the daily rate at the time of separation. The payment is in addition to the annual vacation leave balance (up to 30 days) that is paid at separation.

(Reference: Public Schools of North Carolina Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

Contagious Disease

When a director of a county health department, in order to control the spread of contagious disease or to protect the health of an employee, orders an employee to leave his or her work environment, the local superintendent shall: (a) Reassign the employee to a safe work environment under conditions agreed to by the director of the county health department, or (b) Place the employee on leave with pay for the period of time set by the medical director. Leave shall not be charged to the employee's sick leave or other available paid leave. A substitute employed for this reason shall be paid from the same source of funds as the employee (local, federal, or state)

Family and Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), an act of the federal government, allows eligible employees to take unpaid leave for up to twelve (12) weeks during each 12-month FMLA leave year. **Guilford County Schools requires an employee to use available paid leave before taking leave without pay.** Guilford County Schools must maintain any employer-paid health benefits while the employee is on FMLA leave. Employment protection under the FMLA does not eliminate the district's ability to address prior performance issues through disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Reasons: FMLA may be taken for the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child of the employee and in order to care for the child;
2. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
3. Taking care of the employee's spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition;
4. Taking care of a service member recovering from a serious injury or illness sustained in the line of active duty. This also applies to a veteran, if the veteran was on active duty within five (5) years of the date the Veteran needs care. (Must meet eligibility requirements);
5. A serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's position; or

6. The notification of spouse, son, daughter or parent being called to active duty and has been deployed to a foreign country as a member of the Armed Forces. This applies to **any** member of the Armed Forces whether reservists or full-time military personnel.

An employee is eligible for FMLA leave if **both** of the following conditions are met:

1. The employee has worked for Guilford County Schools for at least twelve (12) months, which need not be consecutive; and
2. The employee has worked at least 1,250 hours for Guilford County Schools during the twelve (12) month period immediately preceding the beginning of the FMLA leave.

Calendar: The FMLA leave year is a rolling twelve-month period measured forward from the date the employee first takes FMLA leave after completion of any previous FMLA leave year. The full text of the FMLA policy is contained in the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Website.

Parental Leave

All full-time permanent or part-time permanent employees may take a leave of absence without pay for up to twelve (12) calendar months to care for a newborn child, a newly adopted child or a child placed in foster care. **Guilford County Schools requires an employee to use available paid leave before taking leave without pay.**

Use of appropriate earned leave during the time of the leave (annual vacation leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, sick leave, extended sick leave, personal leave and voluntary shared leave) will not extend the 12-month period of parental leave to which the employee is entitled. However, the Board of Education may determine when the leave will begin or end, based on a consideration of the welfare of the students and the need for continuity of service.

Benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act are available to eligible employees requesting Parental Leave. An employee may apply for a parental leave by completing the "Request for a Leave of Absence Form (form HUM-F001). The employee's doctor must complete the "U.S. Department of Labor Form" (WH-380-E).

Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Website for more detailed information with respect to requesting a Parental Leave.

Paid Parental Leave

The leave entitlement extends to the parent of a:

- o Newborn biological child
- o A newly placed adopted child
- o A newly placed foster child
- o A child under the age of 18 otherwise legally placed with the parent, such as through guardianship

According to N.C.G.S. 126-8.6, entitlement to paid parental leave is effective for births, adoptions, and foster care that occur on or after July 1, 2023. There are two categories of paid parental leave: paid parental leave for birth mothers related to the birth of a child and paid parental leave for bonding with a newly born child, an adopted child, or a child placed into guardianship.

Full-time employees are eligible for up to four (4) weeks of paid parental leave after giving birth to a child (birth mother), which must be taken continuously from the date of the birth. Part-time employees are eligible for up to four (4) weeks of paid parental leave after giving birth to a child (birth mother), which must be taken continuously from the date of the birth. This type of paid parental leave is only available to birth mothers.

Full-time employees are eligible for up to four (4) weeks of paid parental leave for parental bonding, which may be taken continuously or intermittently within the 12-month period following the birth or placement of the child. Part-time employees are eligible for up to two (2) weeks of paid parental leave for parental bonding, which may be taken continuously or intermittently within the 12-month period following the birth or placement of the child. This type of leave is available to all parents.

*The paid parental leave guidelines are subject to revision pending further clarification from the State Human Resources Commission.

Military Leave



The granting of military leave to full-time or part-time permanent employees is an obligation of the State to the defense effort of the nation and to the protection of the State itself. Generally, employees may be granted up to fifteen (15) days of leave with pay during the federal fiscal year for military training. An employee called to active duty will take leave without pay unless he/she chooses to use available annual leave. Important Note: The "Request for a Leave of Absence" (form HUM-F001) must be submitted to the

Benefits Department for any amount of time away from the job due to military duties such as annual training, annual physical or active duty.

Public school employees, including charter school employees, on leave of absence for state or federal military duty under honorable service status, for required training, or for special emergency management service will be paid the difference in military base pay and public school salary, including non-performance based bonuses, when the military pay is less than the public school salary. The employee must request differential pay within 12 months from the date of separation or discharge.

All military leaves of absence will be administered in accordance with federal and state laws.

Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Website for more detailed information with respect to requesting a Military Leave.

(Reference: Public Schools of North Carolina Benefits and Employment Policy Manual, Section 10; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act; Reference: Guilford County Schools Employee's "Guide to Leave and Absences"; G. S. 115-C-302.1)

Medical Leave for Employee*

All full-time permanent or part-time permanent employees may take a leave of absence without pay for up to twelve (12) calendar months in excess of sick leave provisions for personal illness or temporary disability that prevents an employee from performing his or her usual duties. Guilford County Schools requires an employee

to use appropriate earned leave during the time of the leave (annual vacation leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, sick leave, extended sick leave, personal leave and voluntary shared leave). However, the Board of Education may determine when the leave will begin or end based on a consideration of the welfare of the students and the need for continuity of service. Benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act are available to eligible employees requesting Medical Leave.

An employee may apply for a medical leave by completing the "Request for a Leave of Absence Form" (form HUM –F001). The employee's doctor must complete the "U.S. Department of Labor Form" (WH-380-E). Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Website for more detailed information with respect to requesting a Medical Leave.

**Employees who work less than four (4) hours per day are not considered part-time and are, therefore, ineligible for a medical leave. They must resign their position if they cannot work due to their own illness or that of a family member. However, employees who resign under these circumstances will be given consideration for rehire.*

Medical Leave to Care for Family*

All full-time permanent or part-time permanent employees may take a leave of absence without pay for up to twelve (12) calendar months to care for the employee's **immediate** family member with a serious health condition. Guilford County Schools requires an employee to use appropriate earned leave during the time of the leave (sick leave, annual vacation leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, personal leave and voluntary shared leave). However, the Board of Education may also determine when the leave will begin or end, based on a consideration of the welfare of the students and the need for continuity of service.

Benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act are available to eligible employees requesting Medical Leave to Care for Family. An employee may apply for a medical leave to care for an immediate family member by completing the Request for a "Leave of Absence Form" (form HUM –F001). The employee's immediate family member's doctor must complete the "U.S. Department of Labor Form" (WH-380-F). Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Website for more detailed information with respect to requesting a Medical Leave to Care for Family.

**Employees who work less than four (4) hours per day are not considered part-time and are, therefore, ineligible for a medical leave. They must resign their position if they cannot work due to their own illness or that of a family member. However, employees who resign under these circumstances will be given consideration for rehire.*

Military Caregiver Leave

An employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a member of the Armed Forces can now take up to 26 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member or covered veteran undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness sustained in the line of active duty. This applies to veterans if the veteran was on active duty within five (5) years of the date the veteran needs care. The leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. An employee may apply for a Military Caregiver leave by completing the "Request for a Leave of Absence Form" (form HUM-F001). The service member's doctor must complete the "U.S. Department of Labor Form" (WH-380).

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

Qualifying Exigency Leave

An employee can take up to 12 weeks of job-protected **unpaid** leave in a 12-month period because of any “qualifying exigency” arising out of the fact that an employee’s spouse, son, daughter or parent has been notified of an impending call to covered active duty and has been deployed to a foreign country as a member of the Armed Forces. This applies to **any** member of the Armed Forces whether Reservists, National Guard or Regular Armed Forces.

Eligible employees may take qualifying exigency leave for any of the following reasons:

1. short term deployment
2. military events and related activities;
3. childcare and school activities;
4. financial and legal arrangements;
5. counseling;
6. rest and recuperation;
7. post-deployment activities;
8. additional activities; or
9. care for a military member’s parent who is incapable of self-care when the care is necessitated by the member’s covered active duty.

Eligible employees who request qualifying exigency leave to spend time with a military member on Rest and Recuperation leave may take up to fifteen days of leave. Supporting documentation may be needed for approval of leave. An employee may apply for a Qualifying Exigency leave by completing the “Request for a Leave of Absence (form HUM-F001) and form WH-384.

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

Educational Leave

Employees of Guilford County Schools, who are eligible to take a leave of absence and are enrolled as full-time students at college or university should make every effort to schedule their classes in so far as possible after their regular duty hours. If the employee has exhausted all measures and must schedule a class before the end of the workday the following options are available:

1. In lieu of taking any professional days, a total of eighty (80) hours of release time may be taken for educational purposes. The employee should make a written work request, including the class schedule, to his/her supervisor.
2. If the employee must be absent for more than one hour any given day, a substitute is required. The cost of a one-half day substitute will be deducted from the employee's wages.
3. Twelve-month employees enrolled in full-time summer school may use vacation time to account for the day(s) absent.
4. Employees enrolled in internships will:



- a. Request placement in writing for fall semester by June 1 and placement for second semester by November 15 in conjunction with the college/university placement request.
- b. Be governed by the number of hours to be served in the internship by the sponsoring college or university.
- c. Present a proposal or plan, approved by the college or university, to the Executive Director of Human Resources for review. If the proposed plan cannot be accommodated during the school year in terms of before, during or after school hours, then the employee must secure a leave of absence from his/her position (full-time) to fulfill the internship requirement or request the Executive Director of Human Resources for placement in Guilford County Schools year-round summer programs, if appropriate placement is available.
- d. Receive approval and be assigned to their current school/department or assigned to a different school/department by the Executive Director of Human Resources, after consulting with the principal/supervisor and the appropriate Executive Director.

5. Any approved request and schedule will be forwarded to the employee's personnel file.

To take an unpaid educational leave, an employee at least sixty (60) days in advance must: complete the "Request for Leave of Absence" form (HUM-F001), attach appropriate documentation, indicating a full-time registered student, and submit all documents to the Benefits Department. Once received, the employee will be contacted for an appointment with the appropriate Benefits Specialist.

Educational leave may be granted for full-time study as defined by an accredited college or university. The maximum length of an educational leave is one calendar year, except for employees participating in the North Carolina Principal Fellows' Program. Failure to request an educational leave sixty (60) days in advance in writing could result in denial of the leave. Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Website for more detailed information with respect to requesting an Educational Leave.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBRL)

Educational Leave for NCAE Officers

Educational leave for the purpose of serving as an officer in the NCAE must now meet the requirements of educational leave in order for the educational service to remain credited on their State Retirement System records.

Employees must complete the form for educational leave and will also have to complete the employee portion of Form 463F "Requesting Continuation of Contributions and Credit for Planned Educational Leave" and submit it to the Benefits Office. The form will be forwarded to the State Retirement System by the Benefits Department. This form is required for each elected term and will initiate notification of the amount the employee will need to contribute each month for retirement. Effective July 1, 2013, retirement will no longer be deducted from the monthly paycheck during service for the NCAE and the employee will need to pay the monthly retirement contribution to remain credited on the State Retirement System records. Payment must be paid via check to the Guilford County Schools Payroll department no later than the last

business day of the month. The Payroll Department will remit the funds to the State Retirement System for the employee's benefit.

Leave is limited to no more than six years of educational leave (after July 1, 2013) over the career term. The employee must return to work for a school in the State Retirement System or state government within one year of the term's end for duration of at least three years (absent death or disability) at the end of the leave.

Intermittent Leave

All full-time permanent or part-time permanent employees may take Intermittent Leave. Intermittent leave is leave taken in separate blocks of time. For a situation involving a serious health condition of the employee or a family member, the employee may take leave intermittently as is medically necessary. Intermittent Leave is approved for one calendar year from the start date.

Employees needing intermittent leave must attempt to schedule their leave to minimize disruptions to school system operations. In addition, to better accommodate an employee's need for intermittent leave, the school system may transfer the employee to an alternative position during the period of leave. The alternative position must have equal pay and benefits but need not have equivalent duties.

An employee may apply for a intermittent medical leave by completing the "Request for a Leave of Absence Form" (form HUM –F001). The employee's doctor must complete the "U.S. Department of Labor Form" (WH-380-E). An employee can apply for an intermittent medical leave to care for an immediate family member by completing the Request for a "Leave of Absence Form" (form HUM –F001). The employee's immediate family member's doctor must complete the "U.S. Department of Labor Form" (WH-380-F). Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Website for more detailed information with respect to requesting an Intermittent Leave.

Professional Leave with Deduction

All full-time or part-time permanent employees are eligible for professional leave. Permanent public school employees who have professional responsibilities, or who need to attend meetings of professional associations, may be absent with pay minus a salary deduction for substitute teachers. The deduction is mandatory whether or not a substitute is employed. Such absences must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee (usually the Principal at a school or designated administrative supervisor at other sites) and will be allowed for a period not exceeding three (3) successive days for in-state meetings and five (5) successive days for out-of-state meetings. Absences for this purpose may not exceed ten (10) days for the school year. The limitation will not apply to a person who is a local or district president or president-elect, state or national officer of a professional education, or a person selected as the National Teacher of the Year. The Office of the Deputy State Superintendent will upon request determine the eligibility of the professional association.

Professional Leave without Deduction

Permanent public school employees attending meetings or performing duties as members of the State Board of Education, the State Textbook Commission, the Board of Governors of the Governor's Schools or required attendance at a case manager's hearing will receive full salary. Permanent public school employees completing assignments for, or serving on a commission or committee appointed by the Governor, the State Superintendent, the State Board of Education, or the General Assembly will receive full salary. Substitutes for these persons will be paid from the same funding source as the employee being replaced.

Officers of Professional Organizations

Upon the recommendation of the local superintendent, local boards of education may grant leave with pay for elected officers of professional organizations, provided the organization pays the full salary and all benefit costs for the employee on leave. During such leave with pay, the employee will earn sick, personal and annual vacation leave and receive paid holidays. Employees will be eligible to use leave as they would when in active status with the school system.

Community Responsibility

Upon approval of the supervisor, a full-time or part-time public school employee may be granted leave to represent the school or administrative unit at community functions such as the funeral of a school child or his parent. Absences of this type will qualify for full salary during the days absent.

Proper provisions will be made for the continuation of the employee's regular work by making satisfactory arrangements within the system or by employment of a substitute. Substitutes employed for these absences will not be paid from state funds.

Jury Duty and Court Attendance

Jury Duty: Full-time or part-time public school employees will retain full salary when absent from work to serve on a jury. The employee is entitled to regular compensation in addition to payment for jury duty.

Court Attendance by Duty or Subpoena: Full-time or part-time public school employees retain full salary for absences from school due to court attendance related to their official duty. The employee also will receive full salary when subpoenaed, except as noted in section (b). Out-of-state subpoenas are not binding on North Carolina residents, unless that state and North Carolina have an interstate subpoena agreement.

Any fees except travel reimbursement received by a school employee serving in an official capacity as a witness will be returned to the employing school administrative unit to be credited to the same fund from which the employee is paid. Substitutes employed for these absences will be paid from the same source of funds as the employee's salary (local, federal or state).

Court Attendance for Personal Reasons: Full-time or part-time public school employees who are absent for appearance in court as plaintiffs, defendants or witnesses for personal matters, even if subpoenaed, will not be entitled to receive any salary payment for those days, unless they are using appropriate earned leave. (Note: School personnel, who are responding to subpoenas for civic responsibilities such as a witness to a crime, are eligible for paid court attendance leave).

Elected Officials

Full-time or part-time public school employees serving as elected government officials may, with their supervisor's approval, choose to use appropriate earned leave to attend to the responsibilities of their elected office.

Parental Involvement in Schools Leave

Eligibility and Rate of Earning: In accordance with G.S. 95-28.3, any employee who is a parent, guardian or person in loco parentis may take up to four hours per fiscal year to attend or otherwise be involved at his or her child's school. There is no requirement that the employer pay an employee while taking this leave. However, the local school district may allow the employee to use eligible accrued leave in lieu of non-paid parental involvement leave. Leave granted for this purpose is subject to the following conditions:

1. The leave will be at a mutually agreed upon time between employer and employee,
2. The employer may require an employee to provide a written request at least 48 hours before the time desired for the leave, and
3. The employer may require that the employee furnish written verification from the child's school that the employee attended or was otherwise involved at the school during the time of leave.

Definition of School: For the purpose of this policy, "school" is defined as any:

- a. Public
- b. Private church school, church of religious charter, or nonpublic school that regularly provides a course of instruction,
- c. Preschool, or
- d. Child day care facility.

(Reference: G.S. 95-28.3)

Exhibits

Contact List

The telephone numbers listed below are for your convenience, should you have questions regarding the subjects listed.

Action Plans | 336-370-8341

Address Changes | 336-370-8348

Administrative Cohorts | 336-370-8340

Administrative Intern Placements | 336-370-8341

Administrative Interns | 336-370-8340

AESOP | Substitute Questions | 336-378-8820

Applications | 336-370-8319

Beginning Teacher Status | 336-378-8806

Beneficiary Changes | 336-370-8348

Benefits | 336-370-8348

Coaches (non-faculty, paid volunteer) | 336-370-8319

Contract Administration | 336-378-8806

Criminal Record Checks | 336-378-8806
- Substitutes | 336-378-8820

Death Claims | 336-370-8348

Disability | 336-370-8166

Employee Grievances | 336-370-8341 or 336-378-8821

Employee Records | 336-370-8825

Employee Relations | 336-370-8341 or 336-378-8821

Employment Verifications (salary only, loans, social services) | 336-370-8348

Exit Interviews | 336-378-8806

Evaluations | 336-378-8806

Extended Employment Agreements | 336-378-8806

GCS Act | 336-378-8823

Hiring | 336-378-8806

Identification Badges | 336-370-8348

Insurance | 336-370-8348

Lateral Entry | 336-378-8823

Leaves of Absence | 336-370-8166

Legal (HR) | 336-370-8341

Licensure

-Lateral Entry | 336-378-8823

-Current Employees | 336-378-8806

Longevity | 336-370-8091

Name Changes | 336-370-8348

NCEES Technical Assistance | 336-370-8091

New Employee Orientation | 336-378-8806

Principal of the Year | 336-378-8821

Recruitment and Staffing | 336-370-8319 or 336-378-8806

Renewal/Non-renewal | 336-370-8341

Resignation | 336-370-8341

Retirement | 336-370-8348

Salary Administration | 336-370-8091 or 336-378-8822

Salary Verification (experience/prior service verifications) | 336-370-8348
See also *Employment Verifications*

Substitutes | 336-378-8820

Student Teachers | 336-370-8319

Teacher of the Year | 336-378-8821

Transfers | 336-378-8806

Tutors | 336-378-8806

Unemployment Compensation | 336-370-8348

Workers' Compensation | 336-370-8351 or 336-370-8007

Use of Personal Leave Chart

Calendar Days	Can Use Personal Leave without a Deduction?	Can Use Personal Leave With Deduction?	Can Use Annual Vacation Leave?
<i>Instructional Days</i>	Yes ⁽⁸⁾	Yes ⁽¹⁾	No, traditional school. Yes, in extended year or year-round school only and with supervisor approval.
<i>Optional Workdays⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾</i>	Yes ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾	Yes ⁽¹⁾	Yes
<i>LEA Mandatory Workdays⁽⁶⁾</i>	No	No	No

Notes:

(1) In accordance with Section 5.1.2. – Benefits & Employment Policy Manual

(a) Personal leave may be used only upon authorization of the immediate supervisor

(b) Unless approved by the principal, a teacher shall not take personal leave on the first day teachers are required to report for the school year, on required teacher workdays, on days scheduled for State testing, on the last working day before or the next working day after holidays or annual vacation days scheduled in the calendar.

(c) On all other days, if the request is made at least five days in advance, the request shall be automatically granted subject to the availability of a substitute teacher.

(d) A teacher who requests personal leave at least five days in advance cannot be required to provide a reason.

(e) Personal leave may be used on any instructional day or workday except as noted in (b) above.

- (2) *G.S. 115C-84.2.(a)(4) – To allow teachers to complete instructional and classroom administrative duties.*
- (3) *Optional Workdays – Workdays that may be designated as inclement weather make-up days, or otherwise not specified in 115C-84.2 and/or Section 7.29.(b) G.S. 115C-238.29F(d)(1). Teachers may use annual leave. Optional training and meetings may be scheduled; however, teacher attendance cannot be required.*
- (4) *5 of the 15 non-instructional days must be designated as days that teachers may take accumulated annual leave (optional workdays).*
- (5) *Limited to the accrued personal leave balance as of the leave date.*
- (6) *Workdays that the local board can designate as mandatory workdays; if not mandatory, optional workday provision applies.*
- (7) *Mandated Workdays – Teacher attendance is required for district or school-level professional development, planning meetings, grading, etc. Annual and personal leave may not be taken.*
- (8) *Effective November 18, 2021, teachers using personal leave, on days other than teacher workdays, shall receive full salary as long as the teacher provides a reason for that request. If a teacher does not provide a reason for the request, the teacher shall receive full salary less the full cost of hiring a substitute for the teacher.*

Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for North Carolina Educators

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Policy Manual

Policy Identification Priority: Quality Teachers, Administrators, and Staff Category: Qualifications and Evaluations Policy ID Number: QP-C-014

Policy Title: 16 NCAC 6C .0601 and 16 NCAC 6C .0602 Policy regarding the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators

Current Policy Date: 02/05/1998

Other Historical Information: Previous board dates: 06/05/1997

Statutory Reference:

Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Reference Number and Category: 16 NCAC 6C .0601 and .0602

Preamble: The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to define standards of professional conduct.

The responsibility to teach and the freedom to learn, and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all are essential to the achievement of these principles. The professional educator acknowledges the worth and dignity of every person and demonstrates the pursuit of truth and devotion to excellence, acquires knowledge, and nurtures democratic citizenship. The educator exemplifies a commitment to the teaching and learning processes with accountability to the students, maintains professional growth, exercises professional judgment, and personifies integrity. The educator strives to maintain the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents and legal guardians, and the community, and to serve as an appropriate role model.

To uphold these commitments, the educator:

I. Commitment to the Student.

- A. Protects students from conditions within the educator’s control that circumvent learning or are detrimental to the health and safety of students.
- B. Maintains an appropriate relationship with students in all settings; does not encourage, solicit, or engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with students, nor touch a student in an inappropriate way for personal gratification, with intent to harm, or out of anger.
- C. Evaluates students and assigns grades based upon the students’ demonstrated competencies and performance.
- D. Disciplines students justly and fairly and does not deliberately embarrass or humiliate them.
- E. Holds in confidence information learned in professional practice except for professional reasons or in compliance with pertinent regulations or statutes.

F. Refuses to accept significant gifts, favors, or additional compensation that might influence or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

II. Commitment to the School and School System

A. Utilizes available resources to provide a classroom climate conducive to learning and to promote learning to the maximum possible extent.

B. Acknowledges the diverse views of students, parents and legal guardians, and colleagues as they work collaboratively to shape educational goals, policies, and decisions; does not proselytize for personal viewpoints that are outside the scope of professional practice.

C. Signs a contract in good faith and does not abandon contracted professional duties without a substantive reason.

D. Participates actively in professional decision-making processes and supports the expression of professional opinions and judgments by colleagues in decision-making processes or due process proceedings.

E. When acting in an administrative capacity:

1. Acts fairly, consistently, and prudently in the exercise of authority with colleagues, subordinates, students, and parents and legal guardians.
2. Evaluates the work of other educators using appropriate procedures and established statutes and regulations.
3. Protects the rights of others in the educational setting, and does not retaliate, coerce, or intentionally intimidate others in the exercise of rights protected by law.
4. Recommend persons for employment, promotion, or transfer according to their professional qualifications, the needs and policies of the LEA, and according to the law.

III. Commitment to the Profession

A. Provides accurate credentials and information regarding licensure or employment and does not knowingly assist others in providing untruthful information.

B. Takes action to remedy an observed violation of the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators and promotes understanding of the principles of professional ethics.

C. Pursues growth and development in the practice of the profession and uses that knowledge in improving the educational opportunities, experiences, and performance of students and colleagues.

Adopted by the State Board of Education June 5, 1997.

.0601 PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

The purpose of these rules is to establish and uphold uniform standards of professional conduct for licensed professional educators throughout the State. These rules shall be binding on every person licensed by the SBE, hereinafter referred to as "educator" or "professional educator," and the possible consequences of any willful breach shall include license suspension or revocation. The prohibition of certain conduct in these rules shall not be interpreted as approval of conduct not specifically cited.

History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-295.3;
Eff. April 1, 1998.

.0602 STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) The standards listed in this Section shall be generally accepted for the education profession and shall be the basis for State Board review of performance of professional educators. These standards shall establish mandatory prohibitions and requirements for educators. Violation of these standards shall subject an educator to investigation and disciplinary action by the SBE or LEA.

(b) Professional educators shall adhere to the standards of professional conduct contained in this Rule. Any intentional act or omission that violates these standards is prohibited.

(1) Generally recognized professional standards. The educator shall practice the professional standards of federal, state, and local governing bodies.

(2) Personal conduct. The educator shall serve as a positive role model for students, parents, and the community. Because the educator is entrusted with the care and education of small children and adolescents, the educator shall demonstrate a high standard of personal character and conduct.

(3) Honesty. The educator shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties including the following:

(A) statement of professional qualifications;

(B) application or recommendation for professional employment, promotion, or licensure;

(C) application or recommendation for college or university admission, scholarship, grant, academic award, or similar benefit;

(D) representation of completion of college or staff development credit;

(E) evaluation or grading of students or personnel;

(F) submission of financial or program compliance reports submitted to state, federal, or other governmental agencies;

(G) submission of information in the course of an official inquiry by the employing LEA or the SBE related to facts of unprofessional conduct, provided, however, that an educator shall be given adequate notice of the

allegations and may be represented by legal counsel; and

(H) submission of information in the course of an investigation by a law enforcement agency, child protective services, or any other agency with the right to

investigate, regarding school-related criminal activity; provided, however, that an educator shall be entitled to decline to give evidence to law enforcement if such evidence may tend to incriminate the educator as that term is defined by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

(4) Proper remunerative conduct. The educator shall not solicit current students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator in a private remunerative capacity. An educator shall not tutor for remuneration students currently assigned to the educator's classes, unless approved by the local superintendent. An educator shall not accept any compensation, benefit, or thing of value other than the educator's regular compensation for the performance of any service that the educator is required to render in the course and scope of the educator's employment. This Rule shall not restrict performance of any overtime or supplemental services at the request of the LEA; nor shall it apply to or restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens of minimal value offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons in recognition or appreciation of service.

(5) Conduct with students. The educator shall treat all students with respect. The educator shall not commit any abusive act or sexual exploitation with, to, or in the presence of a student, whether or not that student is or has been under the care or supervision of that educator, as defined below:

- (A) any use of language that is considered profane, vulgar, or demeaning;
- (B) any sexual act;
- (C) any solicitation of a sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical;
- (D) any act of child abuse, as defined by law;
- (E) any act of sexual harassment, as defined by law; and
- (F) any intentional solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student, or any sexual contact with a student. The term "romantic relationship" shall include dating any student.

(6) Confidential information. The educator shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information regarding students or their family members that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law or professional standards, or is necessary for the personal safety of the student or others.

(7) Rights of others. The educator shall not willfully or maliciously violate the constitutional or civil rights of a student, parent/legal guardian, or colleague.

(8) Required reports. The educator shall make all reports required by Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes.

(9) Alcohol or controlled substance abuse. The educator shall not:

- (A) be under the influence of, possess, use, or consume on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity a controlled substance as defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-95, the Controlled Substances Act, without a prescription authorizing such use;
- (B) be under the influence of, possess, use, or consume an alcoholic beverage or a controlled substance on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity involving students; or
- (C) furnish alcohol or a controlled substance to any student except as indicated in the professional duties of administering legally prescribed medications.

(10) Compliance with criminal laws. The educator shall not commit any act referred to in G.S. 115C-332 and any felony under the laws of the United States or of any state.

(11) Public funds and property. The educator shall not misuse public funds or property, funds of a school-related organization, or colleague's funds. The educator shall account for funds collected from students, colleagues, or parents/legal guardians. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

(12) Scope of professional practice. The educator shall not perform any act as an employee in a position for which licensure is required by the rules of the SBE or by Chapter 115C or the North Carolina General Statutes during any period in which the educator's license has been suspended or revoked.

(13) Conduct related to ethical violations. The educator shall not directly or indirectly use or threaten to use any official authority or influence in any manner that tends to discourage, restrain, interfere with, coerce, or discriminate against any subordinate or any licensee who in good faith reports, discloses, divulges, or otherwise brings to the attention of an LEA, the SBE, or any other public agency authorized to take remedial action, any facts or information relative to actual or suspected violation of any law regulating the duties of persons serving in the public school system, including but not limited to these Rules.

History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-295.3;
Eff. May 1, 1998.

We look forward to another successful year and hope that this handbook will serve as a useful resource in your search for general information and a guide to specific policies and procedures when more details are needed. Please refer to the GCS website at www.gcsnc.com for more details or to your supervisor regarding questions concerning policies and expectations.

Any suggestions for improvement or changes may be forwarded to any committee member. We welcome your feedback.

The Handbook Committee:

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