

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**PERSONNEL
HANDBOOK
2019 - 20**

**DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES
&
TALENT MANAGEMENT**

Envisioning a system of world-class schools

GWINNETT
COUNTY
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

437 OLD PEACHTREE RD NW
SUWANEE, GA 30024



GWINNETT
COUNTY
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

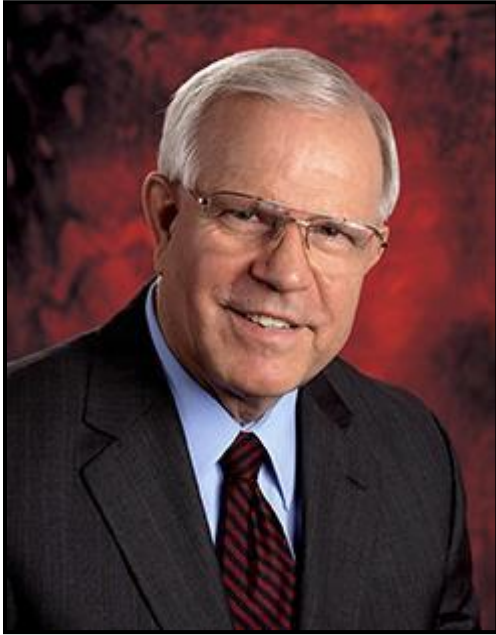
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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO/SUPERINTENDENT



In Gwinnett County Public Schools, our core business is teaching and learning, and we believe the quality of our employees is the most important factor in providing a quality education for the students of our community. Whether you are a teacher or someone who supports teaching and learning, you were selected as a GCPS employee because we believe you have the knowledge and skills that will assist our school system in fulfilling its vision of becoming a system of world-class schools.

As is characteristic of all dynamic organizations, our school district is constantly improving. That drive to improve is what helped GCPS become a three-time finalist and two-time winner of The Broad Prize for Urban Education and a College Board AP District of the Year among large districts.

Our policies and practices that support the GCPS teaching corps contributed to recognition as a great place to work. Our overall commitment to our employees earned us a spot among the top 200 large employers in the U.S. on the *Forbes* "Best Employer" list and a top-ten ranking on the "Best Employer for Women" list for 2018. And we just learned that we're on the "Best Employer for Women" list again in 2019!

We're also proud of the national recognition we earned during the 2016-17 school year as an Outstanding Great District for Great Teachers, an honor from the National Council on Teacher Quality. In addition, GCPS is home to the state's inaugural Governance Team of the Year and has been named one of the best places to work in metro Atlanta and Gwinnett County, year after year.

It is important for you as an employee to learn more about this outstanding organization and matters that affect you on the job. This handbook highlights opportunities available to GCPS employees, communicates compensation and benefits information, and summarizes Gwinnett County Board of Education policies and procedures. I urge you to read the Personnel Handbook and other information available to you as you take steps to become an informed and engaged employee. Our school system website and Employee Portal also serve as critical resources, providing access to policies, forms, general information, and more.

Again, thank you for joining our GCPS team and for all that you will do to support Gwinnett County students. Your work makes a difference in the lives of children and has a positive impact on the future of Gwinnett County, our state, and our nation. Whether you are a teacher or someone who supports those who teach, the work you do touches the lives of our students and the promise they hold for a bright future. We believe in the Promise of Gwinnett! We believe in you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Alvin Wilbanks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Alvin Wilbanks
CEO/Superintendent

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) has earned a reputation as a high-performing school district that provides a quality and effective education for every student. Sustaining that success requires the district to continuously review where it is today and envision what the organization must be in the future. In 2014, GCPS revisited its vision, mission, and strategic goals to ensure they are relevant and resonate with those who live in Gwinnett today. Overall, stakeholders indicated that these foundational components have served GCPS well over the years, helping to keep the focus on the main thing— teaching and learning. That said, the updated version of these foundational components reflects several suggestions received through the review process. We encourage you to become familiar with our strategic direction and to learn more about our vision of becoming a system of world-class schools. Following, find the updated foundational elements of Gwinnett County Public Schools:

GCPS' Vision: What we aspire to be...

Gwinnett County Public Schools will become a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers.

GCPS' Mission: Why we exist, our core business...

The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

GCPS' Strategic Goals: The plan for achieving our mission (Adopted 1/22/15)

- Ensure a world-class education for all students by focusing on teaching and learning the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum.
- Ensure a safe, secure, and orderly environment for all.
- Optimize student achievement through responsible stewardship of its financial resources and the proactive pursuit of all resources necessary to meet current and future demands.
- Recruit, employ, develop, and retain a workforce that achieves the mission and goals of the organization.
- Support instructional and operational needs with technological systems and processes that support effective performance and desired results.
- Provide and manage the system's facilities and operations in an exemplary manner as determined by programmatic needs and best management practices.
- Apply continuous quality improvement strategies and principles as the way the organization does business.

What does 'World-Class' mean?

In Gwinnett County Public Schools, "world-class" describes any product, service, or organization that is judged by qualitative and quantitative measures as one of the best in its class, and is recognized accordingly by customers, stakeholders, professional peers, and competitors alike. Characteristics of a world-class school include:

- Rigorous academic standards and high expectations for all students
- A comprehensive, challenging and relevant curriculum
- Effective, engaging instructional strategies
- Reliable, appropriate, and meaningful assessments
- High-performing and inspiring employees committed to professional development, training and lifelong learning
- A safe, secure, positive learning environment
- A culture of continuous improvement
- Accountability for results at all levels
- Productive and engaging partnerships with families and the community
- Effective use of technological resources to advance teaching and learning
- Innovative and productive approaches to management, operations, and use of resources
- Behavioral standards that promote teaching and learning
- An inclusive environment that acknowledges and values differences and encourages positive interactions between members of a diverse community
- Students who are prepared for the next grade level and graduate ready for college and careers
- Communication with internal and external audiences as a priority
- A shared vision for success

Core Beliefs and Commitments of the Gwinnett County Board of Education (Updated 3/17/16)

Believing, as we do, that public education is an integral part of the seamless fabric of the American experience, we, the Gwinnett County Board of Education, derive our core beliefs and commitments for public education in Gwinnett County from the foundational principles of the United States of America, specifically those espoused in the Declaration of Independence. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness,” and “That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”.

America’s public schools exist to undergird and advance these principles. They are the one place where all children and youth in our great, diverse country are provided a common, free education. They must educate every child for success in life and for the responsibilities of American citizenship.

Thus, we commit ourselves to a world-class education that meets the needs of individual students, to a sharp focus on the traditions and values at the heart of our constitutional democracy and the rule of law, and to the civic virtues that bind together communities of many cultures, faiths, viewpoints, interests, and histories into a unified nation. *E pluribus unum*. Out of many, one.

Therefore, the Gwinnett County Board of Education will:

- Ensure our core business of teaching and learning is built on a rigorous curriculum, effective instruction, and high-value assessments
- Educate every student to world-class standards and individual potential
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment
- Optimize the school effect to have a positive impact on every child
- Govern the district fairly and openly, seeking the engagement of the many stakeholders we serve.

GCPS’ Strategic Priorities for 2010-2020

Gwinnett County Public Schools is a high-performing school district. To sustain this record of success, we must review our plans and our progress year after year, and envision what the school district must be in the future to educate and prepare students for the demands of the 21st century. The **Strategic Priorities for 2010–2020** play an integral role in that essential work. They are not a “strategic plan.” Rather, they communicate the direction in which the school district is moving. The Strategic Priorities keep the school district focused on its core business— teaching and learning— and they drive continuous improvement in all that we do. They are one of the foundational pieces of the district’s strategic direction, linking its vision, mission, and beliefs to the goals, initiatives, and operational management plans/local school plans for improvement. Most importantly, the Priorities help ensure the school district will do its part in building a better Gwinnett for all of us.

The **Strategic Priorities for 2010–2020** reflect Gwinnett County Public Schools’ ongoing commitment to excellence, instructionally, and operationally. They outline the qualities and characteristics stakeholders believe are desirable for 10 major components of the school district:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Students | • Information Management and Technology |
| • Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment | • Governance and Leadership |
| • Employees | • Communication |
| • Facilities and Operations | • Financial Stewardship |
| • Parents and Guardians | • Public Image and Community Pride |

We believe that pursuing these attributes will move us closer to our vision of being a system of world- class schools. Stay tuned this year as the district shares the Strategic Priorities for 2020-2030.

INTRODUCTION TO GWINNETT COUNTY SCHOOLS

As Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) strives to become a system of world-class schools, we pride ourselves on our continuous quality improvement initiatives regarding our curriculum, classroom instruction, support for students, professional development for our workforce, GCPS' accountability system, technology and digital resources, maintenance of our facilities, and the district's fiscal management.

Gwinnett County Public Schools is the largest school system in the state of Georgia and 12th largest in the country, with a projected enrollment of 180,204 students for the 2019-20 school year. Made up of 141 schools, GCPS has 80 elementary schools, 29 middle schools, 23 high schools, two charter schools, and seven other special schools.

Gwinnett County Public Schools is financially sound with a FY2020 budget of \$2.319 billion. On average, the cost of educating one child in Gwinnett County is \$9,960 per year, with the direct costs of instruction accounting for 71.3% of that amount. Putting it in perspective, of the state's 10 largest school systems, GCPS had the 2nd lowest per-pupil expenditure in FY2018 (\$822 per student below the state average), yet GCPS' average SAT score was 4th highest among the 10 systems and 38 points above the state average, with 53% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

GCPS has received the highest possible bond rating (AAA) from the nation's two leading rating agencies. Gwinnett is only one of 24 school districts nationwide to hold this distinction, evidence of the district's stellar financial stewardship.

Gwinnett County Public Schools is the largest employer in Gwinnett County, employing more than 23,600 staff members, including full- and part-time positions and the pool of substitutes. GCPS takes pride in its veteran professional educators. In FY2020, our average teacher will hold a master's degree or higher advanced degree and have 13 years of teaching experience.

With our highly qualified workforce, we prepare our students for the future. The vast majority of 2019 graduates (82%) plan to attend college or postsecondary school. Seniors were offered \$203.7 million in scholarships, not including HOPE scholarships or full-ride awards to Gates Scholars. The Class of 2019 included four Gates Scholars, 17 QuestBridge scholarship recipients, 21 National Merit Scholars, a U.S. Presidential Scholar, two Horatio Alger Scholars, nine Posse Scholars, a KPMG Future Leader, and 21 military service academy appointees.

GCPS is a three-time finalist (2009, 2010 and 2014) and two-time winner (2010 and 2014) of The Broad Prize for Urban Education! Other recent national honors include a place on the *Forbes* "Best Employer" list in 2018 and ranking as one of *Forbes*' "Best Employers for Women" in both 2018 and 2019, a nod as one of the country's best communities for music education, and kudos as an outstanding Great District for Great Teachers and AP District of the Year among large districts. GCPS is home to the state's inaugural Governance Team of the Year and has been named one of the best places to work in metro Atlanta and Gwinnett County. GCPS' programs, school leaders, educators, support staff, and students have earned thousands of awards, championships, and recognitions. A few recent school honors include a National Blue Ribbon School and a National PTA School of Excellence; national counseling recognition for 31 schools since 2008, including nine repeats; state kudos for farm-to-school nutrition, recruitment, bus safety, procurement practices, and financial reporting; eight state-certified STEM/STEAM schools and programs; 21 AP Honor Schools, recognized in both STEM subjects and the humanities; 12 Reward Schools among Georgia's top Title I schools, and kudos for 38 PBIS schools and 31 SHAPE Honor Roll Schools; 28 schools honored for Greatest Gains in academic performance and 17 schools recognized for Highest Performance, with nine schools noted in both categories; Georgia's Principal of the Year and Counselor of the Year; U.S. staff honors for innovative teaching in mathematics, music education, entrepreneurship, computer science, career and technical education, culinary arts, band direction, and advocacy in adapted sports, and international recognition for language instruction; state and metro honors for staff in science, career and technical education, arts education, writing, counseling, advocacy, AP, library media services, and alternative education; two winners of Atlanta Families' Awards and three A/C teaching winners; school recognition for STEM, peer leadership, financial literacy, innovation, language instruction, and three honored media centers. Students and teams earned honors in international, national, and state competition in language arts, mathematics, science, history, writing, reading, literacy, problem-solving, engineering, poetry, leadership and community service, creativity, robotics, languages, physical fitness, technology, app development, visual and performing arts, JROTC, video production, entrepreneurship, business, marketing, culinary arts, law enforcement, health services, sport stacking, and athletics.

For more information detailing GCPS, please visit the [Gwinnett County Public Schools website](#).

COMMUNICATION WITH EMPLOYEES AND THE COMMUNITY

Employees' achievements and best practices in the classroom are recognized through internal communication vehicles, including staff publications such as *Torch*, *Education Briefs*, and *Spotlight*; GCPS' print and digital publications for the community such as *Communiqué*, *Essentials*, and *GCPS eNews*; the district's website, Employee Portal, and social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; and on GCPS TV (available on cable television stations and on the web). In addition, employee achievements at the state and national level may be publicized through press releases prepared by the Department of Communication and Media Relations for distribution to all metro-area media. Any employee may submit information for recognition by sending it to the Department of Communication and Media Relations at the J. Alvin Wilbanks Instructional Support Center (ISC). The district is the recipient of a number of state and national communication awards, including NSPRA Awards of Excellence and EMMY and Telly awards.

The Teacher Advisory Council (TAC)— composed of one teacher representative from each school— and the Local School Administrators Association (LSAA), an organization of principals and assistant principals, meet with the CEO/Superintendent at various times during the school year. In addition, Cross Functional Action Teams, or XFATs, are convened to address specific concerns or solve problems in a collaborative manner.

During budget preparation, Gwinnett County Public Schools provides employees with opportunities for input on financial matters through a number of channels. Any employee may give input on the budget by attending the School Board's public hearings or by sending recommendations to the district's Chief Financial Officer.

Parents and citizens have direct channels to provide input to their School Board representatives through attendance at monthly Board meetings. Gwinnett County Public Schools shares information through the system-wide parent newsletter, *Essentials*, and online magazine, *Communiqué*; through e-newsletters; and via the district's website, the employee and parent portals, GCPS' social media presence (Facebook and Twitter, and, new this year, Instagram and Pinterest), and original programming on GCPS TV. SchoolMessenger is a rapid notification system used by GCPS to contact families via telephone messages, text messages, and email messages. The district uses the system to communicate information related to districtwide events, including safety alerts and school closings due to inclement weather. Schools also may use the system to communicate general/non-emergency information related to school events and attendance messages via email. Ongoing, two-way communication between the school system and its internal and external audiences and positive media relations are a continued focus for Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Strategic Priority for Communication

The school district will promote open, honest, reliable, two-way communication that builds trust and confidence within the school community. We will share accurate, timely, and relevant information with stakeholders through appropriate communication vehicles. We will be committed to public engagement so that students, parents, staff, and community members will be well informed and able to provide meaningful input regarding district issues. The school district will overcome communication challenges such as those associated with growth, language differences, and access to technology. Communication will promote and reinforce the school system's reputation, conveying a clear and compelling story of our instructional and operational success. Effective communication will be everyone's responsibility.

Employee Recognition

Gwinnett County Public Schools employees frequently receive recognition for awards and various national, state, and local accomplishments. Professional associations regularly recognize GCPS teachers for their excellence. Additionally, each school chooses a Teacher of the Year nominee during the fall. From the pool of local school Teachers of the Year, level winners and the GCPS Teacher of the Year are named. The district also recognizes its top support staff, including transportation employees, custodial teams, counselors, and media specialists and advocates. Additionally, GCPS recognizes teachers with perfect attendance each year. School system newsletters prepared by the Department of Communication and Media Relations highlight employee honors. In addition, the school system shares employee and school and system accomplishments with the local news media.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Individuals employed by Gwinnett County Public Schools are selected by a systematic personnel screening process designed to identify highly qualified candidates. This same commitment to quality is reflected as the system plans for enhancement of the skills and competencies of employees. Professional growth opportunities are coordinated by the Department of Staff Development.

Staff Development

Staff Development provides high-quality professional learning opportunities and customized support and services that are designed to advance the system's vision, mission, and goals by enhancing employee performance and developing employee capacity to lead in a system of world-class schools. We are committed to the development, support, and implementation of professional learning that is research-based, data-driven, student-focused, and sustainable over time.

Gwinnett County Public Schools offers extensive professional learning opportunities for teachers in content, pedagogy, and processes. These opportunities are facilitated by the district office curriculum departments and local schools. Teachers have multiple venues for gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to provide impactful instruction that meets students' needs. Staff Development supports and partners with local schools to ensure teachers receive differentiated, ongoing, professional learning to continuously improve.

Additionally, Staff Development coordinates special programs to meet the specific needs of teachers and staff throughout the district.

- **Teach Gwinnett**, a Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (GaTAPP), is a certification program for teachers seeking initial certification. Teach Gwinnett provides the professional learning and support needed to ensure beginning teachers are fully equipped to be successful and positively impact student learning.
- **Coach Endorsement** is a program designed for teacher leaders concentrating on research-based coaching practices proven to be successful in supporting teachers and leading change within schools.
- **Mentor Gwinnett** program is a district-wide, supplemental program for teacher leaders serving as mentors. Specific professional learning and induction processes are implemented in local schools to provide comprehensive support to new teachers and to ensure they develop the knowledge and skills necessary to impact student learning.
- **Support Staff Development** provides instructional services designed to increase the knowledge, skills, and overall performance of support staff. The program offers courses focusing on workplace dynamics, working with teams, professional growth, and job-related competencies.

Our district's commitment and belief that learning is a life-long journey are evident in our Board [Policy GAD](#), which requires all GCPS employees to earn 20 staff development hours annually. These hours should align directly to the vision, mission, and goals of the district, LSPI goals, RBES goals, and/or area of certification. They are earned through participation in local school staff development sessions, district-sponsored opportunities, and/or external offerings from approved agencies. To search and register for upcoming district-wide staff development opportunities, refer to the [Employee Portal](#), click on the icon for PD&E or contact the Staff Development Department at 678-301-7095.

Leadership Development

The research is clear and persuasive in describing the impact of school leaders. In fact, the research shows that effective leadership is second only to effective teaching in impact on student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). Moreover, research studies affirm that districts who support a leadership pipeline improve student performance (Gates et al., 2019) and Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) has a rich history in supporting the training and development of school leaders. The purpose of the Leadership Development department is to identify, train, and support aspiring, novice, and veteran school and district leaders with professional learning opportunities to improve teaching and learning and support a system of world-class schools.

The district's Quality-Plus Leader Academy, the umbrella to cover all activities associated with leadership development, has three major components.

These include the Aspiring Principal Program, Aspiring Leader Program, and the District Leader Program.

- The **Aspiring Principal Program** is a selective year-long program that prepares high-potential assistant principals to be the next generation of effective GCPS principals through learning sessions, case studies, leadership simulations, and a residency. Through multiple cohorts, the Aspiring Principal Program has trained principals serving in 88% of GCPS' schools.
- Similarly, through multiple cohorts, the **Aspiring Leader Program** prepares emerging leaders at the teacher level for assistant principal roles through a half-year academy. The Aspiring Leader Program has trained assistant principals serving in 93% of GCPS' schools.
- The **District Leader Program** ensures that GCPS has well-qualified leaders at the district office and that newly appointed district-level leaders have the foundational knowledge needed to serve the system effectively in their new capacity. In addition to these programs, the department collaborates with partner universities to provide cohort preparation and certification programs that are specific to the needs of the district.

The Leadership Development department also provides support for leaders once they are new to a position. Mentoring support is provided for first and second-year principals and assistant principals. Other leadership training includes professional learning opportunities, Just-in-Time (JIT) training, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) training, new administrator orientation, and leadership seminars. The department plans, organizes, and directs the district's annual Summer Leadership Conference, the signature learning event for school and district-level leaders.

For more information about these programs, please visit the [Staff Development](#) and [Leadership Development](#) websites.

Performance Appraisal

Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to performance assessment that encourages continuous quality improvement for all employees. All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually as required by Georgia Code § 20-2-210. Certified educators are assessed using the Gwinnett Teacher Effectiveness System, the Gwinnett Leader Effectiveness System, the Gwinnett Educator Effectiveness System, or other appropriate evaluation programs as determined by the district. Classified employees are assessed using a Job Description Assessment.

Certification

It is the responsibility of all certified employees to obtain and maintain valid in-field Georgia certification. Employees may contact the Certification Department at 678-301-6070 for certification forms and requirements.

All paraprofessionals and media clerks must hold a Paraprofessional Certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). Certification requirements are found on the [GaPSC](#) website.

Questions regarding certification should be directed to the Certification Department at 678-301-6070.

Licensing

All vehicle operators covered by the commercial driver's licensing laws must have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and must complete the training course prescribed by the State Department of Transportation and Gwinnett County Public Schools. Other specialized positions may also require licensing.

BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Benefits are a large part of the total compensation package for Gwinnett County Public School employees. To meet the changing needs of our employees, we are continuously reviewing and updating these benefits and their features. The following is an overview of the benefits provided by GCPS. Because of the importance of the benefits package, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the details of the various plans from a variety of sources, including the *GCPS New Hire Guide*, the *State Health Benefit Plan Decision Guide*, and the *Benefits Blast*. These publications, along with other detailed information, can be found on the [GCPS Benefits](#) website.

Open Enrollment (OE) is the annual period when employees may enroll or change options or coverage, subject to the conditions described in the plan. The OE period, unless otherwise announced, occurs mid- October through mid-November of each calendar year. Coverage changes or enrollments become effective the following January 1.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Benefits and Leave Administration Office of any changes in the number of dependents and/or the names of beneficiaries.

Insurance benefits become effective on the first day of the month following the completion of one full calendar month of employment. Temporary employees (substitutes and miscellaneous employees) or employees who work less than 20 hours per week are not eligible for benefits.

Accident Insurance

Accident Insurance also complements traditional health coverage by providing a lump sum payment that can help pay expenses not typically covered by other insurance. The payment can be used to off-set medical deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, and/or living expenses. Employees have a choice of two comprehensive plan options which provide payments in addition to any other insurance payments employees may receive.

Behavioral Health & Counseling

Behavioral Health and Counseling services are available to all benefit-eligible employees. Professional counseling services are offered for a loss or major life change, at no cost to the employee, for up to 5 sessions per life event.

Critical Illness Insurance

Employees may enroll in the Critical Illness insurance plan, which supplements health care by helping with costs associated with a critical illness. Benefits are paid directly to the employee in a lump sum when a diagnosis of a covered illness is confirmed. Coverage amounts are \$15,000, \$30,000 and \$50,000. Rates are age-banded and are not changed once enrolled in the plan.

Dental Insurance

Dental coverage may be purchased for the individual employee and his/her eligible family members. Two plans are available: Basic or Premium Direct Reimbursement. Both plans offer a voluntary MetLife network of preferred dental providers. The Premium plan also offers orthodontia benefits. Late entrant restrictions may apply to employees who decline enrollment at the time of hire and enroll through a subsequent Open Enrollment, or for those employees who dropped dental coverage and re-elected coverage at a later Open Enrollment.

Disability Insurance

Short-Term Disability coverage is available to the employee. There are three levels of coverage: Basic (\$225 weekly benefit), Plan A (\$300 weekly benefit), and Plan B (\$500 weekly benefit). The weekly salary benefit may not exceed two-thirds of an employee's current salary. Short-Term Disability benefits begin the 15th day of disability and may continue for up to 180 days, provided an appropriate health care provider certifies the disability. Childbirth and complications of pregnancies are also covered. Short-Term Disability benefits may be received in conjunction with accrued leave usage. An employee must have paid six-monthly premiums to receive benefits for a medical disability.

GCPS employees contribute 1% of their salary to the Gwinnett Retirement System (GRS) for mandatory Long-Term Disability coverage. Should you become disabled, you will be entitled to a monthly income equal to one-twelfth of sixty percent (60%) of your earnings in the calendar year preceding your disability, or 60% of your monthly earnings in the last month preceding your disability, whichever is greater.

Disability Income Benefits will be the amounts necessary, when added to benefits available under other plans, to provide the 60% benefit level. Other plans include the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia, the Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia, Workers' Compensation, Social Security, and any successors thereto. You must first apply for benefits from such other plans. If you do not apply for benefits from another plan for which you could be eligible, no Disability Income Benefits are payable or will accrue under the Plan.

Disability Income Benefits will begin on the first day of the month following the completion of the last of the following conditions:

- You must have completed a leave of absence lasting 180 consecutive days from the first day you were absent from employment based on your disability.
- You must have been determined to meet the Plan's definition of disability.
- You must have exhausted all other paid absence benefits, including short-term disability payments, sick leave payments, and paid vacation.

Complete information about the Long-Term Disability plan and GRS is available on the [GCPS Retirement Services Department](#) website.

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

Employees may deduct up to \$2,700 in pre-tax dollars per plan year to pay for eligible non-reimbursed health care expenses. Employees may deduct up to \$5,000 in pre-tax dollars per plan year to pay for qualifying dependent care expenses. Special care must be taken in predicting out-of-pocket expenses for either the health care or dependent care plans as any unused portion of both FSA will be forfeited at the end of the plan year. The entire election for the healthcare FSA is available on the first day of the plan year as services are provided. Dependent care expenses are reimbursed up to the accumulated payroll deductions as services are provided. Detailed information on both FSA plans and lists of eligible expenses can be found on the [GCPS Benefits](#) website.

Health Insurance

Benefit-eligible employees have the opportunity to enroll in group health insurance provided by the State Health Benefit Plan. Information on the health plan is available from the Benefits and Leave Administration Office or the [GCPS Benefits](#) website.

Hidden Paycheck

The Gwinnett County Board of Education provides additional compensation to employees in the form of employer-paid portions of insurance, retirement contributions, and accumulated leave that can add 30% or more to an employee's actual salary. The Hidden Paycheck is not available for Temporary/Miscellaneous employees, Substitutes, or Retirees. Employees can locate the individualized Hidden Paycheck in the [Employee Portal](#) under the About Me tab>Benefits>Hidden Paycheck.

Hospital Indemnity Insurance

Hospital Indemnity insurance complements traditional health coverage by providing a lump sum payment that can help pay expenses not typically covered by other insurance. The payment can be used to off-set medical deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, and/or living expenses. Employees have a choice of two comprehensive plan options which provide payments in addition to any other insurance payments employees may receive.

Legal Insurance

Benefits include legal representation, over the phone or face-to-face, telephone legal advice and consultation, reduced fee services, online legal tools and resources, identity theft services, immigration assistance, and financial education and counseling services.

Employees may enroll in their choice of two plans. Both plans provide access to professional legal assistance for employees and family members.

- The [Law Phone Plan](#) provides toll-free telephone access to a network attorney for help with legal questions.
- The [Ultimate Advisor Plan](#) is a comprehensive service that provides face-to-face consultation and legal assistance.

Liability Insurance

The Board of Education provides professional liability insurance for its employees, which may provide for legal expenses and damages that may arise from suits brought against employees for incidents that occur while they are carrying out assigned duties of the district.

Life Insurance

Benefit-eligible employees are automatically covered by a \$15,000 group term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy provided by the Board at no cost to the employee, and underwritten by MetLife. Additionally, an employee may purchase Supplemental Life insurance up to six times his/her annual salary, up to \$500,000. Spousal Life insurance is available in increments of \$10,000 not to exceed 50% of Employee Supplemental Life benefits up to \$250,000. Rates for Supplemental and Spousal Life insurance are age-banded. Employees may also purchase a \$5,000, \$10,000, or \$15,000 dependent life insurance policy.

Medicare

All employees hired after April 1, 1986, are required to pay Medicare contributions, which provide the medical benefits within the Social Security Administration.

Vision Insurance

Vision coverage may be purchased for the individual employee and his/her eligible family members. Vision insurance covers the cost of eye exams and other services and materials through the EyeMed vision care network. Using in-network providers allows enrollees to receive care at no cost or minimal out-of-pocket expense. The plan also includes an out-of-network benefit that allows enrollees to use any eye care professional. The out-of-network feature reimburses 50% of eligible expenses up to a total reimbursement of \$300.

A complete description of services provided by the above plans is available by accessing the [GCPS Benefits website](#).

ADDITIONAL GCPS BENEFITS

Additional benefits are available to GCPS employees including, Metlife Auto & Home Insurance, and Long-Term Care Insurance. For information and contact numbers for these services and plans, access the [GCPS Benefits](#) website.

Peach State Federal Credit Union

As a convenience for employees of GCPS, payroll deductions are provided upon request for contributions or payments to the Peach State Federal Credit Union. For more information and telephone numbers, please visit the [Peach State Federal Credit Union](#) website.

GCPS Foundation

The Gwinnett County Public Schools Foundation Fund is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to providing financial resources to enrich and enhance education in Gwinnett County Public Schools. Located at the ISC, the Foundation's mission is to sustain excellent standards by strengthening internal and external community relationships providing resources and support to improve the educational future of our students. [The GCPS Foundation website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) offer the latest Foundation events, news, student scholarships/teacher grants, and the popular employee perks!

Love a discount?

Gwinnett County Public Schools is the largest employer in the county and among the largest in the metro area. As a result, employees of the district have access to a number of special programs and offers not available to the public – sporting events, entertainment, cell service, mortgages, florist, auto, electronics, banking and more. In addition, foundation partners often donate back to the schools and the district through these offers. You can help too by informing businesses of the **Community Partnership Program** offered through the GCPS Foundation. Direct interested parties to contact the GCPS Foundation office at 678-301-7287, and be sure to add the new [GCPS Foundation App](#) to your phone today!

COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATION

Gwinnett County Public Schools provides employees with a total compensation package that is regionally competitive in order to recruit, employ, develop, and retain a highly qualified work force. We believe that the high quality of our personnel is the single most important factor in continuing to provide a quality education for the students in our community. The Compensation office is committed to ensuring competitive wages for all employees while also maintaining internal and external pay equity. The Compensation Office produces annual salary schedules and work calendars for all GCPS employees and generates over 11,000 employment contracts annually, which are provided to employees electronically via the Employee Portal.

Teacher Compensation System

In the fall of 2015, GCPS formally kicked off a three-year process to implement a fair, flexible compensation system that will provide opportunities for employees to be rewarded and recognized for exceptional performance rather than solely years of service. The new Performance-Based Compensation System for Teachers rewards individual teachers who meet expectations on their performance evaluations and rewards top performers with additional financial awards. There are two phases to the new system; Phase 1 — a Performance-Based Salary Schedule, was implemented in August 2017 and acknowledges performance, not time on the job, as the impetus for movement on the salary schedule; Phase 2 — Performance-Based Awards, were implemented in 2018-19, with the first awards being distributed in the winter of 2019. The highest scoring eligible teachers in three Performance Categories, which include both ES/MS/HS level awards and each individual school awards, will receive additional financial compensation ranging from 3% to 10% of the average annual GCPS teacher salary. We believe that rewarding outstanding teachers will help us with teacher recruitment, retention, and morale, all of which impact student achievement. Additionally, incentivizing top performance in every school will help us improve the education we provide across the district. More information about the Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System can be found on the [GCPS Compensation](#) website.

Employee Personal Data Changes

It is the responsibility of employees to inform the Division of Human Resources & Talent Management of any change in name, home address, and/or phone number. Employees may update their name, personal address, and phone number online via the [Employee Portal](#) at any time. Name change requests must be accompanied by a copy of the signed social security card reflecting the new name, before the request may be completed.

Pay Statement/Direct Deposit

Employees may access and update the following payroll items online via the [Employee Portal](#).

- Pay Statements
- Direct Deposit
- Tax Withholding
- W2's

Penalty for Failure to Provide Certification

The employment contracts issued to certified staff are contingent upon the employee securing and continuing to hold a valid in-field certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Salary adjustments may be made to conform to the certificate level approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. If an employee is unable to be certified properly, the daily rate of pay may be adjusted to that of a substitute teacher retroactive to the beginning of employment under the contract.

Penalty for Failure to Meet Contractual Obligation

If fewer than 20 days of service are rendered under contract, the daily rate may be equal to the substitute teacher pay rate.

Vacations

Benefit-eligible 12-month employees accumulate vacation on a monthly basis. An employee must be at work or on paid leave 13 working days within a month in order to earn vacation leave. Employees working 20 or more hours per week, but less than 40 hours per week will earn a pro-rated share of vacation leave.

Employees who earn vacation will accumulate hours based on the schedule below:

Continuous Years of Service in GCPS	Time Accumulated Each Year
Years 1 – 5	96 hours (12 days)
Years 6 – 10	120 hours (15 days)
Years 11 – 15	144 hours (18 days)
Years 16 – 20	160 hours (20 days)
Over 20 years	184 hours (23 days)

- Vacation leave may be accumulated to a maximum of 25 times an employee’s monthly accrual amount. When the maximum is reached, additional vacation accumulation is not possible.
- All vacation leave is subject to approval by the principal or program manager.

Holidays

Other employees follow the holiday schedule on the annual GCPS Employee Calendar.

- New Year’s Day (1)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (1)
- Spring Holiday (1)
- Memorial Day (1)
- Independence Day (1)
- Labor Day (1)
- Thanksgiving (2)
- Winter Holidays (See Calendar)

Visit the [Compensation Center](#) website, where additional information, such as: Salary Schedules, Verification of GCPS Employment, Employee Work Calendars, and more are provided.

EQUITY AND COMPLIANCE


The Department of Equity and Compliance ensures the equitable administration of applicable federal, state, and GCPS regulations and laws impacting the GCPS community and fosters positive relationships between the school system and its students and employees. The Department of Equity and Compliance also administers the complaint and appeal processes; responds to inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies, investigates employee, student, and community complaints of discrimination or harassment, and processes accommodation requests. In addition, it facilitates compliance with legal requirements associated with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; Age Discrimination Act; Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. Questions regarding discrimination may alternatively be addressed to either U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, depending on the status of the complainant.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs, activities or employment practices and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. GCPS is expressly prohibited from subjecting any person to discrimination or harassment on the basis of his/her membership in a protected class by the following laws: Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title I and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008.

Annual Compliance Training

All GCPS employees are required to complete annual compliance training in the areas of Title IX Equity and Compliance and Security Awareness. Some school-based employees are also required to complete Safety and Security training on an annual basis. The training listed below is conducted through PD&E on the employee portal:

- **Title IX Equity and Compliance** training is an annual requirement for all GCPS employees and is the district's primary means of ensuring that employees are aware of laws and regulations related to mandatory reporting, suicide prevention, ethics, sexual harassment, and seclusion and restraint.
- The **Security Awareness Education Program** is aimed at helping school system employees better safeguard the information entrusted to us by students, families, and staff members. The mandatory program consists of a series of online courses that provide practical information on how to recognize and respond appropriately to cybersecurity threats. To access this training, log on to the [Employee Portal](#) and click the Security Awareness  Icon.
- **Safety & Security Training** is an annual requirement of some school-based employees, depending on position. This training ensures that school-based staff are aware of critical information related to keeping local schools safe and secure.

For more resources concerning Equity and Compliance, please visit the [Equity and Compliance Website](#).

LEAVE ADMINISTRATION

Gwinnett County Public Schools recognizes that our employees will encounter personal situations that may require time away from their job. Our leave options are designed to not only be flexible and consistent with employee needs but also to comply with state and federal laws. Leave of absence may be used for the following reasons: employee's personal disability, adoption, guardianship, military leave, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and/or Workers' Compensation. Family and Medical Leave does not need to be taken in one continuous block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take FMLA intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Employees seeking intermittent leave are not required to be absent for 10 consecutive days. Leave of absence taken in a continuous block is defined as leave taken in excess of 10 consecutive working days through the approved leave period, or until leave options have been exhausted. Employees must complete a "Leave Request Form" and provide supporting documentation.

Extended Leave of Absence

Employees who have completed at least three full years of consecutive service with GCPS are eligible for an extended leave of absence. No extended leaves of absence may exceed one calendar year unless approved by the CEO/Superintendent. Extended leaves may be granted for educational leave, health, childcare, military, and political leave. Employees are entitled to return to active employment, contingent upon a vacancy in the field in which they were employed at the time leave was granted.

Family and Medical Leave Act

GCPS is in full compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. To be eligible for FMLA, an employee must have been employed by the district for at least 12 months and must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the prior twelve-month period.

The FMLA may grant qualified employees 60 working days of unpaid leave every twelve months, which may be used for the following purposes:

- Birth of a child
- Adoption of a child or the placement of a foster child
- Care for a sick spouse, child, or parent
- Employee's own serious health condition
- Military

An eligible employee who is a covered service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member with a serious injury or illness.

The district requires that any leave request based on a family member's health condition, the employee's own health condition, or military caregiver status, be supported by the appropriate FMLA form. Additionally, an approved health care provider's release to return to work will be required for all employees who were on leave due to their own health condition.

The employee must provide at least 30-day notice of the employee's intention to take leave when possible. The employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment in a manner that will not overly disrupt the operations of the district. With limited exceptions, any eligible employee who takes leave under FMLA is entitled to be restored to his/her job or an equivalent position. The district may, under certain circumstances, request that an employee "recertify" his or her serious health condition or the serious health condition of his or her family member within the same leave year. In general, an employer may request the employee provide recertification no more often than every 30 days and only when the employee is actually absent or has requested to be absent. The district may contact the employee's health care provider to authenticate or clarify the fitness-for-duty certification.

Detailed information concerning FMLA is available through the [GCPS Policies](#) website and the Benefits and Leave Administration Office. For any additional information, please contact the Leave Department at Leave@gwinnett.k12.ga.us.

Jury Duty, Subpoena, and Other Court Order

All district employees shall be allowed leave without loss of pay when they respond to a summons for jury duty or attend a judicial proceeding in response to a job-related subpoena or other court order that requires their attendance.

Employees with jury duty shall not have the jury leave deducted from sick or personal leave, and no employee using legal leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute. Employees may also retain juror compensation.

Military Duty Leave

Employees will be paid for a maximum period of 18 working days, per federal fiscal year, for ordered military duty as defined in Georgia Code § 38-2-279, and while going to and returning from such duty.

Personal Disability Leave

Except in emergency cases, a completed Leave Request Form, accompanied by a healthcare provider's statement, must be submitted to the Benefits and Leave Administration Office at least 30 days before the anticipated date of disability. Childbirth is classified as a disability.

If an employee wishes to discontinue work before the anticipated date of disability, the employee must notify, if possible, the Benefits and Leave Administration Office in writing 30 days before the leave is to begin.

If an employee has been absent 10 consecutive working days and has not notified the Benefits and Leave Administration Office by completing a Leave Request Form, along with a written attending healthcare provider's statement or FMLA form certifying the illness and anticipated return to work date, his/her position is subject to being declared vacant and may result in employment termination.

Personal Leave

Up to three days of accumulated sick leave may be used each year for personal or professional reasons. Supervisory approval is required prior to the date of the planned absence. The employee is not required to disclose the specific purpose for the leave. Personal leave may not be taken when the presence of the employee is considered essential for effective school/school system operation. Teachers may not take personal leave on the day before or after a student holiday. Personal leave may not be carried over from year to year; therefore, unused personal leave will be carried over as accumulated sick leave.

Professional Leave for Certified Personnel

An employee may request leave to attend specific professional activities or to receive in-service training. Leave requests must be approved by the supervisor and submitted to the CEO/Superintendent or his/her designee for approval at least two weeks prior to the requested absence. Approval of the request does not commit the system to payment of any expenses. Professional leave may not total more than three days.

Religious Leave

Leave for religious holidays may not exceed three days per fiscal year. The employee should make up the leave at a time mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor.

Returning from Leave

An employee who is returning to work for the beginning of the new school year after extended leave must notify the Division of Human Resources & Talent Management in writing of his/her intention to return for the following school year. Every effort will be made to place an employee in the field held prior to the leave and at the location where the employee worked prior to the leave.

Such placement will depend on the availability of openings. Gwinnett County Board of Education Policy states that an employee "shall be entitled to return to active employment upon written request for reassignment and contingent upon a vacancy in the field in which he/she was employed when the leave was granted." Employees who have been on an extended leave without pay, and did not participate in the annual benefits Open Enrollment process, will be contacted by the Leave Administration Office regarding the process for making benefit election changes. When returning from disability leave, the employee must submit to the Leave Administration Office and supervisor a release to work statement from the health care provider stating that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of the job. If an employee is released with work restrictions, the work restrictions must be approved by an HR Staffing Director and Principal/Program Manager.

Sick Leave

Sick leave for full-time employees is earned at the rate of 10 hours per month multiplied by the number of months worked. Sick leave may be accumulated up to a maximum of 1,200 hours (150 days). An employee must be at work or on paid leave at least 13 working days within a month to earn sick leave for that month. Employees working less than 40 hours per week earn a prorated share of sick leave. Temporary employees (substitutes and miscellaneous employees) or employees who work less than 20 hours per week are not eligible to accrue leave.

With the supervisors' approval, an employee may use sick leave for absences due to the following reasons:

- Illness (including childbirth) or injury
- Adoption
- Exposure to contagious diseases which might endanger others
- Illness, injury, or death in employee's immediate family (spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, siblings, grandparents, in-law equivalents of the aforementioned, any relative residing in the employee's home or any dependent as shown in the employee's most recent tax return). This provision also covers in loco parentis relationships.

Employees absent for reasons other than those above or absent after sick leave has been exhausted, shall have their rate of pay adjusted accordingly based on Board [Policy GBRI](#).

Teachers, student services support personnel, administrative or supervisory personnel, and bus drivers who transfer to GCPS from other Georgia public school systems may transfer up to 45 days of sick leave. In accordance with state statute, the transfer of leave must take place within one year of termination from the previous school system.

An employee may donate a total of 10 days of sick leave to his/her spouse, who is also a GCPS employee, if the spouse's sick leave has been exhausted, and the following conditions are met:

- Must be for maternity leave, illness, or death of a family member
- Both employees must be contributing members of the GCPS Sick Leave Bank; and
- If requested, employees must provide a certificate of illness or death.

Accrued sick leave balances at the time of retirement may be purchased from employees according to current Board policy with the following stipulations:

- Employee must have been employed full time for a minimum of nine months.
- All certified employees, supervisory staff, school secretaries, and twelve month employees in positions where substitutes are not permitted will be paid at the rate of .75 of the 1996-97 pay of a substitute teacher with two or more years of college. All other employees will be paid at the rate of .75 of the 1996-97 pay of the highest non-teaching substitute rate. This payment will be made one month after the employee received his/her final check.
- Employee must request payment for unused leave within one year or forfeit all monies due; and employees who have transferred sick leave from another Georgia school system must have worked for GCPS for at least one full contract year to be paid for unused sick leave.

Sick Leave Bank

The Sick Leave Bank (SLB) has been established to provide additional sick leave days for employees who have exhausted their accrued leave due to catastrophic or life-threatening personal illness. The SLB is available to Board-approved positions that earn sick leave based on Board [Policy GBRI B](#). Application for Sick Leave Bank benefits shall be made through a completed Sick Leave Bank Benefits Request Form and submitted to the Benefits and Leave Administration Office. The request form must be submitted within 12 months from the beginning date of the disability. For detailed information regarding the SLB, please refer to [Procedure P. GBRI B](#).

For additional resources concerning Leave of Absence, please visit the [Leave](#) website.

RETIREMENT

The mission of the Gwinnett Retirement Services Department is to provide Gwinnett County Public Schools' employees and retirees with the information, guidance, support, and service they need to plan and achieve a comfortable, secure, and independent retirement; and to manage the assets of the Plan to ensure the promise of life-long benefits.

The Gwinnett Retirement Services Department offers Gwinnett Retirement System (GRS) counseling services for prospective retirees, assistance to the School District's existing GRS retirees, benefit processing for GRS beneficiaries and provides information to assist former employees related to their GRS vesting/benefit status. Another key service provided is assistance with the School District's 403(b) & 457(b) retirement savings plans.

Gwinnett Retirement System

Effective January 1, 1983, Gwinnett County Public Schools elected to withdraw from the Social Security System. The Gwinnett Retirement System (GRS) was developed to offer employees benefits comparable to Social Security benefits at a greatly reduced cost to the employee. This plan provides a retirement income that supplements the state retirement programs. Further details can be found on the [Gwinnett Retirement System](#) website.

Some highlights of the Gwinnett plan are:

- Lifetime income at retirement
- Benefits may increase up to 3% annually based on the cost of living index.
- Full benefits begin at age 65
- An employee hired before July 1, 2012, who remains continuously active is vested after five years of service.
- Employees hired or rehired on or after July 1, 2012, will become vested after 10 years of service.
- Survivor benefits
- If disabled while employed, an employee can collect benefits which, when added to benefits from other sources, equal 60% of salary.
- Board of Education contributions fund 100% of an employee's GRS retirement benefits, and the employee contributes 1% of earnings to provide for Long-Term Disability coverage.

Teachers Retirement System of Georgia

Teachers, administrators, supervisors, clerical employees, paraprofessionals, and various central office staff are eligible members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). Benefits become available after 30 years of service, regardless of age, at 25 years of service with early retirement adjustments, or at age 60, after 10 years of service. Employees who have 10 years of TRS service are eligible to apply for disability retirement benefits if permanently disabled, as well as survivor's benefits that are paid to a beneficiary. TRS retirement benefits are funded by a combination of employee and employer contributions. Current contribution rates and additional information about TRS is available on the [Teachers Retirement System of Georgia](#) website.

Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia

Bus drivers, food service employees, some non-supervisory maintenance and custodial personnel, and other employees not eligible for membership in TRS are eligible for membership in the Public School Employees' Retirement System of Georgia (PSERS). For members with at least 10 years of creditable service, normal retirement benefits may commence at age 65, and reduced early retirement benefits may commence as early as age 60. Members hired before July 1, 2012, contribute \$4.00 per month for nine months each year. Members hired or rehired on or after July 1, 2012, contribute \$10.00 per month for nine months each year. The state makes the employer's contribution. Further information is available on the [Employees' Retirement System of Georgia](#) website.

Workers' Compensation

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. The injured employee must provide notice of the injury immediately, but no later than 30 days after the accident, to the employer, the employer's representative, or the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. The injured employee may select a medical care provider from the [Panel of Physicians](#) posted by the Board of Education. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work-related injury. The Panel of Physicians is posted in conspicuous places in all locations maintained by the Board of Education and may be obtained through the [Risk Management](#) office.

Not every injury that occurs on GCPS premises or during the workday is covered under Workers' Compensation. Generally, employees are not eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries sustained: going to or coming from work; during deviations from the scope of employment (e.g., employee making a delivery drives to a place unconnected to the employment); as a consequence of imported danger (e.g., an employee's attire or a personal weapon causes injury to self); an employee engaging in a prohibited act; an employee engaging in horseplay; during voluntary participation in recreational or social activities; and during times in which the employee is not subject to the employer's control. Each report of injury is reviewed in detail by Risk Management staff, and a decision on coverage is made based on the available information. Questions may be addressed to an immediate supervisor or the [Risk Management](#) office.

For additional information regarding GCPS' Retirement services, please visit the [Retirement](#) website.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS

Gwinnett County Public Schools recognizes the importance of meeting employee needs and utilizing employee abilities. For effective district operations, it is necessary that sound personnel policies and practices are known and understood by all employees. These policies and practices ensure consistency and fairness for all employees.

This handbook, the salary schedule, and references to the number of days to be worked should not be considered an employment contract. Since it is the responsibility of each employee to understand GCPS Board policies, administrative procedures and practices, if clarification of information contained is needed, an immediate supervisor should be contacted for assistance. Board policies and procedures summarized in this handbook are meant to provide employees with only a general overview of Board policies and procedures related to personnel. Any policies or procedures on the [GCPS Policies](#) website supersede any content printed in this handbook.

A listing of each section of Board policies may be accessed on the [GCPS Policies](#) website. Employees may also access the Board Policies and Administrative Procedures using the Lotus Notes Database.

Assistant Principal and Teacher Transfer Requests ([Policy GBM](#), [Procedure P.GBM](#))

The Placement Preference Process provides an opportunity for assistant principals and teachers to express interest for a lateral transfer to a different location for the next school year. It is not necessary to determine the existence of a vacancy to list a school as a preference. Principals receive electronic notification regarding all transfer requests to and from their schools. Transfer requests will be considered as principals fill positions for the coming year. Certified teachers and assistant principals must complete their third consecutive, complete, contractual year in the current school to be eligible for a transfer. Detailed information on the process and the deadline for assistant principals and teachers are communicated in the spring.

Complaint Procedures ([Policy GAE](#), [Procedure P.GAE](#))

The purpose of this policy is to provide a way for the Board and its employees to reach solutions to problems, disputes, or controversies that may occur and to provide a mechanism for employees or applicants to complain about unlawful discrimination or harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide a clear and concise method for the resolution of complaints at the lowest possible administrative level.

This policy may also be used specifically as a procedure by employees who allege discrimination or harassment based on age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability. In the case of alleged discrimination based on age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability, employees may complain directly to the Director of Equity and Compliance, Title IX Section 504/Title II Coordinator, who will make a prompt investigation. Any supervisor who becomes aware of such a complaint should notify the Director of Equity and Compliance, Title IX Section 504/Title II Coordinator of the Division of Human Resources and Talent Management no later than on the business day immediately following his/her knowledge of the complaint.

Please refer to the Gwinnett County Board of Education [Procedure P.GAE](#) for specific steps. Complaint Procedure forms may be obtained from a supervisor or by calling the Division of Human Resources and Talent Management at 678-301-6000.

Scope of Complaint: Exclusions

This complaint and grievance procedure is applicable to any claim by any employee of the Gwinnett County Board of Education who is affected in his/her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of this school district or with which the district is required to comply.

Exclusions - Unless the complaint is based on unlawful discrimination, this procedure shall not apply to:

- Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluations and professional development plans
- Job performance
- Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee; and/or
- The revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee.

An employee, who chooses to appeal under O.C.G.A. §20-2-1160, shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

Initiating a Complaint and Requesting a Hearing

In order to resolve matters in a fair, equitable, and expeditious manner, the Board of Education has developed a procedure outlined in [Policy GAE](#). This policy is designed to identify all parties involved, provide timelines, and assist in organizing complaint information.

Contracts

Contracts for certified employees and other Board-approved personnel are issued for no more than one school year. A contract of employment is made between an employee and the Gwinnett County Board of Education for a position within the district.

An employee who is fulfilling a full year contract for the current year must be notified by May 15 if a contract for the ensuing year will not be offered. An employee who holds a contract for less than one full year will not necessarily be offered a full contract for the ensuing year.

Drug-Free Workplace ([Policy GAMA](#), [Procedure P.GAMA](#), [Procedure P.GBU](#))

The Board provides a drug-free workplace and professes that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of tobacco and alcohol are wrong and harmful. The unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or dispensation of illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol by employees on school premises, in school vehicles, or at any school-sponsored activities is prohibited. Compliance with these standards is mandatory. Disciplinary sanctions, up to and including termination of employment and referral for prosecution, will be imposed on employees who violate these prohibitions.

Employees are prohibited from using or displaying drug, alcohol, and tobacco products in front of students while the employee is on duty, during the normal school day, or while on duty at any school-or system-sponsored function.

Drug and Alcohol Testing Procedure ([Policy GCRA](#), [Procedure P.GCRA](#))

In recognition of its responsibilities to take reasonable measures to ensure that the students it undertakes to transport are transported safely; and in further recognition that safe transportation depends on the driver/employee's physical dexterity, reflex action, unimpaired judgment, and unimpaired senses of sight and hearing; and in recognition of the fact that certain drug and/or alcohol use can impair an employee's ability to transport students safely; the Board of Education hereby implements a controlled substance and alcohol testing program for all employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions.

As part of the Board's continuing effort to provide an environment for students and employees that promotes health and safety, the Board will not tolerate the use, possession, or sale of any controlled substances, alcohol, or misuse of any legally prescribed or obtained medications by employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions. The Board will provide training, education, and other assistance to employees to help them understand their responsibilities in achieving an environment free of alcohol and controlled substances.

Information concerning Drug and Alcohol Testing is outlined in [Procedure P.GCRA](#). Noncompliance with this policy or violation of the regulations may result in severe disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal.

Employee Background Checks ([Policy GAK](#))

All personnel employed by the Gwinnett County Board of Education (BOE) shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check performed, at time of hire or before, as required by state law.

- **Certificated:** Teachers, principals, and other certificated personnel employed on or after January 1, 2011, shall have a criminal background check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission.
- **Non-Certificated:** Non-certificated personnel shall also have a criminal background check conducted on a periodic basis, not to exceed every five years, using procedures and schedules as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Equal Opportunity Employment ([Policy GAAA](#), [Procedure P.GAAA](#))

It is the policy of the Board not to discriminate based on gender, age, race, color, disability, religion, or national origin in any educational program or other programs, activity, or service or admissions to facilities operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Board. It is the express policy of the Board to comply with all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination now in effect or hereafter enacted including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and all accompanying regulations.

Health and Safety

The Board recognizes the responsibility for ensuring the safety of all employees. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to take all practical steps to develop and implement a safety program for all employees, which will provide and maintain safe and healthful working conditions, adequate protection equipment, and develop operating procedures and practices that comply with federal, state, and local legislation pertaining to accident prevention.

To help ensure safe working conditions, an employee is responsible for:

- Knowing the potential hazards of the job.
- Learning and following the safety practices required by management.
- Using health and safety devices required by the job (the Gwinnett County Board of Education has adopted a policy regarding Infectious Diseases; all employees are required to be familiar with this policy). Detailed information can be found in Communicable Diseases. ([Policy GANA](#))
- Correcting and/or reporting safety hazards immediately.
- Immediately reporting any accident or injury to a supervisor.
- Obeying “No Smoking” regulations. All students are prohibited from tobacco use on campus or at school activities, functions, or events. While fulfilling their duties as district employees, staff members shall not use tobacco in the presence of students or on school system property. Please refer to the section titled “Personnel Smoking” for additional information. ([Procedure GAMA](#))
- Operating machinery or equipment only if qualified to do so.
- Maintaining good housekeeping practices including keeping all fire exits clear and firefighting equipment accessible.

Identification and Security Badges

All employees of GCPS will have picture identification badges. When an employee terminates, his/her direct supervisor should inform the Employee Clearance Office to ensure any security access is canceled upon termination. Badges for terminated employees should be returned to the Employee Clearance Office, located at the Instructional Support Center.

Lateral Transfers ([Policy GBM](#), [Procedure P.GBN](#))

Certified and classified employees may be displaced from their current school due to a reduction in staff allotment, approved changes in curriculum, or budgetary limitations. Principals will identify any employees “displaced” based on tentative staff allotment. All displacements are subject to review and approval by the Human Resources Director. All displacement forms must be submitted to a Human Resources Director according to the timeline established by the Division of Human Resources and Talent Management.

The following criteria will be observed in effecting these transfers:

- The needs of the instructional program
- Volunteers will be given top priority

Personnel Attire (*Policy GBRC*)

The expectation of the Board is that all staff members dress in a professional manner. Dress should be appropriate for the position.

Personnel Records (*Policy BE, Procedure P.BE*)

Information contained in an employee's personnel record is kept strictly confidential except as may be required by law, requested by the employee, or requested by authorized officials on a need-to-know basis. Otherwise, requests for information not specifically approved by the employee will be referred to the Executive Director for Administration and Policy or his/her designee. There are specific document types that are protected from public disclosure, as stated in the Georgia Open Records Act. These documents include medical records, home address information, Social Security numbers, insurance information, and confidential evaluations.

GCPS will release, with written approval from the employee, information about the employee's current salary, dates of employment, job title, and work location.

Employees may review their personnel records by contacting the Division of Human Resources and Talent Management to schedule an appointment. A request form must be completed and signed for employees who request copies of records from their personnel file. Confidential reference documents are not available for review.

Personnel Smoking

No employee, student, nor school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product while in any building, facility, or vehicle owned or leased by GCPS. This includes all school grounds and property as well as athletic fields and parking lots. Tobacco use is prohibited at all school- or system-sponsored events 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Personnel Time Schedule (*Policy GBRC*)

A full-time work schedule is 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week. The principal or program manager sets a schedule within this policy for the time of arrival and departure of all employees assigned to his/her operation. In order for an organization to achieve its desired goals, excellent attendance and punctuality are necessary. Therefore, regular and prompt attendance is expected and required of all employees. If it is necessary to be absent or late to work, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor at least one day in advance, if possible. In case of emergency or other circumstances when it is impossible to give advance notice, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor or designee before time to report to work.

Personnel Use of Illicit Drugs (*Procedure GAMA*)

For criminal drug statute convictions of employees for violations occurring in the workplace, the following steps must be followed:

- Employees must notify GCPS in writing of any criminal drug statute arrest and/or conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace (in GCPS facilities, vehicles, and at school-sponsored activities) no later than five calendar days after such conviction.
- GCPS will notify all appropriate federal agencies in writing within 10 calendar days after receiving notice from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction.
- GCPS will take one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice with respect to any employee who is so convicted:
 - Take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and/or
 - Require such employee to participate satisfactorily in drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

An on-going drug-free awareness program is provided to inform employees about:

- The dangers of drug abuse;
- GCPS Drug-Free Workplace [Policy GAMA](#) and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act for Students and Employees;
- The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Schools and school districts are mandated by Federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to protect educational records. "Educational records" refers to those data elements that are (1) directly related to a student; and (2) maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting on behalf of the agency or institution.

FERPA permits school districts to disclose information designated as "Directory Information" without consent of parent or student. Directory information is considered information which is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes student information found in athletic and extracurricular programs, yearbooks, honor roll, and other recognition lists, graduation programs, etc.

Extra care must be taken to protect "non-directory" student information as well as personally identifiable information contained within student records, either in electronic or paper form. Among the items considered non-directory information are:

- Advisement records
- Courses taken
- Disciplinary actions
- Grades
- Schedule
- Student number
- Test scores

Personally identifiable information in education records is defined as a student's first and last name with one or more of the following data elements:

- A list of personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable.
- Any other information or identifiers that would make the student's identity easily traceable.
- Name of student's parent(s) or other family member(s).
- Social security number.

Reduction in Force ([Policy GBN](#), [Procedure P.GBNA](#), [Procedure P.GBN](#))

A reduction in force may occur for the following reasons: inadequate funds; loss of funding that includes the reduction or expiration of grant generated funds; insufficient student enrollment to merit continuation of a program or service; decline in average daily attendance; decline in need for services rendered by a position classification; return of contractual personnel from extended leave; discontinuation of a program by action of the Board; change in class sizes; closure or change in purpose of a school or program; reorganization; legislative mandates; judicial decrees; other exigencies. The determination of employees to be demoted or terminated is based upon approved procedures established by the Board and school system administration.

Teachers, administrators, or other employees having a contract for a definite term are afforded certain procedural rights as provided for in the Georgia Fair Dismissal Law, OCGA 20-2-940 et.seq. Employees not under contract are considered "at-will."

Responsibility to Report Criminal Charges ([Policy GAM](#), [Procedure P.GAM](#), [Procedure P.GBU](#))

Any employee of the Gwinnett County Board of Education who is arrested, charged, indicted, bound over by or to a grand jury, convicted, enters a plea or is nolle prossed for or to any crime or criminal offense in the State of Georgia or elsewhere, whether the crime or criminal offense is a felony or misdemeanor, shall report each and all of these events, occasions, or developments to his/her principal/supervisor within 48 hours after the arrest or legal action, or immediately upon the employee's return to work, whichever comes first. The principal/supervisor shall immediately notify the Division of Human Resources and Talent Management.

In making the report, the employee shall:

- Provide a copy of the arrest warrant, citation, motor vehicle accident report, indictment, or any other narrative explanation of the arrest generated by the arresting officer/jurisdiction.
- Disclose all court dates and the disposition of the matter within **48 hours** after that information becomes available to the employee.

Sexual Harassment Policy ([Policy GAEB](#))

The Board is committed to providing a workplace free from distractions caused by sexual harassment; all forms of discrimination based on age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability; or inappropriate or offensive conduct. It is the Board's expectation that all personnel conduct themselves in a highly professional manner and respect co-workers, students, parents, and customers. In this regard, the Board prohibits sexual harassment, all forms of discrimination, and other unprofessional conduct.

Sexual harassment includes repeated unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which:

- Is made a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- Is used as the basis for employment decisions such as promotions or benefits; and/or
- Substantially interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of sexual harassment and unprofessional conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Making sexually-oriented remarks such as jokes, inquiries, or innuendoes
- Making inappropriate sex-based comments, gestures, or insults and sex-based stereotyping
- Making inappropriate comments or compliments about physical appearance or attire
- Making inappropriate sexual terms of endearment or demanding forms of address
- Offering employment or other benefits in exchange for sexual favor
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances
- Asking a co-worker repeatedly to spend time with you after being turned down
- Displaying offensive sexual material in the workplace
- Touching, pinching, grabbing, patting, kissing, or hugging unnecessarily or inappropriately
- Having inappropriate discussions of personal sexual activities; and/or
- Sending inappropriate sexually explicit photos, poems, stories, jokes by electronic media or courier or any other internal means of communication.

Filing a Complaint of Sexual Harassment ([Procedure P.GAEB](#))

A person should report complaints of sexual harassment to the Local School/Division Title IX Coordinator or his/her supervisor or any manager. If for any reason, the person prefers not to share the complaint with a direct supervisor, he/she may file a complaint with the Director of Equity & Compliance, Title IX Coordinator in the Division of Human Resources and Talent Management. The complaint may be in writing or made in person.

Staff Conflict of Interest *(Policy GAG)*

All employees shall avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict with their professional responsibilities. The board provides the policy written below with the full knowledge that the good judgment of each employee is essential, and that no list of rules or guidelines can provide direction for all circumstances that arise. Employees who have questions about a potential conflict of interest must discuss the situation with the immediate supervisor and/or the Division of Human Resources and Talent Management.

No two relatives of the immediate family may be employed in the same school or unit when one of the two serves in an immediate supervisory capacity.

- Husband
- Wife
- Mother
- Father
- Brother
- Sister
- Daughter
- Son
- Mother-in-Law
- Father-in-Law
- Sister-in-Law
- Brother-in-Law
- Daughter-in-Law
- Son-in-Law

For purposes of this policy, the principal, assistant principal(s), and community school director of a school are deemed to be direct supervisors of all employees assigned to the school. The practice of assigning married couples or other persons within the immediate family to the same school is strongly discouraged and should be avoided whenever possible. Persons who are common-law married or who are living together in a cohabitated relationship are also subject to this policy. If subsequent to adoption of this policy, employees become related in a form otherwise prohibited by this policy that is disruptive or otherwise detrimental to the effective and efficient operations, the district may elect to resolve such issue by transferring individuals to other locations.

Dual Pay

Employees shall be prohibited from receiving dual-pay for services rendered during the regular working hours. The employee must forfeit the regular pay or the pay from another agency, organization, or individual. Employees may receive payment for services rendered while on non-medical leave or for services performed other than during the regular working day.

Endorsements

GCPS employees carry the responsibility of being a representative of the district. Employees should be aware that decisions and actions that could be interpreted as written or oral endorsements of a product or service should be considered in the light of whether the action may be interpreted as a conflict of interest.

No employee of the Gwinnett County Board of Education shall give a written or oral endorsement to any company or representative for promotional purposes for any periodical, book, or product that may be offered for sale to schools, parents, or pupils in his/her charge. Actions that could be construed as a conflict of interest or a violation of the Code of Ethics for Educators may jeopardize the staff member's employment relationship with GCPS.

Non-School Employment

GCPS employees are reminded that their job assignments within the district are their first obligation, and if outside employment is taking time or energy from this position or affecting their performance, they will be asked to choose one or the other.

Each principal/supervisor has direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel assigned. Employees seeking employment in any private business or outside activity during the term of their contract shall first receive permission from their respective principal/supervisor before entering into such supplementary employment.

Political Involvement

The Board recognizes that employees have the same civic responsibilities and privileges as any other citizen including the privilege of campaigning for and holding public office and actively supporting candidates and causes in the political arena. The Board also recognizes that the district is entrusted by the citizens of the county and the state of Georgia with a vitally important public mission and that an employee's political activities must not interfere or conflict with an employee's job or with the best interest of the district.

An employee who participates actively in political activity cannot be promoted, demoted, transferred, or terminated solely because of his/her political participation as long as such actions follow the guidelines stated in this policy.

Tutoring

Teachers may not offer private instruction on a fee basis to any student who is presently enrolled in their classes. It is incumbent upon professional staff members to assist students in their classes after school and whenever feasible.

It is preferred that a tutor is a person who is not on the staff of the school in which a student is enrolled. Tutoring must be done in such a way as not to interfere with the orderly routine of the teacher's regular day and school responsibilities.

Staff Meetings ([Policy GBRC](#))

Regular staff meetings are a necessary part of the district operations. Each school shall have a schedule for staff meetings on a regular basis. The principal shall call special staff meetings for professional learning, accreditation, and/or workshops as deemed necessary. All staff members are required as part of their teaching/employment responsibilities to attend any or all such meetings as designated by the principal.

Transfers to New Schools ([Procedure P.GBCA](#))

This procedure is designed to establish guidelines for making routine staffing decisions; however, it must be construed in light of the Board's ultimate responsibility to control and manage the school system. Consequently, notwithstanding any other provision of this procedure, the Board expressly reserves its right and responsibility to place within the limits of its discretion employees at any school within the system to the extent the Board deems it necessary for the orderly and effective management of the school system.

Eligibility:

- Teachers and assistant principals who will have completed three consecutive full and contractual years in their current schools by the end of the current school year– or were involuntarily transferred to their current schools – may request a transfer. (Involuntary transfers would include teachers and assistant principals who were involuntarily moved as a result of redistricting, opening a new school, or reduction in staffing allocation).
- Teachers and assistant principals hired after the first workday of the current year are not eligible to participate in the transfer process.
- Teachers and assistant principals who are currently on Professional Development Plans (PDPs) or received an overall Ineffective, Needs Development, or Unsatisfactory evaluation are not eligible to participate in the transfer process.
- Regular education or special education teachers with less than three years in their current schools may apply for a transfer to positions in moderate/severe/profound intellectual disabilities, self- contained autistic, and self-contained EBD. **This exception does not apply to teachers requesting transfers within these fields.**

Teachers and assistant principals administratively placed must complete three consecutive full and contractual years before being eligible for a voluntary transfer.

- A teacher offered a head coaching position at another school may also apply for a transfer to the school where the head coaching assignment is located. The three-year rule does not apply for head coaching positions. A teacher may accept a coaching assignment at another school. However, a teacher may not transfer to said school outside of the transfer process.

Transfer Procedures and Timelines

Transfer requests for the next school year will be accepted during the placement preference time frame established by the Division of Human Resources and Talent Management. The transfer process is for lateral transfers only (i.e., assistant principal-to-assistant principal or teacher-to-teacher). Teachers and assistant principals who want to request a lateral transfer to a different location for the next school year must complete the approved Placement Preference Process Form.

The following procedures will be followed:

- Eligible teachers and assistant principals who desire a transfer to a new location must submit the Placement Preference Form prior to the announced deadline.
- Teachers and assistant principals who have requested a transfer will be considered for any vacancy for which they are qualified, up to the announced deadline.
- It is the responsibility of the principal at the requested school to respond to the teacher or assistant principal applying for the transfer.

Security Incident Reporting

Increasingly, school districts— like many other organizations and businesses— have become the target of internet scammers and cybercrime organizations. GCPS has implemented security measures to protect the information it collects. However, individual employees— through their actions and online behavior— have a role and responsibility when it comes to keeping information secure.

A “Security Incident” is any activity that places the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of GCPS’ information technology or digital information at risk.

A “Security Incident” includes, for example:

- Non-compliance with *Responsible Use of Electronic Media for Technology Team Personnel* or *Responsible Use of Electronic Media for Personnel* policy ([Policy IFBG](#));
- Receipt of a suspected “phishing” email;
- Disclosure of Internal Use or Limited Access information via electronic or printed materials;
- Execution of malicious software, such as clicking on a website link or opening an email attachment that contains a virus;
- Unauthorized intrusion or “hacking” into GCPS’ networks or systems; and
- Loss or theft of a GCPS issued laptop, mobile device or other information storage device.

Staff members who experience a security incident should report the incident to their Technology Support Technician, Local School Technology Coordinator, or the Information Management and Technology Customer Support Center at 678-301-6547. Suspected phishing emails should be forwarded to phishing_spam@gwinnett.k12.ga.us.

Use of Electronic Resources ([Policy IFBG](#), [Procedure P.IFBG](#))

The Board recognizes that electronic media, including the internet, provides access to a wide variety of instructional resources in an effort to enhance educational opportunities. Use of electronic resources must be in support of, and consistent with the vision, mission, and goals established by the Gwinnett County Board of Education and for the purpose of Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) instructional support or administrative functions.

All users of the district-wide area network and/or other electronic informational services must maintain strict compliance with all applicable ethical and legal rules and regulations regarding access. Please refer to [Policy IFBG](#) and [Procedure P.IFBG](#) for further information.

Responsible Use of Technology

Gwinnett County Public Schools recognizes that the use of technology is prevalent in society. Students and staff have access to the Internet, cell phones, games, and a variety of personal technology devices. Students and staff utilize social media websites and applications as well as a variety of other digital resources that allow them to interact, share, create, and innovate. Staff members use these same resources as a means to effectively engage and motivate student learning and collaborate with colleagues.

Access to more technology leads to more data access, as well. Regardless of the source, GCPS staff and students are reminded to follow the policies and procedures that protect data access, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), and the Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA), which are detailed in the Student/Parent Handbook. For more information on data privacy, please see [Procedure P.EBCA](#); Passwords and Data Privacy, especially sections 4 and 5. While the School Board supports anytime/anywhere access to GCPS business-related data, all staff members share the responsibility to protect sensitive data in a professional manner. Regardless of the device or the computer with which GCPS data is retrieved, staff members are expected to protect GCPS-related personal and sensitive information at all times. This includes GCPS-purchased devices as well as devices owned, rented, or used by GCPS employees.

Lost or Stolen Computing Equipment

GCPS staff members are routinely given access to computer technology equipment in connection with their assigned responsibilities. In the case where this equipment is lost, stolen or destroyed, staff members are required to:

- Notify their principal, lead administrator, or division head;
- Notify their Technology Support Technician (TST), Local School Technology Coordinator (LSTC) or the IM&T Customer Support Center at 678-301-6547; and
- File a report with their School Resource Officer (SRO) or local police department.

Staff Members’ Social Media Use ([Procedure P.JFBG](#), [Procedure P.JFBH](#))

As online technologies become more interactive, GCPS is providing new methods for supporting teaching and learning, including social media, home access to learning activities, and enhanced online resources. Social media includes all types of communication shared in an electronic format, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, wikis, e-mail, social networks, instant messaging, and video-hosting sites, as well as emerging technology that encourages sharing and electronic collaboration. Each vehicle has its own style and privacy options. These technologies must meet GCPS standards and expectations for communication with students, parents, staff, and community members. Information regarding FERPA and the school district’s media release expectations are detailed in the Student/Parent Handbook.

Some additional guidelines around social networking are important to remember:

- Treat school-related social media as a secondary form of communication with parents and students. District-approved or district-hosted communication tools (such as e-mail and the school website) are the primary resources for communication to parents and students about school-related matters.
- Communicate with students and parents about school-related matters through district-approved or district-hosted electronic accounts and applications, such as district e-mail and the school or department website.
- Do not share information, pictures, or work examples of GCPS students unless parents have approved such use of their child’s information, images, and work examples on social network sites.
- Do not share information, pictures, or work examples of GCPS staff members on social network sites without their approval.
- Consider the information being distributed and its impact on your credibility as a staff member and your ability to perform your duties.
- Only allow “true friends” access to your personal information, and carefully consider what you post about your professional activities and environment on personal social networking sites.

- Directly connect the use of social networking to the academic purpose of the classroom when maintaining a site for teaching and learning purposes.
- Remember that staff members are expected to follow the ethical and professional standards for educators and associated procedures. If you choose to post information about your work, strive to post only information that is a positive reflection of your efforts to educate students and interact with others.

15 Useful Social Media Tips:

- Do not share confidential information.
- Obey applicable laws and the Code of Ethics for Educators.
- Respect GCPS time and property. You should participate in personal social media conversations on your own time.
- Use your best judgment. What you write may have serious consequences. Once you post something on social media, you can't "get it back." Even deleting the post doesn't mean it's truly gone. Ultimately, you bear sole responsibility for what you post.
- Replace error with fact. When you see misrepresentations made about your school or district in social media, you may certainly identify and correct the error. Always do so with respect and with the facts.
- Be aware of the image you present. Any time you engage in social media, you're representing yourself and GCPS. Don't do anything that discredits you or your service as a professional educator or employee.
- Be cautious with information sharing. Maintain privacy settings on your social media account, change your passwords regularly, and don't give out personally identifiable information. Be cautious about the personal details you share on the Internet.
- Avoid the offensive. Don't post any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.
- Don't violate privacy. Don't post any information that would infringe upon the proprietary, privacy, or personal rights of others.
- Don't violate copyright. Don't post information or other material protected by copyright without permission of the copyright owner.
- Don't misuse trademarks.
- Make no endorsements. Don't use your school or the district's name to endorse or promote products, political positions, or religious ideologies.
- Do not misrepresent yourself. Don't disguise, impersonate, or otherwise misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any other person or entity.
- Don't promote yourself for personal or financial gain. Don't use your school system affiliation to promote, endorse, or benefit yourself or any profit-making group or agency.
- Follow terms of service. Be familiar with a social media site's terms of service and follow them. For example, having two personal profiles on Facebook violates its terms of service.

These tips include information from a number of resources, including GCPS [Procedure P.JFBG](#), "Voices of the Staff" from the University of Michigan, and "The Air Force Social Media Guide."

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

Effective January 1, 2018

Introduction

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

Definitions

- (a) **"Breach of contract"** occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
- (b) **"Certificate"** refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.
- (c) **"Child endangerment"** occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.
- (d) **"Educator"** is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.
- (e) **"Student"** is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.
- (f) **"Complaint"** is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.
- (g) **"Revocation"** is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.
- (h) **"Denial"** is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.
- (i) **"Suspension"** is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.
- (j) **"Reprimand"** admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
- (k) **"Warning"** warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
- (l) **"Monitoring"** is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.
- (m) **"No Probable Cause"** is a determination by the Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

Standards

- (a) **Standard 1: Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of *nolo*

contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Soliciting students or parents of students or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the

- educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
 3. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
 4. Coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.
- (g) Standard 7: Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized material, and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. Sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
 2. Sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
 3. Violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
 4. Violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.
- (h) Standard 8: Required Reports** - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. Failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
 2. Failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner;
 3. Failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.
- (i) Standard 9: Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.
- (j) Standard 10: Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. Committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
 2. Compromising the integrity of the assessment.

Reporting

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

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

Disciplinary Action

- (a) The Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:
1. Unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505- 6-.01);
 2. Disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
 3. Order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. § 19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
 4. Notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. § 20-3-295);
 5. Suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
 6. Violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. § 16-13-111); and
 7. Any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- (b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The Superintendent and the educator designed by the Superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the Superintendent and the Superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the Superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the Superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN GEORGIA SCHOOLS

Standardized testing has become a basic component of accountability for students, teachers, administrators, schools, and school systems in Georgia and other states. Communities rely on their schools' standardized test scores to determine the success of their schools and to compare them to other communities. Test scores also have a major impact on the economic future of communities. New industries use test scores as a major factor in selecting locations for new facilities. As a result of national and state accountability ratings, standardized testing has become important to all states. When tests are properly administered, scored, and interpreted with a high degree of professionalism, all of the stakeholders can be guided to make reliable and appropriate decisions. A good testing program provides the following benefits:

- Students, based on their individual test scores, will know the skills and knowledge they have mastered and how they compare to other students.
- Parents can evaluate whether their children are obtaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful during and after their school experiences.
- Teachers can determine if students have mastered the skills and knowledge needed to advance to the next level and if not what skills and knowledge need improvement.
- Community members can compare local student performance with performances of students in other locations. The community has a measuring stick to determine if schools are making improvements from year to year.

Georgia relies on state-mandated assessments as a key component of the state accountability program as well as using the test results to fulfill federal requirements for educational accountability. For reliable and valid reporting, tests must be administered fairly and ethically. In the pursuit of fair and ethical testing for all stakeholders of Georgia, the following areas shall be addressed before, during, and after testing.

- Test Security – Test materials should be secured before, during, and after testing and scoring to ensure fair assessment of all students.
- Test Preparation – The test should reflect the state-adopted content standards being taught, and should be developmentally appropriate for the age and level of the test-taker. Students should be familiar with test-preparation skills. Educators should be trained on proper administration procedures and testing practices. Tests should be administered in the appropriate environment.
- Test Administration – Policies and procedures should be developed to implement fair and ethical testing procedures and practices. All eligible students should be assessed. Tests are used for their intended purposes.
- Test Data – Test scoring should be reliable and valid. Test data interpretation shall be appropriately given to stakeholders. Curriculum improvement should be guided by adequate data analyses.

Georgia Student Assessment Program Responsibilities

The successful implementation of the statewide student assessment program requires a concerted effort by many individuals at the local level. General responsibilities are described below. More detailed responsibilities are listed on the following pages.

NOTE: The failure of any personnel to assume the responsibilities described herein may result in testing irregularities and/or invalidation of scores. Additionally, failure to assume responsibilities may affect professional certification status.

Superintendent

1. Has ultimate responsibility for all testing activities within the local school system.
2. Appoints the System Test Coordinator.
3. Supervises Principals and System Test Coordinator to ensure that they fulfill their specific responsibilities for the administration of tests.
4. Maintains contact with System Test Coordinator to become thoroughly informed of all testing activities.
5. Conducts investigations of reported testing irregularities (e.g., student cheating, unethical professional conduct). Reports unethical professional conduct to the Educator Ethics Division of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
6. Monitors testing activities in the local school system to guarantee compliance with regulations established by the State Board of Education and current legislation.

7. Informs local board members, parents, and other citizens about requirements pertaining to statewide testing.
8. Ensures that appropriate local personnel attend GaDOE workshops concerning state assessment programs.
9. Ensures that the appropriate personnel complete all necessary readiness checks for online testing.
10. Ensures that personnel enforce prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines.
11. Reviews and returns certification/verification forms to the Office of Assessment and Accountability at the GaDOE by the due dates.
12. Ensures that Principal's Certification Forms are completed after each test administration and retained as required.
13. Approves all special administrations.
14. Informs stakeholders residing within the local system's area concerning the collective achievement of enrolled students by school and system.
15. Ensures that local calendars are planned so that all tests are administered according to the state published testing calendar
16. Completes the Superintendent's Certification survey form in the [MyGaDOE portal](#) due January 31 each year for assessments conducted July 1-December 31 as well as July 31 each year for assessments conducted January 1 - June 30 each year.

System Test Coordinator

1. Coordinates all test administration activities within the school system including collaboration with the Technology Director and/or technical staff, Special Education Director and/or designated staff, Principals, and School Test Coordinators.
2. Coordinates with System Technology Director or Coordinator for the appropriate implementation of technology-based test administrations including scheduling, training, system and device requirements, and other communications.
3. Serves as liaison between the system and the GaDOE for all test administration activities.
4. Coordinates all training plans related to test administration activities (online and paper), ethical behavior of personnel, and test security for personnel and students.
5. Coordinates with various local system divisions to ensure successful test administrations (Special Education, Technology, Title III, etc.)
6. Assumes responsibility for carrying out the approved plan for administration of all tests.
7. Furnishes all information and submits all forms required by the GaDOE by specified dates.
8. Ensures principals complete the Principal Certification Form for each administration and maintain these forms for five years.
9. Orders special format tests (Braille, large print, advanced reading aids).
10. Receives test materials from GaDOE at a designated time and place and maintains them in a secure location.
11. Reviews and follows all procedures in all administration manuals and is familiar with administrators' roles and proctors' roles.
12. Ensures that appropriate security provisions and technology readiness checks are in place/completed relative to online testing environments including, but not limited to, security of log-ins, test tickets, passcodes, seating arrangements, etc.
13. Adheres to test dates, time schedules, and specified instructions set by the GaDOE and returns all materials to GaDOE and/or its contractors as specified and by the prescribed date(s).
14. Ensures that each test setting (room) is suitable, has an assigned examiner, and has the appropriate number of proctors.
15. Ensures that prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines are applied in each school.
16. Accounts for all test materials delivered to the school system and for the disposition of specific materials.
17. Attends statewide testing program meetings/webinars and redelivers to local school coordinators.
18. Arranges schedule for staff to monitor schools during testing sessions.
19. Trains all system/school personnel involved in test administration, including School Test Coordinators, examiners, proctors, the system Special Education Coordinator (on the administration of the GAA), the system ESOL Coordinator (on the administration of ACCESS for ELLs/Alternate ACCESS), and any others who have responsibilities related to testing and/or testing materials.
20. Ensures that principals and School Test Coordinators are aware of and follow the protocols/ procedures prescribed in Student Assessment Handbook, Accommodations Manual, testing manuals, and other ancillary materials.
21. Maintains a portfolio of all training session materials and rosters of attendees.
22. Answers questions of all School Test Coordinators and Principals and makes decisions regarding testing, when appropriate.
23. Ensures that School Test Coordinators account for all students in terms of testing requirements.
24. Ensures that all School Test Coordinators or other designated personnel have assigned appropriate accommodations

for students accurately in the online platform prior to administration of assessments, and that any corrections made to accommodations include the printing of a new test ticket where required.

25. Ensures strict test security and reports to Superintendent concerning testing irregularities (e.g. Student cheating, unethical professional conduct).
26. Communicates to the Assessment Division when testing irregularities occur.
27. Distributes test results to the Superintendent and to the schools in a timely manner and ensures that students are informed of the expected date for the return of the test results.
28. Interprets test results to school personnel and appropriate others.
29. Ensures that local calendars are planned so that all tests are administered according to the state published testing calendar that provides testing dates for the current and future academic years.
30. Ensures that students, parents, and other stakeholders have access to information concerning all test administrations and utilization of test results.
31. Works with system personnel to communicate to parents of students with IEPs, IAPs, and ELL/TPC plans pertinent information regarding all statewide tests.
32. Monitors each test administration for school or system-level errors and data corrections that may result in the local system being invoiced for additional costs.
33. Communicates any special accommodation requests to the Assessment Administration Division at least six (6) weeks prior to the administration of a state-mandated assessment.
34. Provides information for the Superintendent's Test Certification twice a year to allow for submission by the Superintendent by January 31 for assessments administered between August 1 and December 31; and by July 31 for assessments administered between February 1 and July 30 each year.

System Technology Coordinator

1. Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including technology requirements for testing programs, training manuals, and testing schedules.
2. Coordinates with the System Test Coordinator for the appropriate implementation of computer-based test administrations.
3. Attends or views GaDOE assessment technology trainings and webinars.
4. Works with the System Test Coordinator to ensure that all schools have technology ready for online testing.
5. Performs readiness checks for the system and local testing devices.
6. Coordinates with schools so local software is installed and ready for use with each testing administration.
7. Coordinates with schools so that test content is available on servers and student responses can properly send to the testing vendor.
8. Verifies that district network security including firewalls and content filters are configured to work with the testing vendor to allow for test content and student responses to pass through the district network.
9. Verifies that wired and wireless bandwidth is appropriate for testing as defined in the system requirements documentation and training sessions.
10. Monitors district resources during test administrations for quality assurance.
11. Troubleshoots technology issues as they arise prior to and during test administrations.
12. Completes all post-testing tasks as stated in technology manuals, handbooks, and guides.

System Special Education Coordinator

1. Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including the section for Students with Disabilities, which is found in the Assessing Special Populations section of the Student Assessment Handbook and the Accommodations Manual.
2. Acquires and maintains current information of IDEA, state rules, and waiver process for students with disabilities.
3. Provides technical assistance to special education teachers on test administration.
4. Ensures that all due process rights pertaining to the testing programs are provided for students with disabilities.
5. Ensures that IEP teams understand the appropriate selection of approved accommodations for all state-mandated assessments.
6. Ensures that IEP teams understand the appropriate selection and eligibility criteria for students who require the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0).
7. Ensures that appropriate documentation is maintained for all students with disabilities.
8. Ensures that students with disabilities have the appropriate test-taking experience or have been taught test-taking skills prior to taking the tests.
9. Informs System Test Coordinator of the number of special format tests (i.e., Braille, state-approved assistive technology,

- or large print) needed to test students with disabilities for all test administrations.
10. Informs the System Test Coordinator of the number of students who must receive each accommodation allowed by state regulations.
 11. Informs the System Test Coordinator of any special accommodation requests at a minimum of eight weeks prior to the administration of a state mandated assessment.
 12. Acquires and maintains current information about the alternate assessments (egg. GAA 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs 2.0).
 13. Ensures that the following activities are completed by special education personnel in preparation for all state-mandated assessments.
 - a. Discusses the state-required tests with the students and parents/guardians.
 - b. Informs IEP students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of pertinent test information and the role of the IEP team in identifying test accommodations, if any, which the student may require to participate.
 - c. Discusses with the student and parents/guardians the consequences of the student not passing a state-mandated assessment (such as promotion/retention requirements, EOCs constituting 20% of the final course grade, and any relevant local policies). Documents the occurrence of this discussion.
 14. Ensures that all special education teachers have been trained to administer the GAA.
 15. Collaborates with Title III/ESOL colleagues to train the appropriate teachers to administer the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.
 16. Coordinates with the System Technology Coordinator for the successful implementation of technology-based assessments including technology-related requirements for students with disabilities, scheduling, training, system requirements, and other communications.

System Title III/ESOL Coordinator

1. Ensures that all assessments and, in certain cases, conferences relating to a student's ESOL eligibility (Rule 160-4-5-.02) are documented prior to assigning EL or EL-M status.
2. Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including the section on accommodations for EL or EL-M students which is found in the Accommodations section of the SAH.
3. Provides technical assistance to teachers on test administration.
4. Ensures that appropriate documentation is maintained for all EL or EL-M students.
5. Ensures that EL or EL-M students have appropriate test-taking experience or have been taught test taking skills prior to taking the tests. EL-M students must not be administered the ACCESS.
6. **Ensures EL-M students are not administered the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.** By definition, EL-M students have exited ESOL services and are no longer for eligible for the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment.
7. Informs the System Test Coordinator of the number of students who must receive each accommodation allowed by state regulations.
8. Ensures that the following activities are completed by EL/ESOL personnel in preparation for all state-mandated assessments:
 - a. Discusses the state-required tests with the students and parents/guardians.
 - b. Informs EL or EL-M students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of pertinent test information and the role of the EL/TPC in identifying test accommodations, if any, which the student may require to participate.
 - c. Discusses with the student and parents/guardians the consequences of the student not passing a state-mandated assessment (such as promotion/retention requirements, EOCs constituting 20% of the final course grade, and any relevant local policies). Documents the occurrence of this discussion.
9. Train Title III/ESOL teachers to administer ACCESS for ELLs and collaborates with special education colleagues to train the appropriate teachers to administer the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.
10. Verifies all test examiners have completed annual certification and training requirements with WIDA for administering ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 as well as appropriate test security and test administration procedures.

Principal

1. Has ultimate responsibility for testing activities in the local school.
2. Designates a School Test Coordinator to coordinate the testing program. The School Test Coordinator must hold a GaPSC-issued certificate.
3. Ensures proper online and/or paper testing environments for all test administrations.
4. Ensures that all testing sites are appropriately prepared: updated devices and technology resources, adequate student workspace, proper lighting, good ventilation, sufficient number of desks in good repair, instructional materials (e.g., posters,

word walls, etc.) removed or covered, etc.

5. Ensures that the appropriate personnel complete all necessary readiness checks for online testing.
6. Ensures that personnel apply prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines to each test setting and each testing administration.
7. Ensures that the test accommodations identified in students' IEPs, IAPs, and EL/TPC plans are provided for each student as specified prior to the administration of all testing sessions.
8. Ensures that testing sites are free of interruptions during test administration (e.g., intercom messages, visitors, wandering students, entry into test settings by person/persons not serving as the examiner or proctor unless necessitated by emergency/time-sensitive need) and that sites do not have content-related materials posted that could advantage one group of students over others.
9. Assigns appropriately trained personnel to serve as Examiners and Proctors.
10. Arranges appropriate schedules for teachers who will be Proctors and Examiners and for those who will be teaching other students not involved in testing.
11. Informs students and parents/guardians about the purpose of testing, dates and times for testing and expected dates for return of test results (see Test Preparation section).
12. Creates an atmosphere in which all staff members know that their cooperation is needed and expected for successful test administration.
13. Advises School Test Coordinator, Examiners, and Proctors if emergency situations arise.
14. Monitors the administration of tests.
15. Supervises all testing activities to ensure strict test security.
16. Maintains test materials in a secure location, with restricted access.
17. Ensures that only staff members who have been trained on the proper management of secure test materials handle such materials.
18. Notifies System Test Coordinator of testing irregularities and provides explanation of circumstances.
19. Ensures that the school calendar is planned so that all tests are administered according to the system's testing calendar.
20. Monitors test preparation activities to ensure that secure testing materials are not misused.
21. Verifies all examiners have been trained in test security, educator ethics, and test administration protocols and policies to administer the state mandated assessments.
22. Reviews and returns the Principal's Certification Form to the System Test Coordinator after each administration.

School Test Coordinator

1. Prepares all testing sites.
2. Assists Principal in assigning Examiner(s).
3. Conducts orientation and training sessions related to test administration, test security, and ethical behavior for all personnel expected to be in direct contact with the test administration process, including Examiners and Proctors.
4. Assigns Proctors appropriately in accordance with state guidelines.
5. Coordinates with various local school and/or system divisions to ensure successful test administrations (Special Education, Technology, Title III, etc.)
6. Ensures that students have only one opportunity to test during each window.
7. Adheres to system testing schedule.
8. Accounts for all students in terms of testing requirements, including special populations and those requiring testing accommodations.
9. Ensures that appropriate security provisions are in place relative to online testing environments and materials including, but not limited to, security of logins, passcodes, conducive seating arrangements, etc.
10. Receives test materials from System Test Coordinator and verifies numbers received.
11. Ensures all materials are stored in a secure, locked location with restricted access, confirms access is restricted by accounting for keys.
12. Accounts for the security of all test materials during the time the materials are in the building.
13. Ensures that only staff members who have been trained on the proper management of secure test materials handle such materials.
14. If applicable, determines the number of paper test booklets and answer documents to be assigned to each testing site and accounts for material distribution and return.
15. Under supervision, ensures the accuracy of student FTE and GTID numbers on each answer document.
16. Provides each Examiner with a list of student FTE and GTID numbers.
17. Gives Examiners extra No. 2 pencils, online test tickets, computer peripherals, and resource materials, if appropriate.
18. Ensures that personnel apply prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines to each test setting.
19. Ensures that testing sites are free of interruptions during test administration (e.g., intercom messages, visitors, wandering

students, entry into test settings by person/persons not serving as the examiner or proctor unless necessitated by an emergency/time-sensitive need) and that sites do not have content-related materials posted that could advantage one group of students over others.

20. Distributes test materials to and collects from each Examiner on the testing days.
21. Ensures Examiners sign out (date and time) materials each testing day shortly before testing begins each day.
22. Counts materials returned from Examiners each day and accounts for all materials distributed each day of testing.
23. Ensures Examiners return (sign, date, and time) materials immediately after testing each day.
24. Maintains dated student sign-in/sign-out sheets for each test administration.
25. Ensures that a minimum of one certified administrator is present and witnesses the transcription of student responses when/where necessary (e.g. such as when a student has the accommodation of marking answers in the test booklet). Documentation of this process must be retained. Confirms that all necessary transcriptions are completed when necessary.
26. Notifies Principal and System Test Coordinator of any emergency and helps to decide what action needs to be taken.
27. Conducts, coordinates, and supervises inspection of all completed answer documents before delivering them to the System Test Coordinator for the following purposes only: to ensure that student demographic/identification information is accurate, that necessary coding/labeling is complete, and that documents are in good condition for scanning.
28. Packages and returns materials to System Test Coordinator according to directions and time line.
29. Notifies Principal and System Test Coordinator of any testing irregularities and provides explanation of circumstances.
30. Ensures that for any students not currently enrolled in their local school, the following protocol is applied:
 - a. contacts students' schools for verification of test eligibility, and
 - b. requires photo ID and maintains photocopy record.
 - c. The decision to test out-of-system students is a local one. The burden of identification, establishment of eligibility, and record-keeping ensuring score reports are returned to the appropriate school must be borne by the administering school/system. Systems should collaborate and discuss such cases prior to test administration.

Examiner

1. Must be GaPSC certified and adheres to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators. As required by State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07, certified educators (teachers, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessionals) must administer all state-mandated assessments. The term Certified Educator in this statement is defined as those educators directly involved with the instruction of students, and who must hold a clearance certificate as defined by the GaPSC. Educators without Georgia certification from the GaPSC must not administer state assessments. Local systems must be mindful of certificate expiration dates and ensure that all examiners possess a valid/unexpired certificate at the time of test administration. The term Examiner refers to the person administering the assessment.
2. At least annually, and more frequently where required, participates in and completes all training related to test administration, test security, and ethical behavior.
3. Reviews and follows all procedures in handling all administration materials.
4. Documents the daily receipt (date, time, and number received) of test materials and the daily return of test materials.
5. Ensures the security of test booklets while they are in the testing site before, during, and after testing.
6. Provides No. 2 pencils, erasers, pens for writing tests, and resource materials (if appropriate).
7. Follows procedures for testing as given in the Examiner's Manual, including reading all directions to students.
8. Confirms that all assigned students have entered and bubbled in the test form number correctly if one is required.
9. Maintains control of testing situation and keeps students on task. Examiners must actively circulate and monitor students throughout the testing session(s).
10. Monitors test administrations and communicates with the School Test Coordinator and/or the Technology Coordinator or designee when test administration, technology, and/or student issue arise.
11. Applies and enforces prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines.
12. Observes students during testing to monitor that they are marking answers completely and correctly and using only specified test materials. Reports student actions to School Testing Coordinator immediately.
13. Allows no student to leave the test room unless there is an emergency/health/restroom need.
14. Counts and verifies all testing materials each day prior to dismissing students.
15. With direct administrator supervision, after testing, inspects answer documents for the following purposes only: to ensure that student demographic/identification information is accurate, that necessary coding/labeling is complete, and that documents are in good condition for scanning.
16. Returns all test materials to School Test Coordinators immediately after testing each day, including special format tests, such as Braille or large print.
17. Ensures that no content-related instructional materials are displayed in the testing site. Charts, diagrams, and posters should not be visible. Chalkboards/Whiteboards should be free of any writing except for test procedure information.

Proctor

1. Participates and completes all training related to test administration, test security, and ethical behavior.
2. Assumes responsibility for assigned students.
3. Monitors a specific area if a large testing site is used.
4. Monitors online test administrations and communicates with Examiner when test administration, technology, and/or student issues arise.
5. With Examiner supervision, assists in preparing test materials for distribution to students in a classroom on days of testing.
6. Ensures that desks are clear of everything except test materials.
7. Assists the examiner in applying and enforcing prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines.
8. With examiner supervision, assists in distributing and collecting classroom test materials.
9. With examiner supervision, answers questions regarding test procedures but does not explain items or answer any questions regarding the content of the test.
10. Remains in testing site during entire testing time.
11. Observes students during testing to monitor that they are marking answers completely and correctly and using only specified test materials. Reports student actions to School Testing Coordinator immediately.
12. Reports any unusual circumstances to Examiner immediately (e.g., suspicion of cheating).
13. Circulates among students during testing to discourage misconduct and to be available to answer student questions.
14. Avoids standing by a student's desk too long or touching a student, as this may be distracting.
15. Monitors students with disabilities, 504 students, or EL students who may require closer observation than other students or who need special assistance.
16. With examiner supervision, assists in accounting for all classroom test materials (Test materials should be returned to the School Test Coordinator by the Examiner).
17. Assists the Examiner in maintaining strict test security.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

- [Board Approved Policies](#)
- [Certification](#)
- [Employee Perks](#)
- [Employee Portal](#)
- [Employee Benefits](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity Posters](#)
- [GCPS Foundation](#)
- [GCPS Jobs.org](#)
- [GCPS News/Blog](#)
- [GCPS Publications](#)
- [Georgia Department of Community Health](#)
- [Georgia Department of Education](#)
- [Georgia Professional Standards Commission \(GaPSC\)](#)
- [Gwinnett Effectiveness Initiative](#)
- [Gwinnett Retirement Services](#)
- [Leadership Development](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Performance-Based Compensation](#)
- [Phone Directory](#)
- [Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia \(PSERS\)](#)
- [Retirement Manager](#)
- [Retirement Savings Plans](#)
- [Salary Schedules](#)
- [Safety & Security](#)
- [Teachers Retirement System \(TRS\)](#)
- [United States Department of Labor](#)
- [Work Calendars](#)

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THE **PROMISE** OF **GWINNETT**



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