



CCSD Personnel Handbook



Clarke County School District

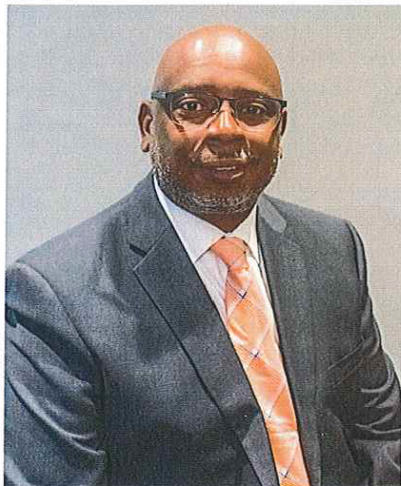
Better Together



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Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to Clarke County School District! Whether you are new to CCSD or returning to our district ready to face a new year, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how excited we are to have you on our team.

We have a busy year ahead of us, one filled with changes and challenges as we work hard to improve student learning and outcomes. It will take a positive attitude and commitment to excellence from each of us to make that happen.

From the transportation staff who ensure our students arrive safely at school, to the teachers and staff who greet those students with a smile each day and work hard to inspire them to reach their full potential, every job is critical to the success of our students and our school district. I ask you to approach each day prepared to support our students and each other. Model kindness, caring, and teamwork. Expect excellence in all things from all students, teachers, and staff.

Together, we will make a difference in the lives of our students and their families and build a stronger community in the process. As we prepare our students for life beyond CCSD – whether that be enrolling in college, entering the workforce, or enlisting in the military – let us all be able to say, “I did my part.”

Thank you again for choosing CCSD and for bringing your best to serve every student, in every classroom, every day. Please know that I recognize and appreciate your commitment to our district and look forward to working with you. We are truly Better Together.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robbie P. Hooker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Robbie P. Hooker

Superintendent

Clarke County School District

Clarke County School District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Building a culture of high expectations and equity in which all students grow academically and socially to improve our community and our world.

OUR MISSION

The Clarke County School District is an ambitious community of learners in a diverse and culturally rich county. We are committed to equity and excellence through the implementation of rigorous standards in a safe and supportive environment — on every campus, in every classroom and for every child.

OUR DRIVING FORCES

OUR CORE BELIEFS

Public education is central to our democracy. To fulfill the promise of public education, the Clarke County School District has a fundamental set of beliefs that serves as a lens through which every decision is made and every action is taken. These beliefs are the backbone of our organization. CCSD believes that:

- Equity, access and progress towards excellence are basic rights that must be afforded to every individual in our system.
- Mission-driven, diverse and creative staff make the critical difference in student achievement, and they must be successfully recruited and retained.
- Students, families, staff and the broader community benefit mutually from active engagement with one another.
- Safe, nurturing and well-maintained schools/campuses are required for optimal learning.

CCSD School Contact Information

Clarke County School District's school personnel contact information is available on the Clarke County School District [website](#).

Resource Guide

This information is intended to guide school district staff in reaching the best resources and support staff available.

Board of Education Administrative Offices

595 Prince Avenue, Athens, GA 30601

Main Office: 706-546-7721

Dr. Robbie P. Hooker, Superintendent

Human Resources

Chief of Human Resources

Dr. Selena Blankenship, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79300

Executive Director of Talent Management

Dan Swartz, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79303

Director of Employee Relations

Meridyth Padgett, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79302

Director of Employee Development

Christopher Pendley, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79311

Human Resources Executive Assistant & Evaluation Platform Administrator

Angelia Tillman, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79301

Human Resources Support/Benefits, Leave, and Substitutes

Tonya Arnold, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79304

Human Resources Specialist/Benefits

La'tura Hunter, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79308

Human Resources Specialist/Certification

Jenna Bell - Certification, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79305

Human Resources Specialist/Schools and Facilities**

Julie Coile, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79306

Tesha Echols, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79309

Lakeshia Jordan, (706) 546-7721, ext. 79307

**Reference the following link to determine which designated Human Resources Specialist represents each School or Facility. <https://www.clarke.k12.ga.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=575>

Payroll

Payroll and Direct Deposits

Pam Cook, (706) 546-7721 ext. 79708

IT Helpdesk

Create a new helpdesk ticket or check the status of a current helpdesk ticket through the online system via the following link. <http://helpdesk/home.asp>

Security

Chief of Police

Terry Reid, (706) 546-7721 ext. 77653

Administrative Assistant (Badges, Fingerprinting, and Security Clearances)

Tanya Bennett-Cade, (706) 546-7721 ext. 77652

<https://www.clarke.k12.ga.us/Page/183>

2023-2024 Academic Calendar

Clarke County School District's academic and district events calendars are available on the Clarke County School District [website](#).

Employee Calendars are available for all staff on the Clarke County School District [website](#).

Professional Development

At CCSD, we are committed to the development and support of professional learning that is research-based, data-driven, student-focused, continuous, and sustainable over time. A plethora of staff development experiences and opportunities for teachers in content, pedagogy, and processes are sponsored and offered by the district office curriculum departments, the local schools, and our community partners in education. Teachers will have multiple venues for gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to provide exceptional instruction to the students in our district.

Performance Appraisal

The Clarke County Schools District is committed to performance assessments that encourage continuous quality improvement for all employees. All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually. Certified educators are assessed per policy [GBI](#). Classified employees are assessed per policy [GCI](#).

Certification/Professional Qualifications Waiver

All teachers in the Clarke County School District will be certificated except in special circumstances where the District may determine eligibility for a waiver or alternative. All teachers are required to hold a four year degree in the appropriate content area with the exception of Career Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) and teachers of World Languages. Certification waivers are also available for student teachers in the last semester of their undergraduate degree. CTAE teachers are required to possess at minimum a two year degree, verify exemplary work experience in the content area, and where appropriate, have completed industry certification.

It is the responsibility of all certified employees to obtain and maintain all required certifications. Certification forms and information are available on the [Georgia Professional Standards Commission website](#).

All paraprofessionals must hold a Paraprofessional Certification issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). Certification requirements may be found on the [Georgia Professional Standards Commission website](#).

Questions regarding certification should be directed to the [CCSD Human Resources Office](#).

Job Descriptions

Job Descriptions are available for review for all District employees. At a minimum, the descriptions will include the job title and description, minimum qualifications, essential functions, and licensing requirements of the position. Employees must be able to perform the essential functions of the job description.

Compensation

To attract and retain highly qualified certified and classified personnel, the Clarke County School District maintains competitive salaries by conducting market analysis of the surrounding counties. Further, Clarke County School Districts is one of the few districts which pays into Social Security and withholds FICA on behalf of all employees to benefit them in retirement.

Pay Statement/Direct Deposit

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

- Pay statements
- W-2's
- Federal Tax Withholding

To change your Georgia tax withholdings or direct deposit information, employees will need to print the applicable form from the Resources section in the upper right corner of Employee Self Service and return the form to payroll.

The Payroll Calendar, Salary Scales, and Compensation Guide are available for all staff on the CCSD [website](#).

Name/Address/Phone Number Changes

It is the responsibility of employees to inform the Human Resources Department of any changes in home address and/or phone number. Employees may print the form from the Resources section in the upper right corner of [Employee Self Service](#) and return the forms to Human Resources. Name change requests must be accompanied by a copy of the signed social security card reflecting the new name before any request may be completed.

Leave and Holidays

Employees accumulate 1.25 days of sick leave on the first day of each *working* month.

Employees who earn vacation (11 and 12 month employees only) will accumulate hours based on the schedule below. All other employees follow the holiday schedule on the applicable [CCSD Employee Calendar](#).

CCSD Years of Continuous Service	Annual Leave Earning
0 - 5	10 days
Over 5	For each year after the 5th year, employees earn one (1) additional day, up to a maximum annual earning of 15 days.

Benefits

The Clarke County School District recognizes that benefits are a large portion of the total compensation package for its employees. The CCSD Board of Education's contribution to employee benefits adds nearly 30% to employee pay. The Human Resources department continually reviews and updates benefits offerings and features to best meet the needs of District employees. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the details of the various plans offered. Detailed information, instructional videos, and provider links can be found on the CCSD [Employee Benefits website](#).

Open Enrollment is the annual period when employees may enroll or change options and coverage, subject to the conditions of each plan. Open Enrollment typically occurs in October of each year, and coverage changes made during this period become effective the following January 1. Under certain conditions such as marriage, divorce or birth of a baby, death, or gain/loss of other insurance coverage you might be able to make changes to your insurance coverage outside of this window. To find out more information about enrollment and changes, contact the [Human Resources Benefits Office](#).

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

New Hire Enrollment

Newly hired employees will be given instructions for enrollment and effective date of coverage during the on-boarding meeting at the time of hire. Newly hired benefit eligible employees have a 30 day enrollment period starting on hire date.

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 [State Health Benefit Plan website](#) or the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Dental Insurance

Dental coverage may be purchased for the individual employee and his/her eligible family members. There are three plans available: Premium, Network or Economy. The costs and coverage vary to help each employee find the best fit for his/her needs. Late entrant restrictions may apply to employees who decline enrollment at the time of hire and enroll through a subsequent Open Enrollment. A complete description of services provided by each plan is available by accessing the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Vision Insurance

Vision coverage may be purchased for the individual employee and his/her eligible family members. Vision insurance covers most of the cost of eye exams and other services and materials through the EyeMed vision care network. Using in-network providers allows enrollees to receive the maximum benefits from the plan. The plan also includes

an out-of-network benefit that allows enrollees to use any eye care professional. A complete description of services provided by the plan is available by accessing the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Disability Insurance

Short Term Disability coverage is available to the employee to protect earnings lost due to disabilities that last less than 90 days. The employee can customize the plan by selecting the monthly benefit amount needed to cover expenses (up to 60% of your pay) and the “benefit start date” based on the amount of accrued sick leave. The plan coverage will only begin once all accumulated sick leave is exhausted. A complete description of services provided by the plan is available by accessing the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Long Term Disability coverage is available for employees to protect earnings lost due to disabilities that last beyond 91 days. Should you become disabled or required to be out of work for an extended period, this plan will replace up to 60% of your monthly pay beginning after 90 days (immediately following the cessation of your Short Term Disability benefits, if you have them) and are generally payable to age 65 if you remain disabled. A complete description of services provided by the plan is available by accessing the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Life Insurance

Benefit eligible employees are automatically covered by a one time annual salary (up to a maximum of \$50,000) Group Term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy provided by the Board at no cost to the employee and underwritten by The Hartford. Additionally, an employee may purchase Supplemental Life Insurance up to six times his/her annual salary, up to \$300,000 (whichever is less). Spousal Life insurance is available, not to exceed the amount that the employee purchases for himself/herself. Rates for Supplemental and Spousal Life insurance are age-banded. Employees may also purchase optional dependent life insurance for any eligible child(ren) up to age 26 years old in increments of \$2,000 to a maximum of \$10,000. A complete description of services provided by the plan is available by accessing the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Critical Illness

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. Covered critical illnesses include: cancer, heart attack, stroke, coma, major organ failure, permanent paralysis, end kidney failure, and coronary artery bypass. Coverage is available in increments of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$30,000. Rates are age-banded and tobacco use dependent, but will not change with age unless additional coverage is purchased. A complete description of services provided by the plan is available by accessing the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

Employees may deduct up to \$2,850 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 health care or dependent care plans as only \$500 from the healthcare FSA and \$0 of the dependent care FSA are eligible for rollover 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 can be found on the [Employee Benefits website](#).

Social Security

The Clarke County School District is one of the few school systems in the metro area that participates in Social Security. This means that when eligible employees retire from CCSD, they will be able to collect a social security benefit upon reaching the federal retirement age in addition to any TRS or PSERS pension and supplemental retirement plan already in place. CCSD contributes 6.2% of pay and the employee contributes another 6.2% of pay to fund the Social Security benefit.

Teachers Retirement System of Georgia

Teachers, administrators, supervisors, clerical and other professional personnel are eligible members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). Eligible members contribute 6% of gross pay, while the Board contributes 19.98% of gross pay. Ultimate benefit is based on a formula that includes the employee's years of creditable service times 2% times final average monthly salary for the highest 24 consecutive months of membership service. Benefits become available after 10 or more years of creditable service AND attain age 60, or after 30 years of creditable service at ANY age. 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. More information on TRS can be found on the [Employee Benefits website](#) and on the [Teachers Retirement System of Georgia website](#).

Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia

Transportation drivers and monitors, 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 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 on or after July 1, 2012 contribute \$10.00 per month for nine months each year. Benefit payout calculations and further information on PSERS can be found on the [Employee Benefits website](#) and on the [Employees' Retirement System of Georgia website](#).

403(b) and 457 Retirement Savings Plans

Employees may choose to supplement retirement benefits by contributing to Clarke County School District Retirement Savings Plan. Information on plan details and enrollment can be found on the [Employee Benefits Website](#).

Employee Assistance Program

CCSD employees are eligible to access financial, legal, and mental health resources through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). More information on services available can be found by contacting the [EAP](#).

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 should provide notice of injury to their supervisor within twenty four hours of the accident by completing the incident report form, regardless of the need for medical treatment. If the injured employee elects to receive medical treatments, he/she may select a medical care provider from the Panel of Physicians posted in each facility. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work related injury. Questions regarding Workers' Compensation should be directed to the [Human Resources Benefits Office](#).

Policies and Procedures

The Clarke County School District recognizes the importance of ensuring that personnel policies and practices are known and understood by all employees. The following policies ensure fairness and consistency for all employees.

This handbook should not be considered an employment contract or an alteration of any existing contract. It is the responsibility of the employee to understand CCSD Board policies. Should clarification be needed, Human Resources may be contacted for assistance. Board policies and procedures referenced or contained within 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 [CCSD policy website](#) supersede any content printed in this handbook. Please reference the policy links below if further information is needed.

Code	Policy Title
GAAA	Equal Opportunity Employment
GAD	Professional Learning Opportunities
GAE	Complaints and Grievances
GAE(1)	Discrimination Complaints
GAEB	Harassment
GAK(1)	Criminal Background Check
GAMA	Drug-Free Workplace
GAN	Employee Tobacco Use
GBI	Professional Personnel Evaluation
GBKA	Professional Personnel Lay-Off
GBM	Professional Personnel Transfer
GBN	Professional Personnel Termination
GBRB	Professional Personnel Time Schedules
GBRC	Professional Personnel Work Loads
GBRCA	Professional Personnel Duty Free Lunch

Code	Policy Title
GBRIG	Federal Family and Medical Leave Act
GBRH	Professional Personnel Leaves and Absences
GBRJ	Arrangement for Substitutes
GBRL	Employee Dress Code
GCI	Classified Personnel Evaluation
GCN	Classified Personnel Separation
IFBG	Internet Acceptable Use

Rules and Conditions of Employment for Classified Personnel

District rules are important to provide and maintain a productive work environment. Rules relating to professional and personal conduct in the following list are representative of those actions considered to be adequate grounds for reprimand, suspension, demotion, or dismissal. The immediate supervisor, the school principal and/or the department administrator may use a “Verbal Warning” and/or “Written Reprimand” as forms of disciplinary action.

“Suspension,” “Demotion” or “Dismissal” of a classified employee must be recommended by a principal or a department administrator, in writing, to Human Resources. After a careful review of the situation and an opportunity for the employee to share information, the head of HR or Superintendent may suspend, demote or dismiss the employee. Rules for classified personnel are:

All new personnel shall be subject to a probationary period of 120 days. During the probationary period, the employee shall be subject to termination for any reason but shall not be entitled to a hearing in connection with such termination.

1. Satisfactory Job Performance: Employees are expected to satisfactorily perform the duties and responsibilities of their position, as outlined in their job description and applicable Board policies. An employee who fails to perform in a satisfactory manner may be subject to disciplinary action, ranging from a verbal warning/reprimand to suspension without pay.
2. Correcting Performance-Related Problems: Employees who receive notice of unsatisfactory performance are expected to correct the identified deficiency within a reasonable period of time. An employee who, after receiving notice of unsatisfactory performance, continues to perform in a deficient manner may be terminated without additional notice.
3. Fitness for Duty: Employees are expected to be able to perform the essential functions of their job in a safe and reliable manner. An employee who refuses to consent to an authorized fitness for duty evaluation may be subject to

disciplinary action, up to and including termination. An employee who is unable to perform the essential functions of his or her position may be terminated.

4. **Compliance with Board Policies:** Employees are expected to comply with all Board of Education policies and regulations. An employee who violates Board policies and/or regulations may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

5. **Compliance with Departmental Rules and Regulations:** Employees are expected to comply with all departmental rules, regulations, and standards. Employees are also expected to adhere to work site specific rules and procedures. An employee who violates departmental or work site specific rules or regulations may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

6. **Attendance:** Punctual, regular, and reliable attendance during the work day is expected of all employees. Employees are expected to exercise sound professional judgment when using personal and sick leave. To the extent practicable, employees should consider the following factors when taking leave:

a. *Departmental Impact:* Employees should minimize absences which may result in missed training session, rescheduled meetings, or the inability to meet deadlines.

b. *Burden on Co-workers:* Employees should minimize absences which may place an increased burden on fellow employees either because of prior absences, existing staffing shortages, or increased workload.

When the cumulative total of an employee's absences places a significant burden on fellow employees or negatively impacts departmental operations, the employee's absenteeism may be considered unreasonable or excessive. An employee with an excessive or unreasonable number of absences may be subject to disciplinary action, ranging from an initial letter of counseling to termination for failing to demonstrate immediate and sustained improvement in attendance.

7. **Medical Documentation Requirements:** Under Board Policy, employees may only use sick leave for (a) personal illness or injury, (b) exposure to contagious disease where the health of others, as certified by a medical doctor, would be endangered by attendance at work, and/or (c) illness or injury in the employee's immediate family, or (d) to attend their child's Individualized Education Plan meeting or Section 504 meeting. An employee who is absent from work for more than two (2) consecutive days or more than seven (7) cumulative days during a school year may be required to submit medical documentation which certifies the employee was unable to perform his or her job duties during the time period the employee was absent from work. An employee is expected to comply with all requests for medical documentation by providing such documentation within fifteen (15) calendar days of taking sick leave. An employee who fails to provide the requested documentation may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. In addition, unauthorized leave may be retroactively designated as leave without pay.

8. **Personal Leave Notification Requirements:** A written request for personal leave must be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor at least seven (7) days prior to the beginning of the leave. Personal leave must be approved by the employee's supervisor in advance. An employee who fails to obtain prior approval before taking personal leave may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. In addition, unauthorized leave may be retroactively designated as leave without pay.

9. **Medical Leave Notification Requirements:** Except in a case involving a medical emergency, employees are expected to inform their immediate supervisor of the need to take sick or other medical leave no later than the first hour of the workday during which the employee will be absent. An employee who fails to provide timely notice of the need to be absent because of a qualifying health condition may be required to provide medical certification from a medical provider which states that: (a) the employee was unable to timely reporting their absence because of a medical emergency and (b) the employee was unable to perform his or her job duties because of injury, illness, or exposure to a contagious disease. An employee who fails to comply with a request for such medical documentation may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
10. **Job Abandonment:** The School District will not tolerate “no call, no show” conduct. An employee who is absent without notice for two (2) consecutive days will be subject to termination for job abandonment. Prior to termination, employees facing disciplinary action for job abandonment shall be afforded an opportunity to provide medical documentation under Rule 9.
11. **Punctuality:** Punctual regular attendance is expected of all employees. An employee who is repeatedly tardy for work may be subject to disciplinary action, ranging from a written reprimand to termination.
12. **Authorized Leave:** An employee who misrepresents the purpose or necessity of leave or who submits inaccurate leave forms may be subject to disciplinary action ranging from a verbal warning/reprimand to termination.
13. **Presence at Job Site:** An employee who leaves their assigned job site without prior authorization may be subject to disciplinary action ranging from verbal warning/reprimand to termination.
14. **Attentiveness:** Employees are expected to be alert and attentive to their work responsibilities at all times during working hours. An employee who sleeps or gambles or who engages in horseplay, practical jokes, sexual activity, or similar conduct during working hours or on school property may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
15. **Illegal Drugs and Alcohol:** An employee who is in possession or under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or illegal controlled substances while on the job, while on District property, while operating District equipment or vehicles, or while operating any other equipment or vehicles on District business may be subject to disciplinary action ranging from suspension with pay to termination.
16. **Lawfully Obtained Medications:** An employee who is lawfully using over-the-counter or prescribed medications must notify their immediate supervisor of any and all symptoms that may impair the employee’s ability to work in a safe and efficient manner. Any employee who fails to inform their immediate supervisor of possible impairments may be subject to disciplinary action ranging from verbal warning/reprimand to termination.
17. **Confidentiality:** An employee who shares confidential information from an education, personnel, or health record or in violation of confidentiality agreements, even without monetary gain, may be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination.
18. **Conflict of Interest:** Employees shall not sell or lease any personal property, real property, or services to the Clarke County School District, either directly or indirectly, without prior approval of the Board of Education. An

employee who transacts business with the Clarke County School District without prior approval may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

19. Discrimination: An employee who engages in prohibited forms of harassment and/or discrimination shall be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

20. Political Activity: No employee in a supervisory capacity shall solicit or require any person under his or her supervision to make political contributions. An employee who solicits impermissible political contributions may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

21. School District Property: Employees are expected to use School District property, including equipment, money, materials and electronic systems only for legitimate School District purposes. An employee who misuses public or school related property or funds may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Misuse of property, includes but is not limited to, the following:

- a. disposing of school district property without authorization;
- b. intentionally failing to maintain accurate inventory of School District property;
- c. failing to account for property or funds received from any source;
- d. submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay;
- e. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts;
- f. using School District property, equipment, or funds for personal benefit, convenience, or profit;
- g. using School District property or equipment in an unauthorized manner.

22. Gifts: Employees are prohibited from accepting gifts, favors, or gratuities from vendors or potential vendors of the Clarke County School District. An employee who accepts gifts, favors, or gratuities from any vendor or potential vendors may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

23. Off-Duty Conduct: Employees are expected to comply with all local, state, and federal laws. An employee who commits (or is charged with) a felony offense or any misdemeanor offense involving violence, dishonesty, or illegal drugs may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. In addition, an employee who commits or is charged with any crime against a child under the age of 18 years old or any disabled adult may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

24. Reporting Off-Duty Conduct: Except for minor traffic violations, employees shall report to their immediate supervisor any violation which results in an indictment, arrest, citation or conviction within five (5) work days of the violation. An employee who fails to report such violation may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

25. Dress Code: An employee who fails to comply with applicable dress codes and uniform policies may be subject to disciplinary action ranging from verbal warning/reprimand to suspension without pay.

26. Smoking: An employee who uses, displays, or possesses tobacco products on school property may be subject to disciplinary action ranging from a verbal warning/reprimand to suspension without pay.

27. Overtime Authorization: Unless otherwise authorized by the employee's supervisor, classified personnel may only work 40 hours per work week. Employees are expected to obtain written approval before working any overtime.

An employee who intentionally works unauthorized overtime may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

28. Insubordination: An employee who disregards reasonable rules, regulations, or directives may be subject to disciplinary action for insubordination, up to and including termination.

29. Health and Safety: An employee who engages in conduct which endangers the health, safety, or security of students, employees, or visitors may be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

30. Providing False Information: An employee who provides false, misleading, or inaccurate records, reports, information or application materials may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

31. Student Interactions: An employee who fails to maintain professional relationships with students, both in and outside the classroom, may be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Inappropriate student interactions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. committing any act of child abuse, including physical or verbal abuse;
- b. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
- c. committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act;
- d. engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, sex, national origin, religion, or disability;
- e. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, or physical relationship with a student; or
- f. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs.

32. Interactions with Co-Workers: Employees are expected to work with their co-workers in a cooperative and respectful manner. An employee who engages in confrontational, abusive, obscene, or disruptive conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

33. Weapons: An employee who carries a weapon on school property may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

34. Threats of Violence: Any employee who commits or threatens to commit an act of violence may be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

050-6-.01 **The Code of Ethics for Educators**

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

(2) *Definitions*

- (a) “Breach of contract” occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
- (b) “Certificate” refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Georgia 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 Georgia Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.
- (e) “Student” is any individual enrolled in the state’s public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the school 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 Georgia 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 permanent invalidation of any certificate held by the educator. A Voluntary Surrender is equivalent to and has the same effect as a revocation. A Voluntary Surrender shall become effective upon receipt by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission
- (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 Georgia 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 Georgia 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 Georgia Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

(n) “Inappropriate” is conduct or communication not suitable for an educator to have with a student. It goes beyond the bounds of an educator-student relationship.

(o) “Physical abuse” is physical interaction resulting in a reported or visible bruise or injury to the student.

(3) Standards

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

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

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

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

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

(i) For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered “under the influence” if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

1. soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator’s school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association..

(g) Standard 7: **Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws

and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

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

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

1. Failure to report to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
2. Failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

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

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

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

(4) *Reporting*

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

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

(5) *Disciplinary Action*

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

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
2. disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);
5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate
6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16-13-111); and
7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

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

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200