

**Rabun County Schools  
Employee Handbook  
School Year 2020-2021**



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# **RABUN COUNTY SCHOOLS**

## **ADMINISTRATION & SYSTEM PERSONNEL**

963 Tiger Connector Road Tiger, Georgia 30576

Phone: (706) 212.4350 ~ Fax: (706) 782-6224

Web Site: <http://www.rabuncountyschools.org/>

### **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

Steve Cabe, Chairman

Curt Haban, Vice Chairman

Mark Beck

Molly Lima

Wayne Stephens

### **SYSTEM PERSONNEL**

Dr. April Childers, Superintendent

Jonathan Gibson, Assistant Superintendent

Kelly McKay, Assistant Superintendent

Cindi Dean, Director of Business Operations and Human Resources

Marty Dixon, Director of Transportation

Laurie Griffin, School Psychologist

Jason Hogan, Director of Facility Operations and Data

Will Howell, Director of Student Services

Amy Pruitt, Director of Federal Programs

Greg Purcell, Director of Technology

Kristin Schupp, Director of School Nutrition

Tammy Wilbanks, Social Worker

Roger Wolfrey, Director of Maintenance

Gail Allen, Accounts Payable

Roberto Aguilar, Migrant Liaison

Kim Anderson, Data Specialist

Heather Bedingfield, Assistant Director of Human Resources

Marie Carver, System Nutrition Manager and Free-Reduced Clerk

Artie Conner, Custodian

Scott Crane, Safety Coordinator

Julie Harvey, Data Specialist

Lori Irvin, Centralized Registrar/Receptionist

Renea Jarrard, Administrative Assistant to Student Services

Kelly Nixon, Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendents

Kitty Panell, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent

Joyce Savage, Payroll

Jerry Shope, Maintenance

Melissa Wolfrey, Purchasing and Procurement

## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### ***Rabun County Primary***

Dr. Jay Fowler, Principal

Merrabeth Benton, Assistant Principal

Keri Cannon, Assistant Principal

### ***Rabun County Elementary***

Jonathan Welch, Principal

Colette Lovell, Assistant Principal

Kelsey Thompson, Assistant Principal

### ***Rabun County Middle***

Kechara Partin, Principal

Avery Lawrence, Assistant Principal

### ***Rabun County High***

Justin Spillers, Principal

Allen Blair, Assistant Principal

John Franco, Assistant Principal

**It is the responsibility of each staff member to study this document and be familiar with the rules, regulations and policies of the Rabun County School System.**

*This handbook has been prepared to help familiarize you with some of our administrative policies and procedures and to present the information in a form that will be readily available for reference. Although the contents of the handbook are based on the Board Policies of the Rabun County Board of Education, the actual policies, which are far more lengthy and detailed, have been summarized to make the handbook more readable. There are additional policies not discussed in the handbook. In the event of a conflict between the handbook and a policy, the policies shall control. Nothing in this handbook or in the policies is intended to create a contract of employment or an entitlement to any particular benefits or terms and conditions of work. The Board of Education has the right to change or modify any of its administrative rules or policies at any time. For additional, more detailed information or if you have questions, please refer to the Board of Education Policy Manual which can be found by clicking on this link: [Board Policies of the Rabun County Board of Education](#) or contact the Human Resources Department, Rabun County Board of Education, 963 Tiger Connector Road, Tiger, GA 30576. The telephone number for the Human Resources Department is 706-212-4350, extension 5227 or 5228.*

## **Section 1 - Workplace/On the Job**

### ***Accidents and Safe Working Environment***

All employees share in the responsibility of maintaining a safe working environment. Each employee should report safety concerns to their supervisor so corrective action may be taken. In the event of a workplace accident, employees should report the injury to their supervisor immediately and complete all necessary paperwork.

### ***Attendance***

It is the core conviction of our school system that employee attendance and promptness on the job is not only the mark of a top-notch professional, but it is also a vital duty on behalf of the welfare of the students and the expectations of our parents and taxpayers. Excellent work attendance also sets an example for our children by modeling what we expect of them. More importantly, the faithful presence of professional educators and other system staff will allow the students to take advantage of all we can offer instructionally and maximize their achievement and success.

If we want success in our schools, it is the duty of each staff member in the Rabun County School System (RCSS) to be present and on the job in a prompt fashion every possible day. At times, there may be circumstances that require educators and staff to be absent from their assigned duties. Personal or close family illnesses, family crises, and occasional personal business that cannot be scheduled outside the school day are reasonable examples of time required to be away from work duties. In these circumstances, employees are authorized to utilize earned personal days (maximum of 3 days per year) or sick leave, as long as the absences do not develop into a perennial pattern of chronic absences which will jeopardize the well-being, safety, and achievement of our students. If your evaluator or supervisor determines via his/her evaluative discretion that a pattern of chronic absences is occurring, this may be documented in the employee's annual evaluation and may affect decisions regarding renewal of the employee's employment contract (if a certified employee) or decisions regarding termination of employment.

### ***Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices***

In order to protect the integrity of our instructional program and to provide the most responsible supervision of our students, personal cell phones and other personal electronic devices should not be activated or used during the school day by faculty or staff during times when they are supervising students or when use of those devices conflicts with their assigned duties. Exceptions due to extenuating circumstances may be approved by the principal/supervisor on an individual basis.

### ***Chain of Command***

The system's chain of command is designed to promote the overall effectiveness of school programs. A positive chain of command is also a trust builder for all staff, and professional staff members are encouraged and expected to communicate openly and fairly with peers and supervisors with the key purpose of building teamwork and solving problems. If there is a question or problem to be resolved, staff at the school level shall refer the issue first to the lowest level of the chain of command, beginning with the employee's direct and immediate supervisor (i.e. the building-level principal or

department-level supervisor). System-wide personnel shall follow the chain of command established by their immediate supervisors.

### ***Code of Ethics***

All employees are expected by RCSS to adhere to the high standards and expectations determined by the Rabun County Board of Education and those described in the Georgia Professional Standards Commission Code of Ethics.

Georgia Professional Standards Commission Educator Ethics Division  
Two Peachtree Street, Suite 6000 404-232-2700  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3141 800-  
537-5996 Fax: 404-232-2720  
[www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) [ethics@gapsc.com](mailto:ethics@gapsc.com)

### **THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS-Effective January 1, 2018/505-6-.01**

**(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 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 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.

### **(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 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 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).

(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 reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law 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.

(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 holder of a certificate:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -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 1-11 -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; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5**

### ***Complaints and Grievances (GAE)***

Certified personnel have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship. Information on this subject is contained in local board policy GAE.

### ***Complaint Procedures Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)***

Any individual, organization or agency may file a complaint with the Rabun County Department of Education if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that the Rabun County Department of Education, the Georgia Department of Education, or an agency or consortium of agencies is violating a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Every Student Succeeds Act. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing. A copy of the Complaints Procedures under the Every Student Succeeds Act is available in the school office, central office, and from the district webpage.

### ***Assessment Security and Accountability***

The Rabun County School System (RCSS) acknowledges the importance of maintaining a system of student assessment that is of the highest quality. High quality assessments must be administered in a manner characterized by integrity that is ensured only when sound procedures of test security and accountability are implemented RCSS is committed to the use of online assessments whenever possible which greatly enhances test security, provides a more positive user experience, and maximizes the accessibility of these assessments to students with disabilities and other learning differences.

In any state or federally mandated test the RCSS expects its employees to act in accordance with specific guidelines mandated by the test and the general guidelines of the Georgia Department of Education. The Rabun County School System has a Test Security Plan which follows guidelines in the [Georgia Student Assessment Handbook](#) and addresses consequences for any violation within the plan. For every administration of a high stakes assessment the following guidelines will be followed.

- The district test coordinator will stay current on appropriate testing rules and practice by viewing required DOE webinars and reading all manuals and memorandums associated with the test. The district test coordinator will attend district testing training held throughout the year.
- All school test coordinators will be appropriately trained by the system coordinator.
- School test coordinators will in turn provide mirrored training to all test examiners and proctors who will be taking part in the test.
- Records of participation and sign-in sheets of each of these meetings will be maintained in a centralized location for a minimum of five years.
- Trainings at every level will include a segment covering testing ethics and ethical behavior in testing environments.
- Test materials, when on site, will be continuously maintained in a secured and locked room with access limited to only those who are functioning as school test coordinators or assistant test coordinators.
- School campuses will be quiet and organized on the day(s) of testing.

- When test results are returned they will be disseminated to students and parents in a reasonable time frame.
- Assessment results will be communicated to the public via press releases, sections of the website, and other means as necessary.
- Assessment practices and security measures will be communicated to the public via school newsletters in the month prior to the testing window.
- District/School State Report Card is provided for public access on the district website.

Each school year, the RCSS requires all personnel to complete and receive credit for Code of Ethics compliance course. The content of the courses is based on information included in the [Code of Ethics for Educators](#).

In addition, administrators have provided school personnel with the Code of Ethics for Educators. The Code of Ethics defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as the guide to ethical conduct. Within this Code of Ethics is Standard 11 which specifically addresses ethics in testing. Teachers in each building are required to sign off that they have read and understand the Code of Ethics.

#### Response to Reports of Irregularities and/or Security Breaches

The RCSS responds to testing irregularities and security breaches in a timely manner and in a way that establishes the validity of assessments and ensures accountability. Training of School Test Coordinators, Examiners, and test Proctors includes defining what constitutes an irregularity and/or security breach. Examiners and test Proctors are instructed to immediately report possible irregularities and security breaches to the School Test Coordinator or Principal who, in turn, must report it to the System Test Coordinator.

When necessary, the System Test Coordinator will provide guidance in conducting an investigation of the incident which may include obtaining written narratives from all parties involved. Irregularities and security breaches are reported by the System Test Coordinator to the appropriate GaDOE Assessment Administration Division Assessment Specialist. The System Test Coordinator will follow the instructions of the assessment specialist who may provide guidance in the investigation, suggest a course of action, give instructions for recording the incident on the GaDOE secure portal, provide the appropriate codes if the incident is deemed to be an irregularity and/or requires an invalidation, and, if deemed appropriate, make a recommendation for a report to the PSC.

#### Consequences of Failure to Follow Procedures / Violations of Professional Ethics

All school system personnel are expected to follow prescribed procedures and to operate within ethical guidelines regarding student assessment. Failure to do so can result in the full variety of disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment. Violation of the *Code of Ethics for Educators* will be reported to the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) who may impose a variety of sanctions that can include revocation of the professional credentials of offending educators.

#### ***Translation and Interpretation Services Plan*** ***Purpose and Overview***

The Rabun County School System (RCSS) recognizes the importance of effective and meaningful communication with parents/guardians with limited English proficiency in order to support the goal of engaging and involving families further in their children's education and to ensure that they have equal access to information communicated to all parents.

For the purposes of this plan, interpretation is defined as spoken information provided in another language. Translation is defined as a written version of a document provided in a different language than the original version of the document.

In order to support linguistically diverse families, RCSS will:

Develop and annually update (by November 1 of each year) a district plan for translation and interpretation as well as school-level parent and family engagement plans (Title I schools) addressing the same at each individual school site:

- Provide families the opportunity to request written and/or oral communications in a language other than English, and inform families of the availability of these services at no cost to them;
- Identify families who have requested written and/or oral communications in a language other than English and maintain this information in a manner that is easily accessible to district and school staff.
- Ensure the availability and accessibility of interpreters and translators, and maximize available resources by providing guidance on determining the mode of communication that best serves families in any given situation;
- Ensure the quality of the interpretation and translation services provided by the district.

#### *Federal Law*

Under relevant statutory and case law, in order to avoid discrimination on the basis of national origin against persons with limited English proficiency, recipients of federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Education must take appropriate steps to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency receive the language assistance necessary to allow meaningful access to services, free of charge.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education relies on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and a May 25, 1970 memorandum created by the Office for Civil Rights entitled "Identification of Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Basis of National Origin" ("The May 25th Memorandum") as its guidance in providing appropriate services to persons with limited English proficiency.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. Under Title VI, "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program to which this part applies."

The May 25th Memorandum lists a number of "major areas of concern" relating to compliance with Title VI. Among them is the "responsibility of school districts to adequately notify national origin-

minority group parents of school activities called to the attention of other parents." These notices, the 1970 memo adds, "may have to be provided in a language other than English" in order to be adequate. It is important to note that in the May 25th Memorandum has never been withdrawn. In fact the United States Supreme Court upheld its provisions in a landmark 1974 decision, [*Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974)].

References, by date:

OCR Dear Colleague Letter. English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents (01/7/2015)

OCR Fact Sheet. Information for Limited English Proficient Parents and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them (Jan. 2015) *Lau v. Nichols*. 414 U.S. 563 (1974)

OCR May 25. 1970 Memorandum. "Identification of Discrimination and Denial of Services on the

Basis of National Origin"

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq

#### *Identification of Household Communication Preferences*

During the student registration process, all parents/guardians indicate a household language preference for written and oral communications by answering questions included in registration process. Families may also make changes to these preferences at any time by notifying school staff. Any staff member receiving a request for a change in a household communication preference will relay the information to the appropriate staff member at each school.

Household communication language preferences are recorded on the *State/Province* area in PowerSchool, the district's student information system. This area is restricted to a limited group of student information system users.

Office staff at each school will notify the teacher(s) of the student that information must be sent home to parents in the language that they request. This includes notes home, all calls, texts, and emails.

- Any communications from the teacher, school, or district must be provided to parents in the language they request. This includes messaged in the Remind System.

#### *Notification of Interpretation & Translation Services*

Families with a household communication language preference other than English are informed by RCSS registration staff upon enrollment of the availability of translation and interpreting services at no cost to them.

#### *Translation & Interpretation Resources*

The district office identifies, and maintains a contact list of district employees who are qualified and approved to serve as interpreters and translators. This contact list, maintained and accessible at all times in Google Drive, is shared with all staff via email annually and as updates necessitate.

The use of family members, children (including students), and friends for the provision of language assistance is not acceptable. The use of such individuals raises issues of confidentiality, privacy, or conflict of interest. Furthermore, in many circumstances, such persons are not competent to provide quality, accurate interpretations or translations. RCSS will not rely on such individuals to provide families with meaningful access to important information. Even when families choose to provide their own interpreter or translator, a district-approved source for translation/interpretation must be provided in order to meet the district's obligation to ensure that interpretation and translations are accurate.

Under no circumstances may an employee of the RCSS accept any form of payment directly from or on the behalf of any family in exchange for providing interpretation services at/during any school event. Such services are provided for free for every RCSS family by the District. An employee who meets the requirements to be included on the RCSS Approved List of Interpreters and Translators will be reimbursed at the established rate for interpretation/translations services that s/he provides, if such services are provided outside of the his/her normal and routine working hours *and* are not considered a part of the job expectations or requirements of the employee.

The use of minor children as interpreters and/or translators also raises particular concerns about competency, quality, and accuracy. Additionally, children under the age of 18 years old cannot be bound to confidentiality regulations under FERPA. It is also not advisable to rely on children to convey information about their own education and/or complex situations. Accordingly, minor children can never fulfill the requirement for adequate interpretation or translation for communication purposes between families and district or school staff.

In general, written materials routinely provided to parents/guardians in English must also be provided in high frequency preferred household communication languages. Current district demographics necessitate Spanish translations as a routine practice. A document is considered of particularly vital importance when it contains information that is critical for obtaining educational benefits or is required by law. In addition, when determining the priority of a particular document for translation, the district will consider the importance of the program, information, encounter, or service involved and the consequence to the family if the information in question is not provided accurately or in a timely manner. In instances in which a translation is not feasible for a particular document or for a given language represented within the intended audience of the document, regardless of number or percentage, another approved source for interpretation must be utilized to adequately *convey* the information orally to parents whose communication needs are not met in written format. Likewise, in live settings, such as, conferences, or other face-to-face encounters, a district-approved source for oral interpretation must be provided to parents who have indicated a preferred household oral communication language other than English.

The district will budget annually for translation and interpretation expenses in the general fund and, as allowable, in applicable Federal funds for activities related to those programs. District staff provide guidance to school leadership on budgeting appropriately at the school level for additional school-specific translation and interpretation needs not met through district resources.

#### *Quality Assurance & Training of Interpreters/Translators*

The district follows board policies and procedures regarding employment. District staff ensures that translation and interpretation services are professional and accurate. Upon meeting district quality standards, staff members and independently contracted individuals on the approved interpreter/translator list participate in ongoing professional learning relevant to the field of educational interpretation and translation as needed.

Professional translation and interpretation companies contracting with RCSS are responsible for ensuring the quality of their translators and interpreters as well as providing any necessary ongoing training and professional learning opportunities.

#### *Evaluation & Monitoring*

The district Translation and Interpretation Services Plan, district parent surveys, and school Parent and Family Engagement Plans are also reviewed for compliance on an annual basis by the district.

#### ***Confidentiality of Student Records***

School employees are to abide by state and federal regulations concerning student records to ensure student record confidentiality. If an employee receives any request from any party for student records, he/she staff should notify their building-level administrator for guidance and direction. (Reference RCSS Policy JR/JRA)

*Employees should be cognizant that grades, test scores, and other student performance data are confidential and should not be inappropriately exposed to other students.*

#### ***Dress Code***

The Rabun County Board of Education expects employees to dress in a manner that is appropriate for their job responsibilities in an educational setting. Employees are expected to be neatly and cleanly attired and groomed while on the job, and the specifics of an employee's dress requirements are defined at the discretion of the school-level or department-level supervisor.

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

The Rabun County Board of Education is concerned with the well-being of all employees of the Rabun County School System. The Board recognizes that a drug free workplace encourages employee productivity and promotes the accomplishment of the system's missions and goals. In accordance with Georgia's Drug Free Public Workforce Act of 1990, the Rabun County Board of Education hereby declares that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance or alcohol is prohibited in the workplace for all Rabun County School System employees.

In accordance with the Rabun County School System policy on the drug free workplace (Policy GAMA), employees may be required to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing when there is a reasonable suspicion that an employee has violated these policies.

***Employee Workload/Workday***

The workload of an employee shall be defined by the Rabun County Board of Education via the approved salary schedule and/or by the Superintendent or his/her designee regarding the employee's written job description.

The minimum workday for all certified personnel shall be eight hours; the required work schedule (days and hours) for all employees is determined by the employee's supervisor in accordance with the above stipulations of the Rabun County Board of Education and/or Superintendent or his/her designee.

Certified employees are exempt employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and upon occasion these employees may be directed by supervisors to attend to duties outside their assigned work hours or work days, including, but not limited to, extra-curricular supervision, PTO and other school related meetings, parent and student conferences, student tutoring and advisement, curriculum and instructional planning, etc. Attending such events is the duty and responsibility of the employee when directed to do so.

Also, certified employees may be directed by supervisors to assume extra-curricular sponsorship duties such as sponsoring clubs, coaching sports and fine arts activities, and providing supervision of other student activities.

***Equal Opportunity Employment (Policy GAAA)***

The Rabun County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, and sex, which includes sexual orientation and gender identity in its employment practices. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and all accompanying regulations. Any employee, applicant for employment, or other person who believes he or she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Employees who have eligible complaints regarding discrimination or harassment as noted above should utilize the procedure contained in Policy GAAA. If any employee needs assistance in regards to the above policy and procedure, please contact the Human Resources Department at the Central Office, 706-212-4350, extension 5227.

***Fundraising***

In order to cooperate with other school organizations and the local merchants, fundraising will be kept to a minimum. The principal, superintendent, and the Board of Education must approve all fundraising projects before they begin.

***Instruction***

The Rabun County School System has a sequential P- 12 instructional program that is based on Georgia's approved curriculum.

Instruction - Teachers are expected to plan instruction and direct teaching to all levels of student achievement that is aligned to the approved state curriculum (as supervised by the building-level administration).

Collaboration – Working, planning, collaborating with other teachers and professionals around the use of student achievement data is a vital component for a successful academic program. It is the duty of all professionals to faithfully collaborate with others and strategically plan instructional activities for the purpose of ensuring maximum student growth in the classroom.

Controversial Materials and Media - If a topic might be considered controversial for a particular age group, the teacher is advised to discuss the program with the principal prior to implementation. If appropriate, the principal will discuss the topic with the curriculum director or superintendent. If the superintendent feels it necessary, the topic will be presented to the Rabun County Board of Education for discussion and action.

Challenged Material - If instructional materials or media are challenged, the teacher is asked to notify the principal in a timely manner for guidance and direction.

If the challenged materials are media center materials, the principal will then arrange for the complainant to meet with the school media specialist to begin the formal complaint procedure.

### ***Job Descriptions***

Minimum skills and educational requirements established for each position are included in the job description for most employees. Supervisors will use the job description as a general guide, yet all employees shall comply with reasonable duties and directions as assigned by their supervisors.

### ***Leaving Work Site***

Employees will not leave or be absent from their designated work site during assigned work hours or duties without prior authorization from his/her supervisor for the absence.

### ***Non-School Employment***

Employees who have other jobs or professional duties in addition to those associated with their employment in RCSS may not allow those jobs or duties to conflict with responsibilities and assignments associated with their employment in RCSS.

### ***Professional Learning***

Registration and expenses for all activities that are considered professional learning shall be approved in advance by the building-level supervisor and then through the professional learning department of RCSS.

Otherwise, the costs may be the total responsibility of the employee, and credit may not be granted. Additionally, the principal or supervisor must approve the activity prior to submitting the request to central office.

Participants will need to complete an official registration through the Doc e fill platform and submit to their supervisor. If you have questions concerning professional learning, please contact the professional learning office.

### ***Personal and Professional Conduct***

Employees should be aware at all times of the following:

1. Public schools and all property therein belong to the public.
2. The Rabun County School system is dependent upon the continued support of the public.
3. Employees project their school's educational image through their contacts with students, parents, and other community persons.
4. While all employees have Constitutionally-protected free speech in their personal lives, any exercise of written or verbal speech or personal conduct exposed to the public (including posts on social media) that interferes with or jeopardizes the safety and operations of the Rabun County School System and its stakeholders may be considered unprofessional conduct and insubordination. Employees considering public speech are advised to remember that educators and staff in Georgia are held to the Georgia PSC Code of Ethics and to a higher standard of conduct. State and federal courts have ruled that personal postings on social media do not have an expectation of privacy, and they may be considered public speech. Public speech that disrupts the safety and operations of stakeholders of RCSS is not permitted.

If employees are unprofessional communicating with students, parents or community persons, the school and system could be perceived as such. If employees are professional in their dealings and demeanor with parents and community persons, the public will view the schools as being staffed by qualified professionals who place first priority on educating students.

The education of students is the first priority in the Rabun County School System. Therefore, all employees are directed to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times when communicating and interacting with students, other staff members, parents, and community persons. If for any reason an employee is arrested, they should immediately report the situation to their immediate supervisor within 24 hours of the arrest.

### ***Release of Students***

No student is to be released from school supervision to accompany any person not properly authorized to accept responsibility for the student. School-level staff shall use faithful and diligent discretion in applying procedures communicated by the building-level principal/supervisor in order to supervise student checkouts and dismissal.

### ***Separation from Employment***

Any employee desiring to terminate his employment with the Rabun County Board of Education should submit a written resignation to the immediate supervisor. If an employee is under a contract for employment, he/she must be recommended for release of contract by the superintendent and the recommendation approved by the Board of Education. Contracted employees who attempt to resign without a proper release from their contract as described above may be reported to the PSC for unethical conduct, a violation of the PSC Code of Ethics. Separated employees will receive separation

forms for salary and insurance purposes (COBRA, etc.) from Human Resources. All system property must be returned at separation, and a replacement or security fee may be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

### ***Harassment of Employees (Policy GAEB)***

It is the policy of this Rabun County School District to prohibit any act of harassment of employees by other employees based upon race, color, national origin, sex, which includes sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, age or disability at all times and during all occasions while at school, in the workplace or at any school event or activity. Any such act shall result in prompt and appropriate discipline, including the possible termination of employment.

Sexual harassment may include conduct or speech which entails unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, taunts, threats, comments of a vulgar or demeaning nature, demands or physical contact which creates a hostile environment. There may be other speech or conduct which employees experience as inappropriate or illegal harassment which should also be reported; harassment can take many forms and it is not possible to itemize every aspect of the harassment forbidden by this policy.

Any employee or applicant for employment who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination as prohibited by this policy should promptly report the same to the principal of their school or to the appropriate coordinator designated in policy GAAA, who will implement the Board's discriminatory complaints procedures as specified in that policy. Employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination.

It is the duty of all employees to promptly report harassment forbidden by this policy. All supervisors will instruct their subordinates as to the content of this policy and, through appropriate professional learning activities, enlighten employees as to the varied forms or expression of prohibited harassment. The principals of all schools shall ensure that employees are informed through handbooks, training materials and verbally that such harassment is strictly forbidden, how it is to be reported and the consequences for violating this policy.

### ***Report Bullying***

Any teacher or other school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgement and discretion, believe he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is the target of bullying should immediately report it to the school principal.

### ***Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct by School Employees***

- A. Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.
- B. Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or

principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

- C. Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Definitions: "Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-75. "Sexual misconduct" includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Educator sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

1. Made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
2. Showed or displayed sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.
3. Wrote sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
4. Spread sexual rumors (i.e. said a student was gay or a lesbian).
5. Spied on students as they dressed, showered or used the restroom at school.
6. Flashed or "mooned" students.
7. Touched, excessively hugged, or grabbed students in a sexual way.
8. Forced a student to kiss him/her or do something else of a sexual nature.
9. Talked or asked about a student's developing body, sexuality, dating habits, etc.
10. Talked repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
11. Made fun of your body parts.
12. Called students sexual names.

### ***Substitute Teachers***

Substitute teachers will be employed by ESS. Any time a substitute is needed, teachers will go online to <https://ess.com/absencemanagement/> and log-in to request a sub. If you need a substitute on short notice, you will call 1-800-942-3767. All teachers will be trained in the use of the new substitute teacher program.

The teacher is responsible for leaving sufficient lesson plans for the substitute to use with all classes.

### ***Supervision of Students***

Students assigned under an employee's supervision must be supervised properly and with effective use of professional discretion, keeping the safety of the children as the primary concern. In the event of an emergency, staff members should seek guidance and direction from the building-level administration when appropriate to do.

### ***Use of Technology***

Employees utilizing technology resources (computers, cell phones, tablets, and other devices) are encouraged to remember that all resources and communication records, including email communications, are the property of Rabun County School System and are subject to the Georgia Open Records Act. Further, inappropriate use of technology that interferes with an employee's assigned duties may be determined to be unprofessional conduct and insubordination.

If equipment under the care of an employee owned by RCSS is lost, stolen, or damaged because of careless conduct or neglect, the employee may be responsible for replacement or repair costs.

### ***Use of Tobacco***

The Rabun County Board of Education recognizes the need for it to promote the health and well-being of its staff and students. The board believes that tobacco use is a major preventable cause of premature death and that the use of tobacco threatens the physical well-being of both users and non-users.

It is the intent of the Rabun County Board of Education to establish and maintain a tobacco free environment for the purpose of protecting the health and well-being of students, employees, and school visitors and providing a positive example of healthy living practices.

Tobacco products are defined to include cigarettes, candy cigarettes, chewing tobacco, blunts, blunt wraps, prewrapped blunt cones & tubes, cigars, cigarillos, bidis, pipes, e--cigarettes, vaping products cigarette packages or smokeless tobacco containers, lighters, ash trays, key chains, t-shirts, coffee mugs, and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products. Tobacco use includes smoking, chewing, dipping, use electronic nicotine delivery systems or other combustible tobacco products.

The use of all tobacco products by any employee, students, or visitor of the Rabun County School System is prohibited on school property and at off-campus school-sponsored events at all times. Furthermore, the use of tobacco products by anyone is prohibited in any building or vehicle owned by the Rabun County Board of Education at all times.

### ***Travel Procedures***

The Georgia SAO travel regulations and policy direct Rabun County Schools employee travel procedures. Further clarification and restrictions pertaining to employees are provided below.

- Employees are responsible for acquiring the lowest possible lodging cost at the time of travel. All lodging costs that exceed \$275.00 (per night) require prior approval.
- Employees are required to submit additional documentation if their expense is questioned during review for payment by the Business Department or during review by auditors.
- Employees attending a conference, meeting, or other organized event are required to submit an official agenda that includes the dates of the event and any meals provided so that the Business Department can ensure compliance with the travel policy.
- Employees are required to use Etrieve when submitting requisitions related to travel (lodging, conference fees, etc.) and when submitting reimbursable travel expenses.
- Employees must submit all reimbursable travel expenses within 60 days of the last day of travel. Reimbursable travel expenses submitted after 60 days will be reported as taxable income to the Employee. (IRS CFR 1.62-2)
- Employees must submit all receipts for any parking or taxi fees incurred in order to receive reimbursement.

#### *Violations*

Individuals in violation of these procedures are subject to a range of sanctions including but not limited to not being reimbursed for travel-related expenses, disciplinary action, dismissal from Rabun County Schools and/or legal action.

#### *Unallowable Travel Expenses:*

Examples of unallowable travel expenses are, but not limited to:

- Fuel expenses. This is covered under the mileage reimbursement per the SAO of Georgia Travel Policy.
- Meals if they are included for the purpose of your travel. For example, attendees during a conference/training session are provided breakfast and lunch. Reimbursement for these meals is unallowable.
- Tipping for baggage handlers, other hotel personnel, and/or taxi services.
- Hotel/Motel expense less than 50 miles from employees home

## **Section 2 – Employment**

### ***Assignment/Transfer***

All personnel are approved by the Board of Education to serve the best interests of the school system. Staff who wish to be considered for transfers to other locations should contact the principal/supervisor before making an application or official request. Ultimately, the decision on whether to approve employee requests for transfer are at the discretion of the school and system administration based on the best interests of the school system as a whole. If you are interested in transferring into open positions within the system, please go to the Human Resources page of our school website and review the employment opportunities link. After reviewing the job listings, click “Internal” in the top right corner of the page. You will be directed to create an account and once the account is completed, you will be able to apply for any position. To ensure all employees are given equal opportunities, we will no longer consider verbal transfer requests.

### ***At-Will Employment***

Classified employees (non-contracted) are employed at the will of the school system. This means that if Rabun County School System deems it to be in the best interest of the school system and taxpayers to terminate employment of any classified employee, it may do so, except in cases prohibited by state and federal law.

### ***Certification***

Obtaining and retaining professional certification related to job duty requirements are the responsibility of the employee. The Human Resources Department of RCSS will assist you and consult with you in this process, and you are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department if you need support.

### ***Changes in Demographic Status***

In the event that an employee experiences a change in residence/address, name, contact information, or relevant payroll/tax/beneficiary information pertaining to your employment, please contact the Human Resources department. Employees must complete appropriate forms to make changes in address, marital or dependent status, beneficiary information, retirement plans and health plan forms.

### ***Conditions of Employment***

The State Board of Education, in accordance with state law, requires that personnel be employed by the Rabun County Board of Education on the recommendation of the superintendent.

- Renewal of employment contracts is determined annually by the Board of Education upon recommendation of the superintendent. Any contracted employee who has not been notified that his/her contract is not to be renewed by May 15 annually will be granted a contract for the ensuing year. Any employee under contract who has been notified by the system that he or she will not be offered a contract for the ensuing school year may upon request receive a written explanation from the superintendent. OCGA §20-2-211(b)

- Complete and/or accurate information requested by the RCSS employment application process shall be provided by the individual seeking employment. FAILURE TO PROVIDE SUCH INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT IF THE INFORMATION IS FOUND TO BE INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE
- A complete fingerprint and background check is required for all employees, including temporary or substitute employees.

Classified personnel are hired on an “at-will” basis for no definite period of time and may, regardless of the date of payment of wages and salary, be discharged at any time without previous notice.

### ***Evaluation***

All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually by their designated evaluators. The method of evaluation will be based on the relevant rules and parameters of the specific evaluation system assigned to the employee based on administrative discretion, board policy, and/or state law. All performance evaluation records shall be part of the personnel evaluation file and shall be confidential.

Failure to obtain a satisfactory annual evaluation could result in termination or non-renewal, and it may affect an employee’s placement on the official salary schedule pertaining to his/her assigned duties.

Employees are encouraged to be active and committed participants with their supervisors about the method of their evaluation and what performance expectations their supervisors have assigned to them. Further, all employees of RCSS are expected to be committed to growth, effectiveness, and professionalism for the best interests of the school system.

### ***Fair Dismissal - Grounds for termination or suspension-Professional Personnel***

The Rabun County School System will adhere to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-940 in regard to Terminations, Suspensions, Nonrenewal, Demotions, or Reprimands of contracted personnel.

### ***Resignation/Separation/Release from Contract***

Any certified employee desiring to be released from his or her contract of employment with the Rabun County Board of Education during the term of the contract for the current school year or after signing a contract for the subsequent school year should (1) discuss the request with the principal/supervisor, (2) discuss the request with Human Resources, and (3) submit a written request to the Superintendent and Board of Education through the Human Resources office to be released from the contract. The position of the administration and the Board of Education is to release a contracted employee only if a suitable replacement can be employed.

Any classified employee desiring to separate from the school system is expected to submit a written letter of resignation to his/her immediate supervisor, and the system would prefer to be given two weeks notice. All school system property must be returned at separation.

***Tenure***

Personnel decisions shall be made in accordance with Georgia law.

### **Section 3 – Compensation & Benefits**

All Rabun County School System employees are required to participate in Social Security and the applicable retirement system designated for their job classification. Mandatory employee contributions shall be deducted from the employee's pay.

State and Federal Taxes - All employees are subject to state and federal income tax withholding.

#### ***Eligibility for Retirement***

Retirement of an employee from the Rabun County School System shall be governed by the provisions of the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia, the Public School Employees' Retirement System, or the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia.

#### ***Employment Related Benefits***

In addition to annual salary as per the appropriate salary schedule, several benefits are provided for employees of the Rabun County School System.

#### **Benefits Funded by the School System**

- Teacher Retirement (TRS) - All employees eligible under TRS contribute 6% of their salary to the Georgia Teacher Retirement System, and the school system contributes a significant additional percentage of the salary to the Georgia Teacher Retirement System as well.
- Social Security – All eligible employees under Social Security pay 6.2% of their taxable salary to Social Security and 1.45% of their taxable salary for Medicare. The system matches those contributions as well.
- Health Insurance – All eligible employees have the option to purchase state health insurance. The cost for coverage is determined annually by the state depending upon the specific coverage purchased. The system also contributes a much larger dollar contribution on your behalf to keep costs as low as the state allows each year. Currently the amount is \$945.00 per month, per employee, no matter the coverage selected.
- Life Insurance - Each employee is provided by the Board of Education free life insurance coverage in the amount of \$25,000. As you grow older, the amount of life and AD&D insurance for you will be reduced according to the following schedule:  
At the Age of:                      The Original Amount of Insurance Will Reduce to:  
70.....65%  
75.....45%  
80.....30%  
85.....20%  
90.....15%

Reductions become effective on the first day of the policy month that coincides with or follows the day you reach the specified age. Any reduced amount of insurance will round to the nearest dollar. If you are age 70 or older on the date insurance becomes effective, the amount of life and AD&D insurance for you will be reduced as shown above. Thereafter, the amount of life and AD&D insurance will continue to reduce in accord with the schedule above.

Benefits Available through Payroll Deduction – Employees may participate in a variety of programs through payroll deduction. Available payroll deduction programs presently include:

- Employee, Spouse and Child Life Insurance
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment
- Dental Insurance
- Hospital GAP Insurance
- Cancer Insurance
- Disability Insurance
- Spending Accounts
- Vision Insurance
- Additional Term Life Insurance
- Credit Union
- GAE/ PAGE membership fees
- Sid Weber contributions
- 403(b) Retirement Plan/ROTH IRA through American Fidelity
- 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan through American Fidelity

***Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (Policy GBRIG)***

It is the purpose of this policy to set out in summary form the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("the Act" or "FMLA") and its implementing regulations. The Rabun County Board of Education ("Board") does not intend by this policy to create any additional rights to leave not provided by the Act; provided, however, the Board does wish to extend the rights of the Act to certain employees who have worked at least 12 months for the Board. The Board does intend to elect certain options as the Act authorizes. Any portion of this policy inconsistent or contrary to the Act is unintentional and shall not be given effect. As to the interpretation of this policy, the Board's employees should look to the Act itself and its regulations.

**A. ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES**

Employees of the Board who have been employed by the Board for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave are eligible to take unpaid leave under the FMLA. FMLA leave is concurrent with sick leave and is measured on a rolling year.

An eligible employee may request leave for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Birth of a son or daughter and to care for the newborn child;

2. Adoption or foster placement with the employee of a son or daughter and to care for the newly placed child;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent, if that person has a serious health condition;
4. Serious health condition of the employee that prevents the employee from performing his/her job functions;
5. Any qualifying exigency arising from the fact that the employee's family member (the covered service member) is on covered active duty. Qualifying exigencies are defined as short-notice deployment (seven or less calendar days); military events and related activities; child care and school activities; financial and legal arrangements; counseling; rest and recuperation (up to fifteen (15) calendar days per instance); parental care; post deployment activities; additional activities where the employer and employee agree that the leave is an exigency and agree to both timing and duration of the leave; and
6. Military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member.

### ***Leaves and Absences (Policy GARH)***

Each employee, who is absent from work for any reason, must abide by the procedures established by the administrator/supervisor at the work site. Generally, the employee who will be absent for sick leave purposes needs to notify the principal/supervisor or designee as soon as possible (either the day/night before the absence or the early morning of the day of the absence). Other type of leave needs to be approved by the immediate supervisor as far in advance as possible. A leave request form must be submitted through Etrieve any time an employee will be out of the workplace.

The following information covers some authorized leaves and absences. For any absence which is not covered by policies or which exceeds the number of accumulated leave days, there will be a salary reduction equal to the pay earned in one day.

### ***Sick Leave (GARH)***

This policy shall apply to all employees of the Rabun County Board of Education. All employees are required to follow the work calendar established by the Board of Education and may take leave from work only in accordance with this policy or other leave policies enacted by the Board of Education. Unless otherwise provided by the Board of Education, principals and other supervisors are not authorized to rearrange the work calendars of employees. Chronic absenteeism beyond the scope of the FMLA by any individual will not be tolerated and could result in suspension and/or termination.

Each employee of the Board of Education shall be entitled to sick leave, with full pay, computed on the basis of one and one-fourth (1 ¼) working days for each completed month (20 school days of service). All unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next up to a maximum of sixty (60) days. Bus drivers and other classified employees may earn 11 ¼ days for 180 days. Sick

leave accumulated by a certified employee is transferable from one school system to another school system, up to a maximum of 45 days.

The leave provided for under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness or death in the employee's immediate family.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. In the event that sick leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member.

For the purposes of absences under this policy, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, sisters, brothers, and in-law equivalents of the same, grandparents, grandchildren, dependents as shown on the employee's most recent tax return, or other relatives living in the employee's household.

### **Personal Leave**

Up to three (3) days of accumulated sick leave may be used annually by each employee for personal leave if prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee's immediate supervisor and if the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation. A leave form must be filed and approved by the supervisor two (2) weeks prior to leave. Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent, personal and professional leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays. In addition, personal leave will not be granted during the first week of the student school year or during the last week of the student school year, unless the Superintendent, in his or her discretion, determines that such leave should be granted due to an emergency or extenuating circumstance beyond the employee's control. The Superintendent may refuse to allow an employee to take personal or professional leave if qualified substitutes are not available. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought, but may be required to state whether the absence is for "personal" or "professional" reasons.

### **Observance of Religious Holidays**

Employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays in excess of the days allowed for personal leave, the employee may take unpaid leave for such purposes provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

### **Jury and Witness Leave**

Each person employed by the Board shall be allowed leave with pay for the purposes of serving as a juror in any court or when subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of the individual's duties as a

school system employee. Jury and /or witness leave shall not be deducted from an individual's accumulated personal, professional, or sick leave. No employee utilizing jury and witness leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute to serve during his or her absence for such leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed to attend a judicial proceeding in a work-related matter may keep any jury/witness pay they receive.

### **Military Leave**

All employees of the Board of Education are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen (18) days in any federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military leave duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. Employees also are entitled to leave not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one calendar year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States armed forces. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the Superintendent or designee annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

### **Bereavement Leave**

In the event of a death in the immediate family of an employee, three (3) days bereavement leave will be granted. Any additional leave will be charged against the employee's sick leave. For the purposes of absences under this policy, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, sisters, brothers, and in-law equivalents of the same, grandparents, grandchildren, dependents as shown on the employee's most recent tax return, or other relatives living in the employee's household.

### **Disclaimer**

To the extent that any provision in this policy conflicts with or is superseded by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the regulations promulgated thereunder, or any other federal or state law, the provision of the applicable law or its regulations, as the case may be shall control.

### **Salary**

All personnel will be paid monthly by direct deposit or debit card and transactions will be issued on the last working day of each month. A calendar of pay periods and pay dates is sent to each school

### **Overtime Pay and Compensatory Time**

Classified employees are covered by the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding overtime pay and compensatory time. Employees may not work in excess of their assigned work schedule without the prior approval of their direct supervisors.

Upon prior approval by the superintendent and supervisor, employees who work in excess of forty (40) hours in a given work week will be paid at the rate of one and one-half times their normal wage for those approved overtime hours.

### ***Placement on Salary Schedule***

Salary schedules are published annually and are available through the personnel office. An individual's placement on the professional personnel salary schedule is based on certificate level and years of creditable experience, except that a teacher shall not receive credit for any year of experience in which the teacher received an unsatisfactory performance evaluation OCGA §20-2-212(a)

A classified employees' placement on the local personnel salary schedule is determined by that person's years of approved service with Rabun County Schools, educational rank, grade classification, hours worked per day, days worked per year, and/or credit for prior experience as appropriate and where applicable. Personnel who leave the Rabun County School System and return at a later date will maintain credit for service in Rabun County accumulated prior to leaving, but will be placed on current pay scale.

### ***Vacation Leave***

All classified and certified 12-month employees shall work a base schedule of 230-235 days from July 1 through June 30. The work schedule for each 12-month employee is set by the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Board of Education, on the recommendation of the Superintendent, may modify this schedule for any employee by implementing furlough days or reducing calendar work days.

Requests to take paid vacation must be submitted in writing to the employee's supervisor a minimum of five working days before the date of vacation, and the supervisor must approve the vacation request in advance. Vacations shall not interfere with the efficient operation of the school system.

When a PSERS employee has formally notified the school system of his/her intent to submit application of retirement and provides proof of that application to the school system and has accumulated a minimum of five consecutive years of service in the system immediately preceding retirement, said employee has the option to receive \$30 for each day of earned but unused sick leave accumulated at the time of retirement up to the Rabun Co. Schools maximum of 60 days. Said request for leave compensation must be submitted in writing to the school system prior to the last day of employment.

### ***Workers' Compensation***

The Human Resources Department oversees the Workers' Compensation Program for the Rabun County School System. If a work related injury occurs, employees should report the accident to their supervisor as soon as it happens, no matter how insignificant the accident may appear. A completed Employee Accident Form should be sent to the Workers' Compensation representative immediately after the accident. A panel of physicians is posted at each location for the convenience of the employees. Only those physicians or vendors listed on the panel will provide medical evaluations, treatment, and referrals as necessary.

**Contact Information**

Rabun County Board of Education, 963 Tiger Connector Road, Tiger, GA 30576. The telephone number for the Human Resources Department is 706-212-4350, extension 5227 or 5228.