

WATAUGA BOARD OF EDUCATION

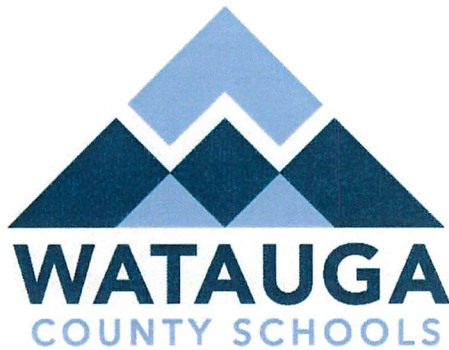
Margaret E. Gragg Educational Center
175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607
(828) 264-7190

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA July 26, 2021 5:30 P.M.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|-------------------|
| 5:30 | 1. | CALL TO ORDER | Board Chair |
| 5:32 | 2. | CLOSED SESSION | |
| | | A. Approval of Minutes | |
| | | B. Reportable Offenses – N.C.G.S.115C-288(g) | |
| | | C. Student Records - N.C.G.S.143-318.11(a)(1) | |
| | | D. Personnel – N.C.G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) | |
| | | E. Attorney-Client - N.C.G.S 143-318.11(a)(3) | |
| 6:00 | 3. | OPEN SESSION CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE | Board Chair |
| 6:05 | 4. | DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA | Board Chair |
| 6:08 | 5. | SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT | Dr. Scott Elliott |
| 6:13 | 6. | CONSENT AGENDA | |
| | | A. Approval of the Minutes for 6/28/2021 | Dr. Scott Elliott |
| | | B. Surplus Report Approval | |
| | | C. Calendar Waiver Request | |
| | | D. Proposed Title I Budget | |
| | | E. WHS Grounds Maintenance Proposal | |
| | | F. After School Fees and Budget Summary | |
| | | G. Field Trip Request | |

- H. Policies: Technical Changes
 - 6140 Student Wellness
 - 6210 Organization of School Nutrition Services
 - 6220 Operation of School Nutrition Services
 - 6230 School Meal and Competitive Food Standards
 - 6305 Safety and Student Transportation Services
 - 6315 Drivers and Vehicles
 - 6321 Bus Routes
 - 6450 Purchase of Services
 - 7100 Recruitment and Selection of Personnel
 - 7130 Licensure
 - 7430 Substitute Teachers
 - 9020 Facility Design
 - 4020/7230 Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law
 - 4040/7310 Student-Staff Relations
 - 4335 Criminal Behavior
 - 7232 Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace
- I. Personnel Report

- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|---|--------------------------|
| 6:28 | 7. | STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE | Dr. Paul Holden |
| 6:48 | 8. | UPDATE ON VALLE CRUCIS SCHOOL PLANNING | Dr. Scott Elliott |
| 7:10 | 9. | COVID UPDATE | Dr. Scott Elliott |
| ----BREAK---- | | | |
| 7:40 | 10. | POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ | Dr. Wayne Eberle |
| | | 3420 Student Promotion and Accountability | |
| 7:50 | 11. | POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND READ | Dr. Wayne Eberle |
| | | 3460 Graduation Requirements | |
| | | 6320 Use of Student Transportation Services | |
| | | 8310 Annual Independent Audit | |
| | | 8341 Limited Claim Settlement | |
| | | 7720 Employee Political Activity | |
| 8:00 | 12. | PUBLIC COMMENT | Board Chair |
| 8:05 | 13. | BOARD OPERATIONS | Board Chair |
| 8:15 | 14. | BOARD COMMENTS | Board Chair |
| 8:25 | 15. | ADJOURNMENT | Board Chair |
| | 16. | MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION | |



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Margaret E. Gragg Educational Center
175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607
(828) 264-7190

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

DATE: June 28, 2021

TIME: 5:30 PM

PLACE: Margaret E. Gragg Educational Center

PRESENT: Gary Childers, Jay Fenwick, Marshall Ashcraft, Steve Combs, Jason Cornett, Dr. Scott Elliott, Superintendent, Dr. Stephen Martin, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Chris Campbell, Board Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Gary Childers, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. He asked for a motion to go into closed session. Steve Combs moved to enter closed session and Marshall Ashcraft seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.

A motion was made at 6:13 by Steve Combs and seconded by Jason Cornett to reenter open session. The vote to enter open session was unanimous and followed by a brief break.

WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Dr. Childers welcomed those attending the meeting. He began with a request to observe a moment of silence, especially remembering those involved in the Surfside tragedy.

DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA

Dr. Elliott noted the addition of a few items to the Consent agenda: An updated Budget Amendment, a change to the resolution in support of legislative action supporting education (regarding the Leandro case), a personnel addendum, and an additional closed session towards the end of the meeting to discuss a personnel item.

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Dr. Scott Elliott greeted Board chair, Dr. Gary Childers, the board members, and administrators and guests. He stated his honor of having Mr. Chris Campbell with the law firm of Campbell Shatley attend the meeting that evening.

He noted that Miss Sibaja was attending Governor's School and would return to meetings closer to the start of the school year. The newest junior class representative, Miss Mia Shanley, would join her.

Dr. Elliott thanked the teachers and staff who had been working in Watauga County Schools' (WCS) summer learning program. Over 500 students were in the summer extension program and 140 other students were participating in additional academic support and enrichment activities. The program was

offered free of charge to families and was paid for using federal emergency relief funds. He thanked all the professionals who had worked hard to make it happen, especially Dr. Martin, Ms. Parker, and Ms. Hendrix in the Human Resources office.

He thanked Ms. Marze and the finance staff for their hard work to wrap up the fiscal year. He noted that it had been a financial year like no other with new sources of funds and ever changing state and federal restrictions and regulations.

He congratulated Dr. Blanton and the entire WHS team for an outstanding graduation ceremony on May 28. He noted his pleasure that graduation had been held in the Holmes Convocation Center with no limitations on the number of family members and guests in attendance. He congratulated the 322 students who had graduated and were on their way into a successful adulthood.

He stated that, while he normally had a COVID update for the board, this month there is nothing new to report. They were aware of and monitoring discussions and pending legislation in Raleigh regarding face mask requirements for the coming year. WCS continues to support and encourage everyone who is eligible to receive the vaccine. He also encouraged everyone to take precautions during the summer to prevent the spread of the virus in the community, which would give WCS the best chance of having a normal a school year. He noted that the health and safety protocols in schools are directed by the governor's executive orders and outlined in the state's Department of Health and Human Services Public Schools' Toolkit. He advocates to our state officials for reasonable precautions but also for as much local flexibility as possible in how to implement the safety protocols.

He invited the Board to the opening convocation for WCS staff, held Tuesday August 10th at WHS from 8:30-9:45 in the auditorium.

PUBLIC RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Scott Elliott introduced Ms. Haleigh Lawson. She had served for the last two years as a student representative on the Board. In addition to her board service, Ms. Lawson had represented Bethel Students on Student Council while attending that school. She served as a Pioneer Ambassador and leader of the Peer to Peer program, supporting WHS students. She advocated for and was the voice of Watauga students to the Board numerous times during her tenure and especially during the 20-21 school year during COVID restrictions and school re-entry. Dr. Elliott presented Ms. Lawson with the Servant's Heart award for her distinguished service to Watauga County Schools and the Board. He congratulated her on her recent high school graduation and wished her success for her future.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes for 5/10/2021
- B. Budget Amendment #5
- C. Recommendation for Banking Services
- D. Surplus Report Approval
- E. Approval of the Resolution Urging the State to fulfill its Constitutional Duty to Provide Every Child Access to a Sound Basic Education
- F. Approval of Beverage Contracts for School Nutrition
- G. Field Trip requests
- H. Approval of Student Fees

- I. Policies: Technical Changes
 - 4002 Parent Involvement
 - 3102 Online Instruction
 - 3230/7330 Copyright Compliance
 - 3470/4305 Alternative Learning Programs/Schools
 - 3640/5130 Student Voter Registration and Preregistration
 - 4050 Children of Military Families
 - 4270/6145 Concussion and Head Injury
 - 4700 Student Records
 - 5030 Community Use of facilities
 - 5070/7350 Public Records-Retention, Release and Disposition
 - 5071/7351 Electronically Stored Information Retention
 - 5210 Distribution and Display of non-School Material
- J. Personnel Report

Marshall Ashcraft moved to approve the consent agenda items A-J. Jay Fenwick seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Tierra Stark presented the “Local Application”, formerly the Local Plan, for the Boards approval which would now be due every two years for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program. She spoke about the program and the variety of career paths available plus the qualifications for being a “Concentrator.” She noted that of 230 students 98% had graduated and 97% had positive post-graduate placement in education, employment, or military service. She noted that the CTE program would include a student-created solar-powered cart, drone building and piloting, interior design, and live projects in carpentry and masonry. Programs were driven by student and local economic interest. Steve Combs moved to approve the Application, which was seconded by Jason Cornett and unanimously approved by the Board.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Dr. Alison Schleede updated the Board on the many projects and activities of the Technology Department which included: updates to school safety equipment (cameras and visitor systems) and the use of Gaggles to identify possibly dangerous student communication, moving to 1to1 student devices in all schools, enhancing cyber-security, infrastructure updates through eRate funding, replacement of educational equipment in classrooms with interactive flat panel monitors, expanding the VOIP phone system to Parkway in the coming year. She acknowledged that the past year had been challenging but learning continued due to the availability of devices for online learning, and additional access points for remote learners. She thanked the Technology team consisting of five staff members, and Instructional Technology Facilitators in each school for their support of the students and staff.

VALLE CRUCIS PROJECT UPDATE

Dr. Elliott updated the Board about the previous month's progress toward a new Valle Crucis School. The team consisting of Jeff Trexler, Dr. Bonnie Smith, Deron Geouque, and the architectural team. The architects had presented a general layout of the building on the property, not a floorplan or external view. Their focus will be to create a building where health and safety are enhanced, where traffic can be routed off the main road, and which has the look and feel of the community of Valle Crucis. The building will likely be two stories to take the best advantage of the footprint and have adequate auxiliary spaces. They hope to have easy access to the outdoors, and open airy interior spaces.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Following determination that there was no one to offer public comment that evening, the Board took a short break.

POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ

- 3460 Graduation Requirements
- 6320 Use of Student Transportation Services
- 8310 Annual Independent Audit
- 8341 Limited Claim Settlement
- 7720 Employee Political Activity

The above policies were discussed and would be presented for second read in July.

POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND READ

- 7220 Employee Grievance Procedures

The policy was briefly discussed. Marshall Ashcraft moved to approve which was seconded by Jay Fenwick. Policy 7220 was unanimously approved.

BOARD OPERATIONS

The July board meeting was moved to July 26th. The August meeting will remain as scheduled for August 9th. In September, Elevate Watauga would be discussed.

BOARD COMMENTS

Dr. Childers stated that the Summer Conference was an outstanding opportunity to learn and build the team. Mr. Combs noted that many of his questions were answered during the conference.

CLOSED SESSION

Steve Combs moved to re-enter closed session for the purposes of a personnel discussion which was seconded by Jason Cornett. The vote was unanimous.

At 9:30, Jason Cornett moved to re-enter open session, which was seconded by Jay Fenwick. The motion was unanimously approved.

OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

At 9:31 pm, a motion was made by Dr. Fenwick and seconded by Mr. Ashcraft to accept Amendment No. 5 to the Superintendent's contract, which extends his term by one year and increased the Board's retirement plan contribution for him. The Board members expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the excellent job he is doing for the Watauga County Schools. The vote was unanimous.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m. by Mr. Cornett and seconded by Mr. Combs. The motion passed 5-0.

Dr. Gary L. Childers, Board Chair

Dr. Scott Elliott, Superintendent

Declaration of Surplus Items - July 2021

Date Approved:

Bethel

Green Valley

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
Varies	3	Smartboard	3	
<hr/>			<hr/>	<hr/>
3			3	0

Hardin Park

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
29795	1	Dell Optiplex 790 Desktop		1
28076	1	Ergotron Computer Cart	1	
28072	1	Ergotron Computer Cart	1	
28071	1	Ergotron Computer Cart	1	
28073	1	Ergotron Computer Cart	1	
600952	1	Bretford Computer Cart	1	
28070	1	Ergotron Computer Cart	1	
28069	1	Ergotron Computer Cart		1
28075	1	Ergotron Computer Cart	1	
N/A	1	Belkin Secure and Charge	1	
28243	1	Access Point- HiveAP 330		1
<hr/>			<hr/>	<hr/>
11			8	3

Parkway

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
700064	1	CPU DC7900 Compaq		1
<hr/>			<hr/>	<hr/>
1			0	1

Watauga High School

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
33725	1	Lenovo 100e Chromebook		1
31013	1	Lenovo N23		1
30156	1	Lenovo N23 Chromebook		1
<hr/>			<hr/>	<hr/>
3			0	3

Central Office

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
80076	1	HP Color LaserJet Printer CP1518ni	1	
	1		1	0

Technology Department

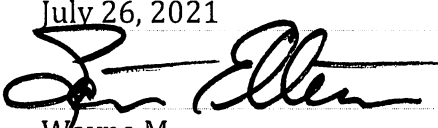
<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
500774	1	Ipevo document camera		1
25642	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
25662	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
25651	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
25641	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
25647	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
35987	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
28087	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
25659	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
25636	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
25644	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
25660	1	Cisco Catalyst 2960S switch		1
27920	1	iPad 4 16GB	1	
Varies	610	Lenovo Chromebook	610	
Varies	6	Lenovo N23 Chromebook	6	
Varies	5	Lenovo N22 Chromebook	5	
28113	1	Access Point- HiveAP 330		1
25090	1	Access Point- HiveAP 330		1
	634		622	12

LEA Based Calendar Waiver Request for Weather Related Causes

General Statute 115C-84.2 states that the opening date for students shall not be earlier than the Monday closest to August 26, and the closing date shall not be after the Friday closest to June 11. This does not apply to year-round schools or to schools designated by the LEA as having a modified calendar in 2003-04, so long as the school operates under a modified calendar.

The State Board of Education may waive this requirement for any LEA within a county that meets eligibility requirements. Waivers will be granted in accordance with 2012 SB 187 and are determined by the LEA 10-year history of closures. 2012 SB 187 changed eligibility requirements. In order to be eligible under this new provision, all schools within an LEA must be closed at least eight (8) full days per year during any four (4) of the last ten (10) years due to severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations. If approved for a weather-related waiver the opening date may be no earlier than the Monday closest to August 19.

Instructions: Complete this form to request a calendar waiver for the LEA.

School Year:	<u>SY 22-23</u>	Date of Request:	<u>26 July 2021</u>
LEA Name:	<u>Watauga County Schools</u>	LEA Number:	<u>950</u>
Requested Opening Date:	<u>August 22, 2022</u>		
Requested Closing Date:	<u>Approx. May 26, 2023</u>		
Date of Local Board Approval:	<u>July 26, 2021</u>		
Signature of Superintendent:			
LEA Contact Person:	<u>Wayne M. Eberle II</u>	Phone:	<u>828-264-7190</u>
LEA Contact Email Address:	<u>eberlew@wataugaschools.org</u>		

Questions concerning the completion of this form should be addressed to Student Accounting at studentaccounting@dpi.nc.gov.

Email completed form to: studentaccounting@dpi.nc.gov

2021-2022 School Allocations

(Paid by district plan)

School	Allotment	Parent Involvement**	Professional Development***	Subs
Bethel	\$82, 125	\$608	\$3, 611	\$2, 000
Cove Creek	\$119, 925	\$975	\$5, 512	\$2, 000
Green Valley	\$230, 625	\$1, 708	\$6, 082	\$3, 000
Hardin Park	\$158, 436	\$2, 716	\$14, 825	\$1, 500
Mabel	\$112, 500	\$833	\$3, 611	\$2, 000
Valle Crucis	\$64, 152	\$1, 100	\$6, 082	\$1, 500
Total Allotted	\$768, 157	\$7, 945	\$39, 725	\$12, 000
Unallocated	\$394	\$5	\$2	-

*Please note subs are factored in as part of the total allotment and not in addition to total.

2020-2021 School Allocations

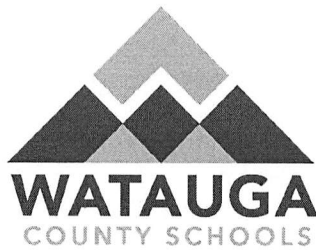
(Paid by district plan)

School	Allotment	Parent Involvement	Professional Development	Subs
Bethel	\$79, 570	\$614	\$ 3, 643	\$2, 000
Cove Creek	\$112, 905	\$984	\$5, 560	\$2, 000
Green Valley	\$223, 450	\$1, 724	\$6, 136	\$3, 000
Hardin Park	\$153, 220	\$2, 741	\$14, 956	\$1, 500
Mabel	\$109, 000	\$841	\$3, 643	\$2, 000
Valle Crucis	\$62, 040	\$1, 110	\$6, 135	\$1, 500
Total Allotted	\$740, 262	\$8, 015	\$40, 073	\$12, 000
Unallocated	\$77	\$1	\$0	-

Eligibility Report for 2021-2022

(Based on March '21 NCDPI TNN of highest yr EDS- COVID)

School	F/R %	Number of Teachers *** (SY 19-20)	Number of F/R ** (SY 19-20)
Bethel	49.7%	19	73
BR	20.2%	-	-
CC	42.2%	29	117
GV	55.1%	32	205
HP	36.4%	78	326
Mabel	59.5%	19	100
PKW	32.2%	-	-
VC	34.9%	32	132
WHS	23.6%	-	-
WIA	30.1%	-	-



July 21, 2021

To: Watauga County Board of Education

CC: Dr. Scott Elliott and Ly Marze

Re: WHS Grounds Maintenance

Dear Watauga County Board of Education,

After careful thought and consideration, it has been determined we need to outsource the Grounds Maintenance at WHS.

Over the past several weeks, I have contacted several companies who specialize in Ground Maintenance in an attempt to find the most cost effective option while providing the best solution to meet our needs at Watauga High School.

After researching our options and checking references it has been determined we move forward with Estate Maintenance Company. In this process, (3) companies expressed interest with (1) backing out due to lack of manpower.

Estate Maintenance Company is located in Blowing Rock, NC and provides Ground Maintenance throughout the High Country. Scope of work will include weekly mowing and weedeating, spraying weeds, annual trimming of trees and shrubbery, and annual application of mulch in areas where applicable.

The total annual cost for these services is \$48,000.00. Once approval has been obtained, services can begin effective August 1, 2021.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jeff Trexler
Director of Facilities
Watauga County Schools

Estate Maintenance Company

**PO BOX 1418
BLOWING ROCK, NC 28605
828-264-7441**

JUNE 10, 2021

**WATAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS
251 PIONEER TRAIL
BOONE, NC 28607
ATTN: JEFF TREXLER**

PROPOSAL

ESTATE MAINTENANCE PROPOSES TO PROVIDE LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AT THE WATAUGA HIGH SCHOOL FACILITY. THE SCOPE OF WORK OF THIS PROJECT IS AS FOLLOWS: INITIAL CLEAN UP, MOWING AND WEEDEATING ALL BANKS, CLEANING OUT LANDSCAPE BEDS, TRIMMING SHRUBBERY, SPRAYING WEEDS, DIGGING CURB LINES DOWN TO RETAIN MULCH, INSTALLING MULCH IN BEDS, AND MAINTAINING PROPERTY AFTER INITIAL CLEAN UP.

THE COST OF THIS PROJECT IS AS FOLLOWS:

INITIAL MOWING AND WEEDEATING	\$4,900.00
DIGGING CURB LINES DOWN, TRIMMING SHRUBBERY, SPRAYING WEEDS, AND INSTALLING MULCH	\$15,400.00
SWEEPING AND CLEANING PARKING LOT AND CURBS	\$600.00

THE ANNUAL COST OF LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AFTER INITIAL CLEAN UP WILL BE \$48,000.00, TO BE PAID IN TWELVE EQUAL PAYMENTS OF \$4,000.00.

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO PRICE THIS SERVICE FOR YOU.

SPECIAL NOTE: IF UNFORSEEN COMPLICATIONS SHOULD ARISE DURING SERVICE MAINTENANCE WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE PRICE CHANGE.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CALL MY CELL PHONE 828-268-1770.

**THANK YOU
DARREN WALLACE
wemcoinc@charter.net
NC Certified Landscape Contractor #1604**



Ground Effects Maintenance LLC
1230 LITTLE LAUREL RD
BOONE, NC 28607
(828)963-0244
shaebjones@gmail.com
www.boonelandscaping.com

Estimate 3368

ADDRESS

Jeff Trexler

DATE
07/20/2021

TOTAL
\$67,450.00

DATE	ACTIVITY	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
	Watauga High School Lawn and Bed Maintenance Contract			
	Services	32	1,600.00	51,200.00
	Weekly Mowing Of All Common Areas From April 1st to November 1st - Services include mowing, weed eating, blowing off the property , edging and spraying beds- a one time shrub pruning is also included			
				Subtotal: 51,200.00
	Services	250	65.00	16,250.00
	Mulching Existing Landscape Beds That Are Covered in Creek Stone - Per yard of Mulch Installed - This is for only spreading mulch			
				Subtotal: 16,250.00
	NC Licensed Landscape Contractor #1386			

TOTAL

\$67,450.00

THANK YOU.

Accepted By

Accepted Date

Watauga County Schools

2021-2022

After School Fees & Budget Summary

Budget Summary for 2020-21

At the end of the fiscal year for 2020-21, the after school program had expenses of \$373,905. and revenues of \$150,854. resulting in a net loss this year of \$223,050. as of June 30, 2021. These figures do not include payroll costs for the Summer Enrichment Camp. The shutdown of the programs in March 2020 due to Covid 19, and inability to operate programs as normal resulted in lost revenues of all parent fees until October 2020 and severely reduced revenues for the remainder of the year. We also suffered a loss in DSS subsidy as a result of program closure. This was somewhat offset by grants we were able to apply for through the Division of Child Development in November and December totalling \$30,450. Despite all the challenges, we were able to keep key staff in place through the remainder of the year because of a robust general fund balance and ESSER Funding as well as additional staff bonuses we applied for through the Division totalling \$15,207.50. During 2020-2021 Staff Day Camps provided care and tutoring for 173 staff children allowing teachers to be able to teach virtually during the height of the pandemic. During summer school, afternoon care was provided for an additional 201 students for summer enrichment camp while teachers took groups of students to provide enrichment classes. This was a benefit to many parents who struggle with affordable childcare and most likely increased our summer school attendance.

Increased expense and projections 2019-2022

- o New ELC Salary scale initiated in January 2020.
- o Additional state mandated increases in retirement and health care costs.
- o Additional technology costs for new billing software and hardware
- o Increase in supply costs for Covid 19 regulations

Proposed budget and fees for 2021-2022

The five day rate for 2020-2021 proposes a 6% increase in parent fees. We have had no increase in parent fees for the prior 4 years. To sustain the additional expenses in personnel costs alone, parent fees need to increase to \$216./month at 5 days per week (based on a 9 month billing cycle). This is only an increase of \$13. per month from the previous four years.

The WCS employee scholarship for child care was a great success and will continue for 2021-2022. Sixty-two of our WCS employees' children took advantage of WCS after school programs during the 2019-20 school year prior to Covid. Staff Day Camp was provided for 173 teachers' children during Covid allowing teachers to focus on teaching the community's children.

This year we have received a grant of \$3,000. from the Valle Country Fair to help fund ½ rate scholarships. We have lost support from various community partners during the Covid pandemic due to the inability to have fundraising events.

Looking Forward 21-22

- We are excited to be implementing a new software called "ProCare" to offer better customer service to parents. This new program offers parent options for online payments, access to swipe cards at each center as well as here at the Central Office, access to tax and payment history, online registration, touchless electronic sign out as well as improved parent communication features. The software that we initiated for 20-21 failed to deliver services they claimed they could provide. The new ProCare software was vetted during the summer to be sure features work as promised.
- We have new DCDEE regulations, costs and challenges in reopening and sustaining our child care programs at a five star level .
- As you know, one of our perpetual challenges is to be able to recruit highly qualified personnel according to DCDEE guidelines to maintain our five star status. Our programs had waiting lists at almost every center for the first time in 2019-2020. Our new salary scale will hopefully help us maintain enough personnel to provide child care to everyone who needs it.
- We continue to sustain five star programs at every Extended Learning Center in Watauga County. This is the highest rating available. We are independently evaluated by the North Carolina Division of Early Education and Child Development to receive these rated licenses.

The complete after school fee schedule for 2021-22 is shown on the reverse side of this page.

Pam Shirley
After School Director

**Watauga County Schools
2021 – 2022
Proposed
After School Rates and Fees**

AFTER SCHOOL - MONTHLY FEES PER CHILD

<u># days per week</u>	<u>REGULAR RATE</u>	<u>**Reduced Rate Scholarship</u>	<u>WCS Employee Scholarship</u>
*3 days or less, OR Limited Use	\$158.00	N/A	\$25.00
4	\$208.00	\$98.00	\$30.00
5	\$216.00	\$108.00	\$38.00

HOLIDAY/SNOW DAY PROGRAM FEES- PER DAY, PER CHILD

1	\$24.50	\$12.25	\$5.50
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After School rates are prorated over a 9 month period instead of 10. The first payment covers both August and September. Since we begin so late in August this saves parents multiple payments within a short time span, particularly for those with multiple children. The second payment occurs October 1 permitting more time to set parents up in the billing system to receive their invoices. At the five day rate, this effectively delivers high quality child care at \$3.43 per hour.

* Limited use is 1 hour or less daily for up to 5 days/week.

**The reduced rate is available only to low income parents who do not qualify for child care subsidies from the Department of Social Services and meet specific criteria.

Other fees and charges:

“Call Ahead” Rate (for unscheduled use) Afterschool: \$25.00/day

“Call Ahead” Rate (for unscheduled use) Holiday/Snow Day: \$36.00/day

Late payment fee: \$10.00 first 2 times, \$15.00 thereafter

Late pickup charge: \$1.00 per minute after 6:00 (after 3:30 for limited use)

Returned check fee: Determined and collected by a private contractor – not a revenue to the after school program.

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

This request is for a: ___ day trip ___ out of state day trip ☒ overnight trip ___ overnight & out of state trip

Day trips must be submitted to the principal 15 days before the trip. Overnight trip requests must be submitted to the superintendent by the first day of each month. Overnight field trips require the prior approval of the principal, transportation director, superintendent, and Board of Education. All trips utilizing rental or charter vehicles require the prior approval of the transportation director. No employee will transport students in a personal vehicle and no employee or volunteer driver will transport students in a 12-15 passenger van. No more than five students will be transported by a school system employee or volunteer in any one vehicle other than a school bus or activity bus.

Sponsoring teacher: (Print) Kelly Pettit School: Parkway
Cell phone number: 334-332-5576 Grade(s): 5th Number of students: 63
Departure time/date: April 13th at 6 am Return time/date: April 15th at 6pm

Educational purpose:

Trip destination including city, state, and all places to be visited: (attach detailed itinerary as needed)

Salter Path, NC

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: hands-on learning experiences
that closely align with Science and Social Studies curriculum

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: Kelly Pettit, Annie Carter, Krista Dancy

Names of all non-school chaperones: parent chaperones - (to be determined)

All chaperones have a background check completed: Sponsoring teacher initials: ZMP

Are all site(s) accessible to students with disabilities? ☒ yes ☐ no How will students with disabilities be accommodated for site access and transportation? Currently, there are no students with disabilities

Sponsoring Teacher Initials ZMP (If applicable) A safety/supervision plan for high risk and/or water activities has been shared with the parents. Please attach a copy of the plan to this form if applicable.

Transportation plan:

Mode of transportation: ☐ Yellow bus with wheelchair lift ☐ Yellow bus without wheelchair lift
☐ Activity bus with wheelchair lift ☐ Activity bus without wheelchair lift Rental car/mini-van
☒ Charter bus Other (Please explain) Sunway 56 passenger bus

Name of charter bus company (if checked above) Sunway

(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

Driver/s: Sunway Driver Round trip mileage: 690 # of buses needed: 1

Total cost per student \$ 325 - 350 Source of funds: each student will pay their amount, PTO will assist w/ scholarships, local churches will assist w/ ~~fundraising~~ fundraising will be conducted all year.

The sponsoring teacher has reviewed Board policies 3320, 3320-R, and 6315: Teacher initials: ZMP

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: Kelly Pettit Date: 7 / 15 / 21

Principal approval: [Signature] Date: 7 / 15 / 21

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: 7 / 22 / 21

Superintendent approval: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Board of Education approval: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Revised: November 13, 2017

Directions to Salter Path, NC

Parkway School - 5th Grade

Wednesday, April 17th

******We will load the bus in the upper parking lot, off Parkway School Drive.
Please DO NOT park in front of the school entrance.******

Student Arrival Time: 5:30 a.m.

Departure Time: approx. 6:00 a.m.

Wednesday's Route:

1. Travel along Highway 421 to I-40 East.
2. Stop for snack at Alamance County Rest Area (exit 139).
3. Travel along I-40 East to US 70 (exit 309).
4. Stop for lunch at Craven County Rest Area (State Road 1225 exit, Clarks Road)
5. Travel along US 70 to US-17 (exit 411)
6. Turn left onto NC Highway 58 (travel approx. 32 miles)
7. Trinity Education Center is on the left between mile markers 10 and 9 (just past the blue water tower).
8. ETA: 1:00 pm

Friday's Route: (same as Wednesday's route)

1. Stop for lunch at Craven County Rest Area (State Road 1225 exit, Clarks Road)
2. Travel along US 70W to I-40 West.
3. Stop for snack at Alamance County Rest Area (exit 139).
4. Travel to Boone I-40 to Highway 421.
5. ETA: 5:30 p.m.

Parent/Guardian Field Trip Information and Consent

I. Description of Trip (an itinerary that provides the same information may be attached instead of filling out items A-E below) See section V if this is a multiple trip permission form.

A. Date/Purpose of trip 4/13-15/22 Sound to Sea

B. Trip destination and activities planned, including an itinerary and description of potentially hazardous activities, including but not limited to swimming/wading/boating.

Sound to Sea - Trinity Center
All activities are planned and facilitated
by to Sound to Sea staff

C. Means of transportation Charter bus - Cost \$4,730
Stanway

D. Arrangements for student supervision (include specific details if this trip includes activities without direct supervision such as at theme parks, museums or malls; or high risk/water activities.):

We will have 15 parent chaperones who will
be assigned small groups of students to
supervise. Chaperones will attend a Chaperone
meeting prior to the trip.

E. Arrangements for meals during trip: We will eat meals at the
Trinity Center. Lunch on 4/13/22 will be sack
lunches from home.

II. Conditions for participation

A. All school rules and policies apply for this trip. The principal and/or trip sponsor may establish additional rules as deemed necessary to protect student safety and preserve the educational value of the trip for all participants.

B. If the student violates school rules or policies or the instructions of teachers or other chaperones in a way that warrants his/her removal from the trip, the student's parent/guardian will immediately come take the student home at their expense upon the request of the trip sponsor.

C. In the event the trip is postponed or cancelled, a refund of fees and deposits paid in advance is not guaranteed. However, the school will refund costs for which it is reimbursed by other parties or which are not paid by the school.

D. By signing this form, the parent/guardian consents to the trip sponsor taking or arranging any emergency medical procedures or treatment that may be required during the trip, and accepts responsibility for the costs of any such treatment.

Mrs Pettit
Parkway School
160 Parkway School Dr.
Boone, NC

Thank you for considering Sunway Charters for your travel needs. Please review the below listed information and quote.

Quotation ID	74225/84480	Client Ref 1	
Date	7/14/2021	Client Ref 2	Kelly Pettit
First Pick-up	Boone, NC	Destination	Pine Knoll Shores, NC
Pick-up Date	Wed 4/13/2022 Time 05:57	Arrival Date	Wed 4/13/2022 Time 11:57
Single Journey	No	Leave Date	Fri 4/15/2022 Time 10:27
Vehicle To Stay	Yes	Back Date	Fri 4/15/2022 Time 17:27
Passengers			

First Pick-up Instructions

Parkway School
160 Parkway School Drive,
Boone, NC 28607

Destination Instructions

Trinity Environmental Education Center -Sound to Sea
618 Salter Path Road,
Pine Knoll Shores, NC 28512

Once the driver drops us off at the Trinity Center on Wednesday he/she will not be needed again until Friday for pickup at the Trinity Center on Friday morning.

Quantity Seats Vehicle Description

1 55 Coach

Movement Totals

\$4,730.00

Route

Further Requirements

Driver Hotel:

Hampton Inn & Suites Atlantic Beach
118 Salter Path Road
Pine Knoll Shores NC 28512, US
T: +1 2522475118

Driver lodging is included in price at the request of the group. -AC

Acceptance

Sunway Charters

Quotation ID 74225/84480
Date 7/14/2021

Client Ref 1
Client Ref 2 Kelly Pettit

Included Items	Included	Included Items	Included
Driver Lodging	Yes		

This quotation was generated based on the information you provided at the time the quote was requested. Should you wish to change any of the details, the price may alter accordingly. This quotation is valid for 14 days, but vehicle availability remains subject to change until they are formally confirmed.

I have reviewed the details above and agree they are correct based on the information I provided. Additionally, I have received the General Terms & Conditions document and the informational document on DOT Hours of Service Regulations.

I accept the quoted price and I understand a deposit of \$250.00 per vehicle is due at the time of confirmation. Please confirm this reservation.

Signature

Print Name

Date

General Terms & Conditions

1. **GENERAL.** This document contains all the terms & conditions under which Sunway Charters (the Company", "Us", "We") agrees to furnish service to you ("Customer" or "You"). When you sign this document, it is a legally binding contract, & it can only be changed by a later written agreement between us. Carefully read this entire document before signing.
2. **ITINERARY.** A written itinerary with times & locations, including addresses, MUST be received no later than fourteen (14) days before departure. Our driver will be given a copy of your entire itinerary, & will be instructed to follow it strictly. Drivers may not consent to make any changes in the trip schedule without the prior approval of an authorized Company supervisor. Therefore, if, after your trip begins, you want to make any change in the agreed itinerary, you must notify your driver at once & he will contact the Company. If we agree to the requested changes, you must then pay the full amount of any increase in the contract price immediately upon completion of the trip. Regular rest stops will be taken for the safety and comfort of both passengers & driver.
3. **COMPLIANCE WITH HOURS OF SERVICE REGULATIONS.** All itineraries must allow the driver & the Company to comply with all Federal, State & local regulations or ordinances. Drivers are limited to: a) 15 hours on duty (including ½ hour driver preparation & post trip inspection); b) of the 15 hours; a maximum of 10 hours may be actual driving hours, & c) the driver is required 8 consecutive hours off before returning to duty. If your itinerary requires the use of more than one driver, either the price of the charter will be adjusted or the itinerary must be changed to allow for only one.
4. **STANDING WHILE VEHICLE IN MOTION.** Passenger capacity cannot exceed the seating capacity of one person per seat with no standees on motor coaches. Trolleys may have, at most, 16 standees. Vehicles may start or stop suddenly. Passengers are requested not to change seats or utilize the restroom when the bus is in motion unless exercising extreme caution. The Company will not be responsible for injuries to passengers who stand or walk while the bus is in motion. Charter groups must provide adequate supervision & discipline.
5. **RIGHT TO SUBSTITUTE EQUIPMENT.** The Company has the right, at its sole discretion, to substitute equipment from our fleet or equipment & drivers from other companies in order to fulfill this charter agreement.
6. **DEPOSIT, PAYMENTS, & ADDITIONAL CHARGES.** A \$250.00 deposit per vehicle is due within seven (7) days after the Company receives your signed confirmation. If the deposit is not received when it is due, your reservation will not be guaranteed. Full charter payment is due twenty-one (21) days before departure unless satisfactory credit arrangements have been made & approved. If you have made credit arrangements with us to pay after departure & you fail to pay on time, we will impose a finance charge on all past-due amounts at 1.5% per month of the unpaid balance or the maximum permitted by law, whichever is less. Any and all amounts not paid as set forth herein shall bear interest at a rate of Fifteen Percent (15%) per annum after default until paid. Acceptable forms of payment include cash, money order, check (payable to Sunway Charters), & credit card. We accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express & Discover Card. The "TOTAL CHARTER PRICE" shown is the Company's estimate based upon our current rates & our best estimate of the specific services you have requested. Charters exceeding the miles or hours booked will be billed for additional charges. Additional hours are billed at a minimum of \$100 per vehicle, per hour. Driver gratuity of 10%-20% of Charter price will be included in your price. Driver lodging, parking, tolls, airport fees & entry fees for parks &/or attractions are the responsibility of the Customer. Driver lodging arrangements are strictly limited to single occupancy.
7. **PERSONAL PROPERTY/LOST & FOUND.** Neither the Company, its agents or employees shall be liable for any personal property of the Chartering Party or the Chartering Party's guests, which are misplaced, damaged or left in a vehicle.
8. **CLEANING & REPAIRS.** The Customer is liable for extraordinary cleaning & for all repairs to our vehicle (beyond normal wear) caused by members of your party. You agree to pay a \$250 cleaning fee per vehicle for any returned in less-than-satisfactory condition. Damage or abuse will be assessed at the cost of the repair. The Company is not responsible for items left on our vehicles.
9. **TIME OF ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE.** The Company does not guarantee to arrive at or depart from any point at a specific time, but will endeavor to meet the schedule submitted by its agent or employee as conditions permit.

10. **CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS.** Charters booked, but not prepaid or confirmed by either party, may be cancelled by either You or the Company without notice. To avoid miscommunication regarding cancellations & any associated fees, we request cancellations be completed in writing via e-mail in addition to verbal cancellation with the sales person. See below a chart defining the Company's refund structure for charter bus rentals. Any amounts not paid within 10 days of the date due shall constitute a default of this Agreement and Company may terminate this Agreement without further notice.

No refunds on Trolley rentals.

>	<	=
0 hrs.	48 hrs.	No Refund
48 hrs.	7 days	70%
7 days	21 days	85%
21 days	-	100%

3% of monies paid by credit card will be withheld from all refunds

11. **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.** The Company adheres to all state & federal regulations regarding alcohol possession &/or consumption on motor coaches, and the Company reserves the right to refuse or terminate transportation to any person that displays aggressive behavior or appears to be under the influence of alcohol, or other intoxicating substances. Glass containers are not allowed on our vehicles.
12. **NO SMOKING ON THE BUS.** Smoking, including vaping, is not permitted on our vehicles.
13. **FORCE MAJEURE.** The Company is not responsible for any delays, changes of schedule or cancellations resulting, directly or indirectly, from any act of God, public enemies, authority of law, quarantine, any pandemic, virus or other illness, perils of navigations, riots, strikes, the hazard or dangers incident to a state of war, accidents, breakdowns, road conditions, weather conditions, & other conditions beyond the Company's control.
14. **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE DISABLED.** Any group which requires an ADA accessible bus is requested to inform us at the time of the reservation, & must notify us in writing no later than 48 hours prior to the charter's departure. Groups with members using personal oxygen canisters must give the Company 48-hours' notice. Each group member requiring the use of personal oxygen may have two (2) canisters inside the bus & two (2) additional canisters may be transported under the bus & properly secured in the forward baggage compartment. Canisters stored under the bus must be properly packaged by the group member in protective cases with safety caps on the valves. Canisters may not exceed 4.5 inches in diameter & 26 inches in length.
15. **TROLLEYS, INC, dba SUNWAY CHARTERS SHALL NOT BE LIABLE FOR INDIRECT OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES OR SPECIAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO: LOST PROFITS, SAVINGS OR REVENUES OF ANY KIND, TROLLEYS, INC, dba SUNWAY CHARTERS SHALL NOT BE LIABLE FOR THE TYPES OF DAMAGES ENUMERATED ABOVE WHETHER OR NOT TROLLEYS, INC, dba SUNWAY CHARTERS HAS BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES. THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL SURVIVE THE FAILURE OF ANY EXCLUSIVE REMEDY. IN THE EVENT TROLLEYS, INC, dba SUNWAY CHARTERS SHALL ENGAGE AN ATTORNEY TO ENFORCE THIS AGREEMENT AND ANY DISPUTES ARISING HEREUNDER OR CONTROVERSIES RELATED HERETO, THEN CUSTOMER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAYMENT OF ALL COSTS ASSOCIATED THEREWITH, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES.**
16. This Agreement, and any disputes arising hereunder, or controversies related hereto, shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the internal laws, and not the laws of conflicts, of the State of North Carolina, without regard to the choice of law principles thereof. Any Action with respect to this Agreement, any matter arising out of or in connection with this Agreement or otherwise, and any action for enforcement of any judgment in respect of any of the foregoing shall be brought exclusively in the state courts sitting in Mecklenburg County in the State of North Carolina or federal courts sitting in the State of North Carolina. By execution and delivery of this Agreement, each party hereto hereby accepts for itself and in respect of such party's property, generally and unconditionally, the sole and exclusive jurisdiction of the aforesaid court and appellate courts thereof. Customer waives a jury trial.

Part 395 - Hours of Service for Motor Carriers of Passengers

General – Part 395

The hours-of-service rules for drivers of passenger-carrying commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) are different from the rules for property-carrying CMVs. Note that Non-business Private Motor Carriers of Passengers are not subject to the record keeping requirements of this part, such as maintaining a logbook or record of duty status.

Maximum Driving Time for Passenger – Carrying Vehicles – § 395.5

No motor carrier of passengers shall permit or require any passenger-carrying CMV driver to drive:

- More than 10 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty, or
- For any period after having been on duty 15 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty.

No motor carrier of passengers shall permit or require any passenger-carrying CMV driver to drive, regardless of number of motor carriers using the driver's services, for any period after the driver has been on duty:

- 60 hours in any 7 consecutive days if the carrier does not operate CMVs every day of the week; or
- 70 hours in any 8 consecutive days if the carrier operates CMVs every day of the week.

Off-Duty Time

"Off-duty time" is not specifically defined in the regulations. In effect, it is any time that is not "driving time," "on-duty time," or "sleeper berth" as defined in § 395.2.

The following guidelines must be met before a driver is considered off duty:

1. During a trip, the driver must be relieved of all duty and responsibility for the care and custody of the bus or passenger-carrying CMV, its accessories, and any passengers, baggage, and freight that it may be transporting.

2. During a trip, the driver must be at liberty to pursue activities of his/her own choosing and to leave the premises where the bus or passenger-carrying CMV is parked.
3. The driver must not be performing any work in the capacity, employ, or service of a bus company or motor carrier.
4. The driver must not be performing any compensated work for a person or company that is not a motor carrier.

On-Duty Time – § 395.2

On-duty time means all time from the time a driver begins work or is required to be in readiness for work until the time the driver is relieved from work and all responsibilities for performing work. Performing other compensated work for a person who is not a motor carrier is also on-duty time. The complete definition of on-duty time can be found in § 395.2.

Travel Time – § 395.1(j)

When a driver at the direction of a motor carrier is traveling, but not driving any vehicle or assuming any other responsibility to the carrier ("cushioning"), such time shall be counted as on-duty time unless the driver is afforded at least 8 consecutive hours off duty when arriving at destination, in which case he/she shall be considered off duty for the entire period.

Relief Drivers

On long-distance trips requiring straight-through driving, motorcoach companies may send a relief driver ahead.

1. In cases when the driver is driven or uses public transportation to get to a layover location, and the driver has 8 consecutive hours off duty after arriving, travel time may be recorded as off duty.
2. If the CMV driver drives him/herself in a non-CMV, time spent driving the non-CMV to a layover location must be recorded as on duty, not driving.

Exception – § 395.1(e)

A driver is exempt from the logbook or record of duty status requirements if he/she operates within a 100 air-mile radius of the normal work reporting location and is released from duty within 12 consecutive hours or less.

Sleeper Berth – § 395.1(g)(3)

A driver who is driving a passenger-carrying CMV that is equipped with a sleeper berth, as defined in § 393.76, may accumulate the equivalent of 8 consecutive hours off-duty time by taking two periods of rest in the sleeper berth, provided that the four requirements of § 395.1(g)(3)(i) - (iv) are met.

Multiple Employer Driver – § 395.8(j)

Some passenger carriers make frequent use of part-time and multiple-employer drivers. When using a driver intermittently, obtain a signed statement from the driver that indicates the total time on duty during the preceding 7 days and the time at which the driver was last relieved from duty prior to using such driver. All compensated work for a motor carrier or a non-motor carrier is on-duty time.



The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes that it is important for students to maintain their physical health and receive proper nutrition in order to take advantage of educational opportunities. The board further recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to a student’s physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. As part of that commitment, the board directs the superintendent to oversee the development, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of this policy and other school system efforts to encourage students to be healthy and active, including compliance with the State Board of Education’s Healthy Active Children Policy, SHLT-000, as further described in Section F, below. The superintendent may designate a school system official to carry out this responsibility (“lead wellness official”).

The superintendent or designee shall make the most current version of this policy available to members of the school community and the public by posting it on the school system website and/or by distributing it annually through other means reasonably intended to reach the school community and public. In addition, the superintendent or designee shall provide a copy of this policy to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) when requested to do so.

A. SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The board will maintain a school health advisory council to help plan, update, implement, promote, and monitor this policy as well as to address other health and nutrition issues within the school system. The council serves as an advisory committee regarding student health issues and works in conjunction with the lead wellness official charged with oversight of this policy and the school system’s efforts to promote student and employee health and wellness in compliance with state and federal requirements. The council is authorized to examine related research and laws, assess student needs and the current school environment, review existing board policies and administrative regulations, collaborate with appropriate community agencies and organizations, and help raise awareness about student health issues. The council also may make policy recommendations to the board related to this policy and other policies concerning student wellness and in conjunction with the lead wellness official, shall periodically review and suggest revisions to this policy. In addition, the council may assist in the development of a plan for measuring and assessing implementation of this policy and in developing methods to inform and update the public about the content and implementation of this policy as described in Sections F and G, below.

The council will be composed of representatives from the school system, the local health department, and the community. The council must include members of each of the following groups: the school board, school system administrators, school system food service representatives, physical education teachers, school health professionals, students, parents or guardians, and the public. The council will provide information to the board about the following areas or concerns: (1) physical activity, (2) health education, (3)

employee wellness, (4) health services, (5) social and emotional climate, (6) nutrition environment and services, (7) counseling, psychological, and social services, (8) physical environment, (9) family engagement, and (10) community involvement.

The council shall provide periodic reports to the board and public regarding the status of its work. In addition, the council shall assist the lead wellness official in creating an annual report that includes the minutes of physical activity and the minutes of physical education and/or healthful living education received by students in the system each school year, as well as any other information required by the State Board of Education or NCDPI.

B. NUTRITION PROMOTION AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

The board believes that promoting student health and nutrition enhances readiness for learning and increases student achievement. The general goals of nutrition promotion and nutrition education are (1) to provide appropriate instruction for the acquisition of behaviors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle for students and (2) to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students.

The board will provide nutrition education within the Healthful Living Standard Course of Study and the grade level expectations outlined in the Healthful Living Essential Standards adopted by the State Board of Education. Nutrition education should be designed to provide all students with the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lives. Students should learn to address nutrition-related health concerns through age-appropriate nutrition education lessons and activities.

Nutrition education and promotion should extend beyond the school environment by engaging and involving families and communities. School system personnel may coordinate with agencies and community organizations to provide opportunities for appropriate student projects related to nutrition. School system personnel are to work to disseminate and promote consistent nutrition messages throughout the school system, schools, classrooms, school dining areas, homes, community, and media.

In conjunction with the school health advisory council, the board establishes the following additional specific evidence-based goals and strategies for nutrition promotion and education. The board will periodically measure and report progress toward meeting these goals.

- Teachers will integrate nutrition education into the curriculum as appropriate.
- Nutrition education will promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and appropriate portion sizes.
- Nutrition and health posters, signage, and/or displays will be exhibited in the cafeteria food service and dining areas and will be rotated, updated, or changed as new or additional information is available.

- Students will have opportunities to taste foods that are low in saturated and trans fats, sodium, and added sugar.
- School personnel will strive to provide a pleasant eating experience for students and adults by adopting the following practices:
 - Student input is solicited for meal choices.
 - Nutrient analysis is available to teachers, parents, students, and health professionals when possible.
 - Adequate time to eat is provided. The recommended eating time for each child after being served is 15 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch. School personnel will schedule enough time, lunch periods, and serving lines so students do not have to spend excessive time waiting in line.
 - Adult supervision and role modeling is available during the meal service times to encourage students to eat meals.
 - Drinking fountains will be available for students to get water at meals and throughout the day.

C. NUTRITION STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOOD AND BEVERAGES AVAILABLE AT SCHOOL

Consistent with policy 6200, Goals of School Nutrition Services, all foods available in the system's schools during the school day that are offered to students should help promote student health, reduce childhood obesity, provide a variety of nutritional meals, and promote lifelong healthy eating habits. All foods and beverages sold at school must meet the nutrition standards established in policy 6230, School Meal and Competitive Foods Standards, including the following:

1. School Lunch, Breakfast and Snack Programs

Foods provided through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast, or After School Snack Programs must comply with federal and state nutrition standards. The director of child nutrition shall ensure that school system guidelines for reimbursable meals are not less restrictive than regulations and guidelines issued for schools in accordance with federal law.

2. Competitive Foods

All foods sold on school campuses in areas that are accessible to students during the school day (defined as the period from midnight through 30 minutes after the dismissal bell rings) in competition with the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs ("competitive foods") must comply with the federal Smart

Snacks in Schools standards. Competitive foods include food, snacks and beverages from a la carte menus, vending machines, and outside suppliers, as well as foods or beverages sold in school stores and at fund-raisers. Vending machine sales also must comply with the requirements of G.S. 115C-264.2 and *Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for All Foods Available in Schools*.

3. Other Foods Available on the School Campus During the School Day and After the School Day

School principals shall establish rules for foods and beverages brought from home for classroom events or parties during the school day or for extracurricular activities after the school day. The board encourages principals to establish rules that are consistent with the Smart Snacks in Schools standards.

Fundraising activities that involve the sale of foods and/or beverages to students during the school day (from midnight until 30 minutes after the dismissal bell rings) must comply with the Smart Snack Rules and may not be conducted until after the end of the last lunch period. See policy 6230, School Meal and Competitive Foods Standards.

School principals may establish standards for fund-raising activities conducted after the school day (beginning 31 minutes after the dismissal bell rings) that involve the sale of food and/or beverages. The board encourages alternative fundraising activities such as non-food items or physical activity.

4. Food and Beverage Marketing

Food and beverage marketing on school campuses during the school day must meet federal and state standards. In accordance with these standards, only foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snack standards (as described in subsection C.2, above) may be marketed or advertised on school campuses during the school day. To comply with this requirement, existing supplies, materials, or equipment that depict noncompliant products or logos will be replaced or removed in accordance with normal lifecycles or as otherwise would occur in the normal course of business.

D. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

1. Goals of the Physical Education Program

The goal of the physical education program is to promote lifelong physical activity and provide instruction in the skills and knowledge necessary for lifelong participation in physical activity. To address issues such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, and Type II diabetes, students enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade must have the opportunity to participate in physical activity as part of the

system's physical education curriculum. The goal for elementary schools is to provide 150 minutes weekly of quality physical education with a certified physical education teacher. The goal for middle schools is to provide 225 minutes weekly of Healthful Living Education, divided equally between health and physical education with certified health and physical education teachers.

2. The Physical Education Course

The physical education course should be designed to foster support and guidance for being physically active, help students know and understand the value of being physically fit, and teach students the types of activities that contribute to total fitness. The course is to be taught in an environment where students can learn, practice, and receive assessment on developmentally appropriate skills and knowledge as defined in the North Carolina Healthful Living Standard Course of Study. Students should be engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity for fifty percent or more of class time. Class for physical education should be equivalent in size to those of other academic classes.

3. Physical Activity Requirements and Goals

School personnel should strive to provide opportunities for age- and developmentally-appropriate physical activity during the day for all students so that students can learn how to maintain a physically active lifestyle. Schools must provide a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily for kindergarten through eighth-grade students. Such activity may be achieved through a regular daily physical education class as described in Sections D.1 and D.2 above, or through recess, dance, classroom energizers and/or other curriculum-based physical activity programs of at least 10 minutes duration, that, when combined, total 30 minutes of daily physical activity. Principals shall work with teachers to ensure that students meet the minimum physical activity requirement. The board will periodically measure and report progress toward meeting these goals.

To ensure that students have ongoing opportunities for physical activity and maintain a positive attitude towards physical activity, structured/unstructured recess and other physical activity may not be taken away from students as a form of punishment. In addition, severe and inappropriate exercise may not be used as a form of punishment for students.

In conjunction with the school health advisory council, the board establishes the following additional specific evidence-based goals and strategies for physical activity:

- K-8 schools and the high school will provide extra-curricular activities that enable students to select from a variety of sports and other active endeavors.

- Teachers will incorporate opportunities for physical activity in the classroom when possible.
- The K-8 schools will provide annual fitness testing for students in grades 3 through 8.

E. OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE WELLNESS

In addition to the standards discussed above, the board adopts the following goals for school-based activities designed to promote wellness:

1. Schools will provide a clean and safe meal environment.
2. Students will be provided adequate time to eat meals.
3. Drinking water will be available at all meal periods and throughout the school day.
4. Professional development will be provided for school system nutrition staff.
5. To the extent possible, the school system will utilize available funding and outside programs to enhance student wellness.
6. Food will not be used in the schools as a reward or punishment.
7. As appropriate, the goals of this wellness policy will be considered in planning all school-based activities.
8. Administrators, teachers, school nutrition personnel, students, parents or guardians, and community members will be encouraged to serve as positive role models to promote student wellness.
9. Teachers are encouraged to serve as role models by being physically active alongside their students during physical classroom activities.
10. Each school will annually hold a health fair to provide information supporting healthy lifestyle choices and practices.

F. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF POLICY

1. Oversight and Monitoring of Implementation and Progress

The lead wellness official, in conjunction with the school health advisory council, shall oversee the implementation of this policy and monitor system schools,

programs, and curricula to ensure compliance with and to assess progress under this policy, related policies, and established guidelines or administrative regulations. Each principal shall be responsible for and shall report to the lead wellness official regarding compliance and measurements of progress in his or her school. Staff members responsible for programs related to student wellness also shall report to the lead wellness official regarding the status of such programs.

2. Review of Policy

The lead wellness official shall work with members of the school health advisory council to periodically review and update this policy based on the triennial assessment of the school system's compliance with the policy (see subsection F.4. below), progress toward meeting the policy goals, and other relevant factors. The lead wellness official shall document the review process and participants, and the method used to notify the school health advisory council and/or other stakeholders of their ability to participate.

3. Annual Reporting

The lead wellness official shall prepare annual written reports to the superintendent and NCDPI/State Board of Education that provide all information required by the superintendent and/or the state pertaining to the school system's efforts to comply with this policy and SBE Policy SHLT-000.

4. Triennial Assessment

Beginning with school year 2017-18, and at least once every three years thereafter, the superintendent or designee shall report to the board and public on the system's compliance with laws and policies related to student wellness, the implementation of this policy, and progress toward meeting the goals of the policy. At a minimum, the superintendent or designee shall measure and report the following:

- 1) the extent to which the individual schools are in compliance with this policy;
- 2) the extent to which the board's wellness policy compares to model local school wellness policies and meets state and federal requirements; and
- 3) a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of this policy.

The report may also include the following items:

- 4) a summary of each school's activities undertaken in support of the policy goals;
- 5) an assessment of the school environment regarding student wellness issues;
- 6) an evaluation of the school nutrition services program;
- 7) a review of all foods and beverages sold in schools for compliance with established nutrition guidelines;
- 8) a review of guidelines for foods and beverages available, but not sold, during the school day, as described in subsection c.3, above;
- 9) information provided in the report from the school health advisory council, as described in Section A, above; and
- 10) suggestions for improvement to this policy or other policies or programs.

G. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

1. The school system will publish contact information for the lead wellness official on the school system website.
2. The lead wellness official shall assist the school health advisory council with annually informing and updating the public about this policy and its implementation and State Board Policy SHLT-000.
3. The superintendent or designee shall make public the results of the triennial assessment described in subsection F.4. of this policy.
4. -All information required to be reported under this section and any additional information required by the state to be reported publicly shall be widely disseminated to students, parents, and the community in an accessible and easily understood manner, which may include by posting on the school system website.

H. RECORDKEEPING

The superintendent shall maintain records to document compliance with this policy and all federal and state requirements. These records, at a minimum, must include:

1. a written copy of this policy and any updates;
2. the most recent triennial assessment for each school;

3. documentation demonstrating:
 - a. the efforts to review and update this policy, as described in subsection F.2 of this policy;
 - b. how this policy and information about the most recent triennial assessments have been made available to the public, as described in Section G;
 - c. compliance with the annual reporting requirements of subsection F.3; and
 - d. other efforts to involve the school health advisory council and/or other community members in the implementation of or assessment of compliance with this policy.

Legal References: Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, 42 U.S.C. 1751; Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, P.L. 111-296; National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751 *et seq.*; 7 C.F.R. 210.11, 210.12, and 210.31; G.S. 115C-264.2, -264.3; 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0104; State Board of Education Policies SHLT-000, CHNU-002, ~~NCAC-016~~; *Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for All Foods Available in Schools*, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, N.C. Division of Public Health (2004)

Cross References: Goals of Student Health Services (policy 6100), Goals of School Nutrition Services (policy 6200), School Meal and Competitive Foods Standards (policy 6230)

Adopted: June 8, 2015

Replaces: Board Policy 4.01.80, Wellness Policy

Revised: January 15, 2018; November 13, 2018; January 13, 2020 (Legal references only);

ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL NUTRITION SERVICES

Policy Code:

6210

The superintendent shall establish school nutrition services consistent with Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) goals as provided in policy 6200, Goals of School Nutrition Services, and state and federal laws and regulations. Duties related to the nutrition services should be included in appropriate job descriptions. Each principal and cafeteria manager is responsible for the school nutrition services program in his or her school, under the supervision of the director of child nutrition.

The superintendent shall verify that all school nutrition services personnel are certified and trained in accordance with the law.

Legal References: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, P.L. 111-2960; G.S. 115C-36, -263

Cross References: Goals of School Nutrition Services (policy 6200)

Adopted: March 9, 2015

All schools will participate in federal National Child Nutrition Programs and will receive commodities donated by the United States Department of Agriculture. All federal and state revenues will be accepted and applied to maximize the use of such funds for the purposes of providing nutritional meals to students at the lowest possible price. The superintendent or designee shall develop procedures as necessary to implement the operational standards established in this policy.

A. OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

The school nutrition services program will be operated in a manner consistent with Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) goals and board policy. The program also will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal law, including requirements of the National School Lunch Program and all federal guidelines established by the Child Nutrition Division of the United States Department of Agriculture. Specific legal requirements that must be met include, but are not limited to, the following.

1. School officials may not discriminate based on race, sex, color, national origin, disability, age, or eligibility status for free and reduced price meals. School officials are also prohibited from retaliating against an individual for prior civil rights activity.
2. The school nutrition services program will meet safety and sanitation requirements established in local, state, and federal rules and guidelines for school nutrition services programs.
3. The school nutrition services program will have a written food safety program that includes a hazard analysis critical control point plan for each school.
4. Menu preparation, purchasing, and related record keeping will be consistent with applicable state and federal rules and guidelines.
5. Banking, financial record keeping, budgeting, and accounting will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted practices and procedures, as dictated by the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act and in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
6. Commodity foods donated by the United States Department of Agriculture will be used and accounted for in accordance with federal regulations.
7. Preference will be given in purchasing contracts to high-calcium foods and beverages, as defined in G.S. 115C-264.1 and to foods grown or raised within North Carolina.

8. School Nutrition Program (SNP) funds will be used only for the purposes authorized by law. Indirect costs, as defined by law, will not be assessed to the SNP unless the program has a minimum of one month's operating balance.
9. The price for meals will be determined in accordance with federal law.
10. Non-program foods will be priced to generate sufficient revenues to cover the cost of those items. A non-program food is defined as a food or beverage, other than a reimbursable meal or snack, that is sold at the school and is purchased using funds from the school nutrition account.
11. All school nutrition services will be operated on a non-profit basis for the benefit of the SNP. School nutrition services are those that operate from 12:01 a.m. until 30 minutes after the end of the school day.
12. All income from the sale of food and beverages that is required by law or regulation to be retained by the SNP will be deposited to the SNP account and will be used only for the purposes of the school's non-profit lunch and breakfast programs. All other funds from food and beverage sales not otherwise required by law to be deposited to the SNP account will be deposited into the proper school account in accordance with guidelines developed by the superintendent or designee.
13. All competitive foods sold on school campuses will meet federal and state standards for nutrient content.
14. To the extent feasible consistent with legal, regulatory, and budgetary limits, the purchase of locally sourced foods and beverages is encouraged in the School Nutrition Program.
15. All employees whose job duties include procurement activities for the Child Nutrition Program shall adhere to the conflict of interest rules and standards for ethical conduct established by the board in policies 6401/9100, Ethics and the Purchasing Function, and 8305, Federal Grant Administration. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in disciplinary action.

B. MEAL CHARGES

Students who are required to pay for meals are expected to provide payment in a timely manner. The board recognizes, however, that students may occasionally forget or lose their meal money. Only elementary and middle school students may charge meals. High school students are not permitted to charge meals in the school cafeteria. At the principal's discretion, high school students may make a loan from the school office to purchase a school meal. No adults will be permitted to charge meals or other items in the school cafeteria. No student will be permitted to charge supplemental or a la carte items, including milk.

Charged meals should not exceed five (5) school meals and all charges must be paid the following day. No student will be deprived a meal nor served an alternate meal due to forgotten or lost money. At no time will a student meal be retrieved once the student has received the tray. The student shall be allowed to eat the meal and the student's account will be charged accordingly.

If a student meal account has a negative balance, money offered by the student for purchase of supplemental or a la carte items cannot be used to pay against the negative balance without the student's permission. If parents wish to limit the purchase of supplemental or a la carte items they should contact the school cafeteria manager with instructions to flag their student's account as necessary.

The school nutrition director and principal shall work jointly to prevent meal charges from accumulating. Every effort will be made to collect all funds due to the school nutrition program on a regular basis and before the end of the school year. Once charges reach \$10.00 letters will be sent home with students weekly from the cafeteria manager. Additionally, automated calls will be placed by the school office each week. If a parent regularly fails to provide meal money and does not qualify for free meal benefits, the school nutrition program shall inform the principal, who shall determine the next course of action. This may include notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect and/or taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges.

Parents are expected to pay all meal charges in full by the last day of each school year. Negative balances on student meal accounts cannot be carried forward to the following school year. All negative balances will continue to be owed to the school office until paid in full. The superintendent shall ensure that federal school nutrition funds are not used to offset the cost of unpaid meals and that the SNP is reimbursed for bad debt resulting from uncollected student meal charges prior to the last day of the school year. The school's general fund, or other fund designated by the school principal, will be financially responsible for outstanding charges that have not been paid.

This policy and any applicable procedures regarding meal charges must be communicated to school administrators, school food service professional, parents, and students. Parents will receive a written copy of the meal charges policy and any applicable procedures at the start of each school year and at any time their child transfers into a new school during the school year.

Legal References: Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. 1771 *et seq.*; National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751 *et seq.*, 2 C.F.R. pt. 200; 7 C.F.R. pt. 210; 7 C.F.R. pt. 215; 7 C.F.R. pt. 220; United States Department of Agriculture Policy Memos SP 46-2016, 47-2016, and 23-2017, available at <https://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/regulations-policies/usda-policy-memos>; G.S. 115C-47(7), -47(22), -263, -264, -264.1, -426, -450, -522; 147 art. 6E, art. 6G; 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0104; ~~State Board of Education Policy NCAC-016~~

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), Goals of School Nutrition Services (policy 6200), School Meal and Competitive Foods Standards (policy 6230), Goals of the

Purchasing Function (policy 6400), Ethics and the Purchasing Function (policy 6401/9100), Federal Grant Administration (policy 8305)

Adopted: March 9, 2015

Replaces: Policy 5.07.90, Charging of School Meals

Revised: May 9, 2016; June 12, 2017; August 14, 2017 and April 9, 2018 (Legal references only); June 11, 2018; April 8, 2019; January 13, 2020 and _____ (Legal references only)

SCHOOL MEAL AND COMPETITIVE FOODS STANDARDS

Policy Code:

6230

All employees or other individuals who select foods or beverages to be sold to students on a school campus during the school day shall select and procure such foods and beverages in a manner consistent with the goals established by the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) in policy 6200, Goals of School Nutrition Services, and policy 6140, Student Wellness, and with all state and federal laws and regulations. Additionally, in furtherance of the board’s goals, the board establishes the following standards for school meals and other foods sold or available on school campuses.

A. SCHOOL MEAL REQUIREMENTS

Meals and snacks provided through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs must comply with all federal nutrition standards applicable to the respective program, including meal component requirements and dietary standards.

B. FOODS OTHER THAN SCHOOL MEALS

1. Definitions

a. School day

As used in this policy, “school day” means the period from midnight through 30 minutes after the dismissal bell rings.

b. Competitive foods

All foods and beverages, other than meals reimbursed through the federally-funded school nutrition programs, available for sale to students on campus during the school day.

2. Foods Sold From Midnight Until the End of the Last Lunch Period

The sale of food and beverages between 12:01 a.m. and the end of the last lunch period is the responsibility of the Child Nutrition Program (CNP), and the CNP will retain the proceeds. The school principal and CNP personnel shall ensure that all competitive foods, including *a la carte* or supplemental food and beverages sold during that time period, including vended *a la carte* items, meet the federal Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

3. Foods Sold Between the Last Lunch Period and the End of the School Day

Each year, through its School Nutrition Program Annual Agreement, the board will establish accountability for the sale of competitive foods during the period between

the end of the last lunch period and the end of the school day. All foods sold during that period must comply with the federal Smart Snacks nutrition standards. This includes foods sold in vending machines (see subsection B.4, below), in school stores, and in other sales venues on the school campus.

4. Foods Sold After the School Day

Foods sold after the school day are not subject to the federal Smart Snacks standards but are subject to any school rules established pursuant to policy 6140, Student Wellness.

5. Vending Sales During the School Day

In pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, no beverage or snack vending to students is permitted outside of the School Nutrition Program.

In grades 9 through 12, all vended snack foods and beverages sold during the school day must meet the federal Smart Snacks standards and any more restrictive state requirements.

Bottled water must be available in every school that has beverage vending.

6. Fund-Raising Activities Involving Food or Beverages

All fund-raising activities that involve the sale of food or beverages to students during the school day must comply with the federal Smart Snacks standards. However, no such fund-raising activities are permitted from midnight until the end of the last lunch period. Tokens of exchange for foods or beverages to be delivered later in the day also are prohibited during this time period.

Fund-raising activities that are conducted after the school day are not required to comply with the federal Smart Snacks nutrition standards, but are subject to policy 6140, Student Wellness, and any school rules established pursuant to that policy.

7. Foods Brought from Home for School Events

Each school principal may establish standards for food and beverages brought from home to be shared for classroom events or parties during the school day or for extracurricular activities after school. The board encourages principals to establish rules that are consistent with the Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

Nothing in this policy is intended to regulate or limit foods that students bring from home as part of a bag lunch.

Legal References: Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. 1771 *et seq.*; Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, P.L. 111-296, 7 C.F.R. Part 210; National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751, *et seq.*;

G.S. 115C-47(7), -47(22), -263, -264, -264.2, -264.3; 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0104; State Board of Education Policyies CHNU-002, ~~NCAC-016~~; *Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for All Foods Available in School*, NC Department of Health and Human Services, NC Division of Public Health (2004)

Cross References: Student Wellness (policy 6140), Goals of School Nutrition Services (policy 6200)

Adopted: January 12, 2015

Revised: August 14, 2017 and January 13, 2020 and _____(Legal references only)

SAFETY AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Policy Code:

6305

Safety is of paramount concern in providing student transportation services. The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes that providing safe transportation requires the cooperation of students, parents, volunteers, personnel, and other governmental agencies. The superintendent or designee and all principals shall make reasonable efforts to inform affected individuals or entities about safety issues and monitor compliance with legal requirements and this policy.

A. STUDENT BEHAVIOR

A safe and orderly environment is critical whenever transporting students. The Code of Student Conduct and board policies on student behavior apply as provided in policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. All students will receive training on school bus safety as required by law regardless of whether they regularly ride a school bus to and from school.

B. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ASSISTANTS AND BUS MONITORS

Upon recommendation of a building principal and the superintendent, the board may employ transportation safety assistants to assist bus drivers with the safety, movement, management, and care of students. In addition, the superintendent or designee may appoint a volunteer monitor to assist a bus driver with maintaining order and student safety for any bus assigned to a school. As necessary, the superintendent or designee shall designate in administrative guidelines the responsibilities of school bus transportation safety assistants and bus monitors in accordance with state law.

C. MAINTENANCE

The superintendent or designee and principals shall fulfill all duties prescribed by state law and regulations for maintaining, inspecting, and repairing school buses and other vehicles used to transport students.

D. SAFETY PRACTICES ON SCHOOL BUSES AND ACTIVITY BUSES

In addition to any rules established by the superintendent or designee for the safe operation of the student transportation services, the board expects school employees to observe the following practices.

1. All school bus drivers must utilize the North Carolina crossing signal to communicate to students when it is safe to cross the street to board the bus and when it is safe to cross the street after exiting the bus.
2. The number of students transported on any school bus, activity bus, commercial bus, or contracted vehicle will not exceed the official rated capacity for the

- specific vehicle being used.
3. All riders must be seated while the vehicle is in motion.
4. No person will be permitted to stand or sit in the aisle or stepwell when the vehicle is in motion.
5. All school bus drivers are expected to use good judgment in determining whether it is safe to operate a school vehicle and to permit students to enter or leave the bus at particular locations.
6. Bus drivers must report immediately any suspected mechanical defects or other unsafe conditions, including road or traffic conditions that affect the safeness of the bus route or bus stops.

E. TRAINING

It is the responsibility of the superintendent or designee to see that:

1. students and bus drivers receive training as required by law, including training on the use of the North Carolina crossing signal;
2. students taking trips on activity buses or commercial buses receive safety instruction as needed, including, but not limited to, instruction on and demonstration of emergency exit operation for the vehicle on which they are riding for any specific trip; and
3. records of student training are made as required by the State Board of Education.

F. ACCIDENT REPORTING

The driver of any school bus or other school vehicle must report immediately to the superintendent or designee any accident involving death, injury, or property damage.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-239, -240, -245, -248, -249.1; 16 N.C.A.C. 6B .0111; *Preventive Maintenance and Vehicle Replacement Manual (NC Bus Fleet Manual)*, State Board of Education Policy TRAN-005, available at www.ncbussafety.org/documents/Buses/NCBusFleetManual.pdf; State Board of Education Policies ~~TRAN-006~~, TRAN-011; *North Carolina School Bus Driver Handout*, Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, available at <https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/license-id/driver-licenses/new-drivers/Documents/school-bus-handbook.pdf>

Cross References: Student Behavior Policies (policy 4300), Authority of School Personnel (policy 4301), School Plan for Management of Student Behavior (policy 4302), Disruptive Behavior (policy 4315)

Adopted: April 11, 2016

Revised: August 14, 2017; November 13, 2018 (Legal references only); February 10, 2020

Safety is of paramount concern in providing student transportation services. Consistent with the goals of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) for student safety, all drivers involved in transporting students must comply with the following board requirements.

A. SCHOOL BUS AND ACTIVITY BUS DRIVERS

School bus and activity bus drivers must:

1. possess required licenses and all other qualifications required by law;
2. undergo and follow all training required by law governing school bus and activity bus passenger safety;
3. not operate a school or activity bus on a public street, highway, or public vehicular area while using a mobile telephone or related technology while the bus is in motion, unless such use is for the sole purpose of communicating in an emergency situation;
4. use the North Carolina crossing signals required by the State Board of Education to communicate to students when it is safe to cross the street to board the bus and when it is safe to cross the street after exiting the bus;
5. report to the principal any misconduct that is in violation of any of the student behavior policies in the 4300 series or school rules;
6. use reasonable judgment in the operation of the buses;
7. make reasonable efforts to maintain good order of the students being transported;
8. not permit any person to ride who is not assigned to the bus or has not received express permission of the principal or other designated official;
9. promptly report to the principal or other designated official any defect or other concern regarding the safety of the school bus, activity bus, or other vehicle operated by the school system; and
10. report to the principal or other designated official by the next work day any moving violation citations received while operating any motor vehicle, whether on or off duty.

B. OTHER DRIVERS

Other drivers, including volunteer drivers, must:

1. possess required licenses and all other qualifications required by law;
2. be approved to transport students by the school principal and/or Human Resources office based on a background check that includes the driving record;
3. be at least 21 years of age;
4. report to the principal by the next school day any moving violation citations received while operating any motor vehicle, whether on or off duty; and
5. carry insurance if operating a privately owned vehicle.

C. VEHICLES

The only vehicles that may be used by a school system employee to transport students are school buses, activity buses, and a car or minivan owned by the Watauga County Schools or rented through a rental company approved by the Finance Office. No employee will transport students in a personal vehicle and no employee or volunteer driver will transport students in a 12-15 passenger van.

No more than five students will be transported by a school system employee or volunteer in any one vehicle other than a school bus or activity bus.

The superintendent or designee shall make copies of this policy and other related policies available to drivers.

Legal References: G.S. 20-7(f)(2), -137.4, -218; 115C-47(25a), -241, -242, -244 to -246, -248, -251, -317.1; 16 N.C.A.C. 6B .0111; State Board of Education Policies ~~TRAN-006~~, TRAN-010; *North Carolina School Bus Driver Handout*, Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, available at <https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/license-id/driver-licenses/new-drivers/Documents/school-bus-handbook.pdf>

Cross References: Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Student Transportation Services (6320), Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators (policy 7241), Insurance (policy 8340)

Adopted: April 11, 2016

Revised: August 14, 2017; November 13, 2018 and January 13, 2020;

Replaces: 5.04.30, Student Transportation by School System Employees

The superintendent or designee shall develop school bus routes in accordance with state law and regulations. All bus routes will be kept on file in the superintendent's office, and all changes will be filed within 10 days after such change becomes effective.

Students will be assigned to a bus that passes within one mile of the student's residence. To the extent practicable and economically feasible, ride time should be less than 45 minutes one way.

Parents will be informed of students' scheduled school bus arrival times. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that a student is present at a bus stop prior to the scheduled arrival time.

A. TRANSPORTATION TO LOCATIONS OTHER THAN HOME

Upon request, the superintendent or designee may, but is not required to, assign a student to a bus to transport the student to and/or from a location other than home if the following conditions are met.

1. The student's parent or guardian submits a written, signed request that states the specific location other than home to which the student is to be transported and acknowledges that the parent or guardian and not the school system is responsible for the student's safety once the child has departed from the bus.
2. The request for such transportation does not require a bus to deviate in any significant way from an established route.
3. There is capacity on the bus if the request would necessitate the student's riding a different bus from the regularly assigned bus.
4. The student's residence and requested bus stop are within the zone eligible for transportation service.
5. The request for such transportation does not cause the school system to incur any additional cost.
6. The proposed bus stop meets safety standards established by law, the Watauga County Board of Education, the superintendent or the principal.

Any changes in bus stops must be approved by the superintendent or designee.

B. BUS ROUTES IN HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS

School buses will not be allowed to operate if there is a serious threat to the safety of students or drivers. The superintendent may develop a more limited bus route for hazardous weather conditions in order to operate only on roads that are safe. To the extent possible, parents will be notified in advance of the bus route that will be used in hazardous

conditions. The hazardous conditions bus route will be on file in the superintendent's office.

A student who is identified as having special needs following procedures in the North Carolina *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities* will be provided with transportation services as required by law.

Legal References: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*; G.S. 115C-240(d), -246; 16 N.C.A.C. 6B .0111; *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000; State Board of Education Policies TRAN-000, -002, -006

Cross References:

Adopted: April 11, 2016

Revised: August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); February 12, 2018; _____ (Legal references only)

Services will be purchased in a manner consistent with the purchasing goals of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”). The board generally does not require competitive bidding for the purchase of services; however, contracts for services will be made under conditions that foster competition among potential providers when feasible and after careful pricing.

No contract may be entered into with a restricted company, as listed by the state treasurer in accordance with G.S. 147, art. 6E or 6G, except as permitted by those laws.

Purchases using federal funds must be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the federal award and all applicable requirements of federal law and regulation, including the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (“Uniform Guidance”) issued by the U.S. Office of Budget and Management. (See also policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration.)

Contracts entered into with entities or individuals to provide a driver education program for students must be awarded on a competitive basis through requests for proposals to contract and in accordance with the requirements of State Board of Education Policy DRIV-001.

This policy does not apply to contracts for architectural, engineering, surveying, and construction management at risk services, which are governed by policy 9110, Use and Selection of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, and Construction Managers At Risk.

Legal References: 2 C.F.R. 200.317-200.326; G.S. 115C-36; 143-64.31; 147 art. 6E, art. 6G; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0303; State Board of Education Policy DRIV-001

Cross References: Goals of the Purchasing Function (policy 6400), Federal Grant Administration (policy 8305), Use and Selection of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, and Construction Managers At Risk (policy 9110)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Revised: May 9, 2016; July 10, 2017; February 12, 2018; March 11, 2019; _____ (Legal references only)

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Policy Code:

7100

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

It is the policy of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) to provide all applicants for employment with equal employment opportunities and to provide current employees with training, compensation, promotion, and other benefits of employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, military affiliation, genetic information, sex, age, or disability, except when sex, age, or physical requirements are essential occupational qualifications. All candidates will be evaluated on their merits and qualifications for positions. All employment decisions will be consistent with the board’s objective of providing students with the opportunity to receive a sound basic education, as required by state law.

The board also is committed to diversity throughout the programs and practices of the school system. To further this goal, the recruitment and employment program should be designed to encourage a diverse pool of qualified applicants.

B. RECRUITMENT

Recruitment for a specific vacancy will be undertaken only after the need and qualifications for the position are established and proper authorization is obtained.

All vacancies must be adequately publicized within the school system so that employees will be informed of opportunities for promotion or transfer to new jobs; however, the superintendent or designee may forgo publicizing a vacancy if the position will be filled through a lateral assignment, reassignment, or promotion of a current employee or if exigent circumstances necessitate that the position be filled immediately. Vacancies also may be publicized externally to attract qualified applicants.

C. CRIMINAL HISTORY

Except as otherwise provided in Section D of this policy, applicants must notify the human resources director immediately if they are arrested, charged with, or convicted of a criminal offense (including entering a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere*) other than a minor traffic violation (i.e., speeding, parking, or a lesser violation). Notice must be in writing, must include all pertinent facts, and must be delivered to the human resources director no later than the next scheduled business day following the arrest, charge, or conviction, unless the applicant is hospitalized or incarcerated, in which case the applicant must report the alleged violation within 24 hours after his or her release. Upon judicial action in the matter, the applicant must report the disposition and pertinent facts in writing to the human resources director no later than the next business day following adjudication.

A criminal history check and a check of sex offender registries must be conducted on all final candidates for employment with the school system. Criminal history checks must be conducted in accordance with state law and any procedures established by the superintendent. School officials shall not require candidates to disclose expunged arrests, charges, or convictions and shall not ask candidates to voluntarily disclose such information without first advising that disclosure is not required. The superintendent or designee shall report to the State Board of Education any licensed individual who is found to have a criminal history, as required by State Board policy. Special requirements are described in Section D of this policy for criminal history checks of candidates for certain positions working with pre-school children or working in afterschool or developmental day programs.

A final candidate for employment or for hiring as an independent contractor will be excluded from hiring on the basis of criminal conduct only when doing so is job-related and consistent with business necessity. If a final candidate is found to have been convicted (including entering a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of a criminal offense, other than a minor traffic violation, the superintendent shall determine whether the individual is qualified for employment despite the criminal history by considering, among other things, whether the individual poses a threat to the safety of students or personnel or has demonstrated that he or she does not have the integrity or honesty to fulfill the duties of the position. The following factors will be considered in making this determination: (1) the nature and gravity of the offense or conduct; (2) the time that has passed since the offense or conduct and/or completion of the sentence; and (3) the nature of the job sought. Before the superintendent may exclude a final candidate based on his or her past criminal convictions, the superintendent must give the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate that the exclusion does not properly apply to him or her. The requirements of this paragraph do not apply to a childcare provider who is determined to be disqualified by the Division of Child Development and Early Education on the basis of a criminal history check conducted pursuant to G.S. 110-90.2, 42 U.S.C. 9858f, and 45 C.F.R. 98.43. (See Section D of this policy).

The board has determined that every position with the school system, regardless of whether the position is located in a school or elsewhere, potentially entails contact with students, either on a regular, occasional, or emergency basis. For that reason, no individual who is a registered sex offender subject to the provisions of policy 5022, Registered Sex Offenders, will be hired for any position with the school system.

In addition, each contract executed by the board with an independent contractor or for services of independent contractors must require the contractor to check sex offender registries as specified in policy 5022, Registered Sex Offenders.

D. CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

For purposes of this section, a “childcare provider” is:

1. any person who works or is a final candidate seeking to work in a classroom or

program licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE); and

2. any person, including a volunteer, who has unsupervised contact with children enrolled in such classrooms or programs.

Before beginning initial employment or volunteer service and at least every three years thereafter, each child care provider must complete a criminal background check that meets the requirements of G.S. 110-90.2, 42 U.S.C. 9858f, and 45 C.F.R. 98.43 and present a letter issued by DCDEE indicating that the individual is qualified to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children based on the individual's criminal history.

After September 30, 2019, no person shall (1) be employed, continue to be employed, or be permitted to volunteer as a child care provider, or to otherwise have unsupervised contact with students enrolled in a licensed classroom or program operated by the school system or (2) be counted in the staff/child ratio of such classroom or program, unless the person holds a current valid qualification letter issued by DCDEE. However, a childcare provider with provisional status may be employed pending final results of the criminal background check but shall be subject to the restrictions established by 10A N.C.A.C. 09 .2703(f).

The application fee and cost of fingerprinting associated with the DCDEE criminal history check process shall be borne by the board.

A child care provider who has incurred any pending charges, indictments, or convictions (other than minor traffic offenses) since the last qualification letter was issued by DCDEE shall notify the assistant superintendent of human resources in writing of such charges within five business days or before returning to work, whichever comes first. The assistant superintendent of human resources shall notify DCDEE within one business day of being notified.

The superintendent or designee shall include the criminal history mandatory reporting requirement in all new employee orientation information for childcare providers. The superintendent shall also be responsible for establishing effective recordkeeping methods and other processes as necessary to ensure compliance with all legal requirements pertaining to criminal history record checks of childcare providers.

E. SELECTION

1. Qualifications

Candidates for employment must be selected based upon their likely ability to fulfill duties identified in the job description as well as performance standards established by the board. In making the determination, the following information must be considered:

- a. application;
- b. education and training;
- c. licensure and certification (when applicable);
- d. relevant experience;
- e. personal interviews; and
- f. references and/or background checks.

When several applicants for the same position are equally qualified and suitable for the position, employees within the school system will be given priority.

2. Nepotism

- a. For purposes of this subsection, the following definitions apply.
 - i. “Immediate family” means spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild. The term includes the step, half, and in-law relationships.
 - ii. “Central office staff administrator” includes directors, supervisors, specialists, staff officers, assistant superintendents, area superintendents, superintendents, and principals.
- b. Before any immediate family of any board of education member or central office staff administrator is employed by the board or engaged in any capacity as an employee, independent contractor, or otherwise, (1) the board member or central office staff administrator must disclose the familial relationship to the board and (2) the prospective employment or engagement must be approved by the board in a duly called open session meeting.
 - i. An employee who knowingly fails to disclose a familial relationship to the board as required will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
 - ii. Notification by the employee to the director of human resources will be deemed disclosure to the board. The director of human resources is responsible for conveying the disclosure to the board before the board takes action on the prospective employment or engagement.
- c. When making recommendations for the selection and assignment of personnel, the superintendent shall attempt to avoid situations in which one employee occupies a position in which he or she has influence over the

employment status, including hiring, salary, and promotion, of another employee who is a member of the first employee's immediate family.

- d. No administrative or supervisory personnel may directly supervise a member of his or her immediate family.

3. Employment Procedures

All applicants selected for employment must be recommended by the superintendent and approved by the board. In situations in which the employee must be hired between board meetings, the superintendent is authorized to approve hiring such personnel, contingent upon approval by the board at its next scheduled board meeting.

State guidelines must be followed in selection and employment procedures. The superintendent shall develop any other procedures necessary to implement this policy.

The superintendent shall develop procedures for verifying new employees' legal status or authorization to work in the United States as required by law.

Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 *et seq.*; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*; Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1703; Equal Pay Act of 1963, 29 U.S.C. 206; Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*; Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, 42 U.S.C. 2000ff *et seq.*; Military Selective Service Act, 50 U.S.C. Appx. 453; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794; Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e *et seq.*; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. 4301 *et seq.*; 8 U.S.C. 1101 *et seq.*; 42 U.S.C. 9858f; 45 C.F.R. 98.43; *Green v. Missouri Pacific Railroad* (8th Cir. 1975); *Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (April 25, 2012) available at http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm; G.S. 14-208.18; 15A-153; 110-90.2; 115C-12.2, -36, -47, -276(j), -332; 126-7.1(i), -16; 127A-202.1 *et seq.*; 127B-10, -12, -14; 143B-421.1, -931; *Leandro v. State*, 346 N.C. 336 (1997); 10A N.C.A.C. 09.0102, -.2701, -.2702, -.2703; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C.0313; State Board of Education Policies BENF-009 and NCAC-019

Cross References: Board Authority and Duties (policy 1010), Registered Sex Offenders (policy 5022)

Adopted: February 9, 2015

Replaces: Policy 3.02.40 Qualifications of Certified Personnel, policy 3.02.55 Recruitment, and policy 3.01.30 Equal Employment Opportunity

Revised: January 28, 2016; August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); November 13, 2018;
September 9, 2019; May 11, 2020; _____ (Legal references only)

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) intends to comply fully with all licensure requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, state law, and State Board of Education policies.

A. LICENSURE AND OTHER QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Except as otherwise permitted by the State Board of Education or state law, a person employed in a professional educator position must hold at all times a valid North Carolina professional educator’s license appropriate to his or her position.
2. To the extent possible, all professional teaching assignments will be in the area of the professional employee’s license except as may be otherwise allowed by state and federal law and State Board policy.
3. The board may employ candidates entering the teaching profession from other fields who hold a residency license or an emergency license.
4. In extenuating circumstances when no other appropriately licensed professionals or persons who are eligible for a residency license are available to fill a position, the board may employ an individual who holds a permit to teach issued by the State Board of Education.

B. EXCEPTIONS TO LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

1. Adjunct CTE Instructors

An unlicensed individual who meets the adjunct hiring criteria established by the State Board of Education for a specific career and technical education (CTE) career cluster may be employed as an adjunct CTE instructor for up to 20 hours per week or up to five full consecutive months of employment, provided the individual first completes preservice training and meets all other statutory requirements for serving as an adjunct instructor established by G.S. 115C-157.1.

2. Adjunct Instructors in Core Academic Subjects

In accordance with G.S. 115C-298.5, an unlicensed faculty member of a higher education institution who meets the adjunct hiring criteria established by the State Board of Education may be employed as a temporary adjunct instructor for specific core academic subjects, provided the individual first completes preservice training and meets all other statutory and State Board of Education requirements.

3. Interim Principals

A retired former principal or assistant principal may be employed as an interim principal for the remainder of any school year, regardless of licensure status.

4. Cherokee Language and Culture Instructors

An individual approved to teach in accordance with an MOU entered into pursuant to G.S. 115C-270.21 will be authorized to teach Cherokee language and culture classes without a license.

5. Driver Education Instructors

An individual, who is not licensed in driver education, is authorized to work as a driver education instructor if the individual holds Certified Driver Training Instructor status according to minimum standards established by State Board of Education policy DRIV-003.

C. BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM

The superintendent or designee shall develop a plan and a comprehensive program for beginning teacher support. The plan must be approved by the board and the Department of Public Instruction and kept on file for review. The plan must be aligned to the State Board of Education's beginning teacher support program standards and, when monitored must demonstrate proficiency. The school system will also participate in implementing a regionally-based annual peer review and support system.

Teachers with fewer than three years of teaching experience will be required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

D. LICENSE CONVERSION

Teachers must meet all requirements of the State Board of Education in order to move from an initial professional license or residency license to a continuing professional license. Licensing is a state decision and cannot be appealed at the local level. The superintendent or designee shall ensure that teachers not qualifying for continuing professional licensure are informed of the process for appealing the state decision.

E. LICENSE RENEWAL

Licensure renewal is the responsibility of the individual, not of the school system. Any employee who allows a license to expire must have it reinstated prior to the beginning of the next school year. A teacher whose license has expired is subject to dismissal.

The school system may offer courses, workshops, and independent study activities to help school personnel meet license renewal requirements. Any renewal activity offered must be consistent with State Board of Education policy. In addition, the superintendent or

designee shall develop a procedure to determine the appropriateness of any credit offered in advance of renewal activities.

Decisions regarding the employment of teachers who fail to meet the required proficiency standard for renewal of a continuing professional license will be made in accordance with G.S. 115C-270.30(b)(4) and applicable State Board of Education requirements. The superintendent or designee shall determine the professional development required of a teacher whose continuing professional license has reverted to an initial professional license and/or has expired due to performance issues. The superintendent or designee may authorize or direct principals to prescribe professional development to such employees in accordance with the employee's demonstrated deficiencies.

F. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

At the beginning of each school year, school system officials shall notify the parents or guardians of each student attending a Title I school or participating in a Title I program of their right to request the following information about qualifications of their child's teacher: whether the teacher has met NC qualification and licensing criteria for the grade level(s) and subject area(s) in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which North Carolina qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification; and whether the child is provided services by a paraprofessional, and if so, the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The school system will give notice within 10 school days to the parents of children who have been assigned or, after four consecutive weeks, have been taught by a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

G. EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS

The superintendent shall assess whether low-income, minority, learning disabled, and/or English learners are being taught by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than students who do not fall into these categories and shall develop a plan to address any such disparities. If DPI does not require such a plan of the LEA, the superintendent is not required to develop a plan under this subsection unless he or she determines that one is needed to address inequities within the school system.

Legal References: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 6301 *et seq.*; 34 C.F.R. 200.55-57, 200.61; G.S. 115C art. 17E; 115C-270.21, -284, -295, -298.5, -325(e)(1)(m) (applicable to career status teachers), -325.4(a)(12) (applicable to non-career status teachers), -333, -333.1; State Board of Education Policies CTED-004, DRIV-003, DRIV-004, EVAL-004, EVAL-023, EVAL-034, LICN-001, LICN-005, LICN-021, LICN-022, NCAC-028, NCAC-035, NCAC-037, TCED-016; *Beginning Teacher Support Program Handbook* (NCDPI), available at <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/ncref/bt-support-program-resources>

Cross References:

Adopted: February 9, 2015

Revised: September 11, 2017; May 21, 2018; March 11, 2019; September 9, 2019; May 11, 2020; February 8, 2021 and _____ (Legal references only)

Replaces: Policy 3.02.40, Qualifications of Certified Personnel

A. GENERAL EMPLOYMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

The Watauga County school system will employ substitute teachers as deemed appropriate by the administration and in accordance with State Board policies. Substitute teachers are “at will” employees hired on an as needed basis.

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes the importance of employing licensed teachers as substitutes and will give first priority to substitutes who hold or have held any teaching license and second priority to those who have completed Effective Teacher Training or comparable professional development courses. Teaching experience also will be considered.

A criminal history check will be conducted on applicants for substitute teaching positions in accordance with policy 7100, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel, and administrative procedures.

B. TEACHER ASSISTANTS AS SUBSTITUTES

A teacher assistant may serve as a substitute teacher in the classroom(s) in which the assistant is regularly assigned and will be paid additional compensation according to state policies.

C. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

In accordance with policy 3560, Title I Parent and Family Engagement, school principals shall notify the parent of any child who receives instruction for four or more consecutive weeks from a substitute teacher who does not meet the certification and licensure standards for the grade level and subject area to which the substitute teacher has been assigned.

Legal References: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C 6312(e)(1)(B)(ii); G.S. 115C-12, -36, -47, -332; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0313, -.0403; ~~State Board of Education Policies NCAC-019, NCAC-009~~

Cross References: Title I Parent and Family Engagement (policy 3560), Recruitment and Selection of Personnel (policy 7100)

Adopted: May 11, 2015

Revised: November 13, 2017; February 10, 2020 and _____ (Legal references only)

Replaces: Policy 3.02.50, Qualifications of Substitute Teachers

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) is committed to constructing new facilities and renovating existing facilities in a manner that maximizes the use of space, conserves environmental and fiscal resources, and produces structurally sound and safe buildings. All school buildings should be designed to create safe, orderly, and inviting learning environments where students can succeed. School buildings also will be planned to the extent feasible for maximum use by the community and for providing extended services to students.

The superintendent is responsible for overseeing the design of facilities that have been identified in the long-range facility needs plan and have been approved for funding. New or renovated facilities must be designed in a way that will meet all legal requirements, including legal standards for accessibility and use of facilities by persons with disabilities. Plans also must take into consideration the facilities guidelines developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The superintendent may utilize services of outside professionals, including architects and other consultants, in the facility design and construction. Any contract for professional services must be (1) reviewed by the board attorney, (2) be approved by the board, unless the board has delegated this authority to the superintendent in policy 6420, Contracts with the Board, and (3) meet the requirements of any applicable board policies. (See policy 9110, Use and Selection of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, and Construction Managers At Risk.) The superintendent also should work to involve school staff, parents, and students in the design of school buildings.

Before investing any money in the construction of any new building, or when using any state money for the erection, repair, or equipping of any building, the superintendent must submit the plans to the State Board for review and comment and must review the plans based upon a consideration of the comments received.

Plans for science facilities in new middle and high schools are subject to approval by the State Board of Education in accordance with G.S. 115C-521(c1) and State Board of Education policy.

The superintendent shall report periodically to the board on the development of facility plans. The superintendent also shall report on the State Board’s review of facility plans conducted pursuant to G.S. 115C-521(c) and this policy and must specifically address any concerns noted by the State Board. The board must give final approval of facility plans before any money may be spent on new buildings or renovations.

Legal References: 29 U.S.C. 794(b); 34 C.F.R. pt. 104 (subpt. C); 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*; 28 C.F.R. pt. 35 (subpt. D); G.S. 115C-204, -521; 133, arts. 1 and 3; State Board of Education Policy SCFC-005; State Board of Education Policies SCFC-003, *North Carolina Public School Facilities Guidelines*, available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districtoperations/school-planning/project-planning#building-design>; and State Board of Education Policy SCFC-006, *Procedures Manual: Public School Building Capital Fund*, both—available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/district-operations/school-planning/capitalfunding> www.schoolclearinghouse.org/ ~~www.schoolclearinghouse.org/~~

Cross References: Contracts with the Board (policy 6420), Use and Selection of Architects,

Engineers, Surveyors, and Construction Managers At Risk (policy 9110)

Other Resources: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Planning Publications, available at <http://www.schoolclearinghouse.org/>
<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/district-operations/school-planning>

Adopted: April 11, 2016; August 14, 2017 and _____ (Legal references only)

Replaces: Board policy 2.05.40, Facility Design Policy

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW

Policy Code:

4020/7230

The board acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The board prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, disability, or age (over 40 or older), and will provide equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by law.

The board will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment in any of its education activities or programs. All forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment are subject to this policy except the following, for which the board has established more specific policies.

- Discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex is addressed in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex.
- Discrimination and harassment in employment is addressed in policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace.

In addition, the process set out in this policy for bringing complaints does not apply to the following.

- Complaints of sexual harassment will be brought in accordance with the processes established in policies 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, and 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process.
- Employee allegations of discrimination or harassment will be addressed using the process established in policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace.
- Allegations regarding or related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or free appropriate public education of a student under Section 504 or the IDEA may be raised through the system of procedural safeguards established under policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, (for Section 504 complaints) or in accordance with the procedures described in *Parents Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education*, published by the NC Department of Public Instruction (for IDEA complaints).

The board takes seriously all reports of unlawful discrimination and harassment and directs school officials to take prompt action to investigate and remedy violations of this policy. The superintendent is responsible for providing effective notice of this policy to students, parents, and employees.

The board encourages students, visitors, and other non-employee individuals who believe that they

may have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy, (including on the basis of disability, as specified in policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities), to report such conduct as soon as possible through the process provided in Section B of this policy. Employees who believe that they may have been discriminated against or harassed should report through the process provided in policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace. Individuals who have witnessed or who have reliable information that another person has been subject to unlawful discrimination or harassment may report the conduct to an individual designated in Section B of this policy.

Any report made through the process established in this policy may be made anonymously, except mandatory employee reports.

A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

Students, school system employees, volunteers, and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. The board expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination and harassment as defined below by students, employees, board members, volunteers, or visitors. "Visitors" includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school system.

1. Discrimination

Discrimination is any act or failure to act, whether intentional or unintentional, by an employee or agent of the school system that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a legally-protected class so as to interfere with or limit their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges offered by the school system's education program. For purposes of this policy, the legally protected classes are race, color, national origin, religion, and disability.

2. Harassment

Prohibited harassment is deliberate unwelcome conduct directed at another person or group of persons based on their membership in a legally protected class that creates a hostile environment. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. Harassment creates a hostile environment when the conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by the school system.

Examples of behavior that may constitute harassment include, but are not limited to, acts of disrespect, intimidation, or threats, such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching, or any physical interference

with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Harassment may occur through electronic means, such as through the Internet, email, or text message. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment.

3. Application of the Policy

This policy applies to behavior that takes place: (1) in any school building or on any school premises before, during, or after school hours; (2) on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity; (3) at any bus stop; (4) during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity; (5) at any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel; or (6) at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

This policy will not be construed to allow school officials to punish student expression or speech based on undifferentiated fear or apprehension of a disturbance or out of a desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that may accompany an unpopular viewpoint.

B. REPORTING DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

1. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy by any student, employee, or other person under the supervision and control of the school system, or any third person who knows or suspects conduct that may constitute discrimination or harassment should inform a school official designated in Section C below. Reports also may be made anonymously through the anonymous tip line.

2. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees

Any employee who witnessed or who has reliable information or reason to believe that a student or other individual may have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must report the offense immediately to an appropriate individual designated in Section C below. Any doubt about whether particular conduct is possible discrimination or harassment under this policy or any other policy of the board must be resolved in favor of reporting the conduct.

Employees who observe an incident of harassment are expected to intervene to stop the conduct in situations in which they have supervisory control over the perpetrator and it is safe to do so. If an employee knows of an incident involving discrimination or harassment and the employee fails to report the conduct or take proper action or knowingly provides false information in regard to the incident, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

3. Preliminary Inquiry

School officials may make a preliminary inquiry when a report is received to understand what occurred and to determine whether further action under this policy or otherwise is necessary.

C. COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

1. A student, visitor, or other non-employee individual who believes he or she is the victim of unlawful discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy, or any person who has witnessed or who has reliable information that another person has been subject to unlawful discrimination or harassment under this policy, may make a formal written complaint to any of the following persons:
 - a. the principal or assistant principal of the school at which either the alleged victim or alleged perpetrator attends or is employed;
 - b. the Section 504 coordinator or the ADA coordinator for claims of discrimination on the basis of a disability; or
 - c. for claims of other forms of prohibited discrimination, the applicable civil rights coordinator as established in Section I of this policy.

If a written complaint alleges that the perpetrator is an employee, the school official receiving the complaint shall notify the senior human resources official without delay.

2. A written complaint alleging that a student has been discriminated against or harassed will be addressed in accordance with this policy.

A written complaint alleging that an employee has been discriminated against or harassed will be addressed in accordance with policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace.

A written complaint alleging that person who is not a student or employee has been discriminated against or harassed will be addressed in accordance with the general process for resolving complaints provided in policy 1742/5060, Responding to Complaints, not this policy.

3. Time Period for Making a Complaint

Alleged discrimination or harassment should be reported as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30-day period may be investigated; however, individuals should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

D. SCHOOL OFFICIALS' RESPONSE TO REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT**1. Investigation**

School officials shall investigate all formal written complaints received. Reports of discrimination or harassment that are not followed by a formal written complaint may be investigated at the discretion of school officials and may be investigated even if the alleged victim does not seek action by school officials.

- a. The principal or designee or site supervisor will be the investigator when the alleged perpetrator is a student or third party. The senior human resources official or designee will be the investigator when the alleged perpetrator is an employee. The superintendent may determine that individual circumstances warrant the assignment of a different investigator.

Notwithstanding the above designations, (1) if the alleged perpetrator is the senior human resources official, the superintendent will be the investigator, and (2) if the alleged perpetrator is the superintendent or a member of the board, the board chair shall direct the board attorney to investigate, unless the board chair determines that outside counsel should be engaged to investigate.

- b. As applicable, the investigator shall immediately notify the Section 504, ADA, or other relevant coordinator of the complaint, and, as appropriate, may request assistance from the coordinator in conducting the investigation.
- c. If the investigator, after interviewing the complaining party and/or the alleged victim and consulting with the board attorney, determines that the allegations submitted, even if factual, do not constitute discrimination or harassment as defined in this policy or policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, school officials shall address the matter outside the scope of this policy. Information regarding the investigator's determination and the process for addressing the complaint will be provided to the complaining party.
- d. Any investigation conducted must be impartial, prompt, and thorough. The investigator shall investigate the facts and circumstances related to the allegation(s) of discrimination or harassment and give the alleged perpetrator an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

The investigator shall consider all the evidence collected, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, the age and maturity of the parties, and any other relevant circumstances, and in consultation with the board attorney as appropriate, shall determine whether the alleged act(s) constitutes a violation of this policy, policy 1730/4022/7231,

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, and/or any other board policy or expected standard of student or employee behavior.

- e. The complaint and investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible and consistent with law. Information may be shared only with individuals who need the information in order to investigate and address the complaint appropriately and those with a legal right to access the information.

2. Investigator's Findings

- a. If the investigator finds that discrimination occurred, the investigator shall take or recommend steps to address the discrimination.
- b. If the investigator finds that harassment occurred and created a hostile environment, the investigator shall assign or recommend appropriate disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator and/or take or recommend other reasonable measures to eliminate the hostile environment and prevent its recurrence.
- c. If the investigator finds that the conduct did not violate this policy but violated policy 4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited, or another board policy or expected standard of conduct, the investigator shall assign or recommend discipline or other action appropriate to the violation.
- d. The investigator shall make a record of the evidence and findings of the investigation and the assigned or recommended discipline and/or other remedial action and provide a copy to the appropriate civil rights coordinator. If the investigator recommends a disciplinary consequence or remedial action that is beyond his or her authority, the investigator shall provide a copy of the record to the superintendent for further action.
- e. The investigator shall inform the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator of the outcome of the investigation.

3. Steps to Reasonably End Discrimination or Harassment

- a. The superintendent is responsible for taking or causing appropriate action to be taken in response to discrimination and harassment in violation of this policy. Appropriate action must include:
 - i. reasonable, timely, age-appropriate corrective action intended to end the discrimination or harassment and prevent it from recurring;
 - ii. as needed, reasonable steps to address the effects of the discrimination or harassment on the victim; and

- iii. as needed, reasonable steps to protect the victim from retaliation as a result of the complaint.
- b. Appropriate steps to end discrimination and harassment may include, but are not limited to, separating the parties, providing counseling for the parties, and/or taking disciplinary action against a perpetrator determined to have violated this policy. The superintendent may take non-punitive measures to end or prevent instances of discrimination or harassment regardless of whether any individual has been found responsible for the discrimination or harassment. The superintendent also may implement or direct the implementation of classroom-wide, school-wide, or school system-wide responses such as additional staff training, harassment prevention programs, and other measures reasonably calculated to end the behavior, eliminate a hostile environment and its effects if one has been created, and prevent recurrence of the behavior.
- c. The applicable civil rights coordinator shall encourage victims of discrimination and harassment to report any subsequent problems and may conduct follow-up inquiries as warranted to determine if there have been any new incidents of discrimination or harassment or any instances of retaliation.

E. APPEALS

- 1. If the alleged victim is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she may appeal the decision to the superintendent (unless the alleged perpetrator is the superintendent, in which case the alleged victim may appeal directly to the board in accordance with the next paragraph). The appeal must be submitted in writing within three school business days of receiving the notice of the outcome of the investigation. The superintendent may review the documents, conduct any further investigation necessary, or take any other steps the superintendent determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. The superintendent shall provide a written response within 10 days after receiving the appeal, unless further investigation is needed.
- 2. Student victims may appeal the superintendent's decision to the board in accordance with subsection E.5.a of policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure. Employees may appeal the superintendent's decision to the board in accordance with subsection E.4.a of policy 1750/7220, Grievance Procedure for Employees.
- 3. Any student or employee subject to discipline for violating this policy will be accorded all rights provided by law.

F. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

The board prohibits retaliation against any person for making a report or complaint of a violation of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or participating in the investigation of a reported violation of this policy. No reprisals will be taken by the board against a complaining party or other individual who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment. Any person who is found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Acts of retaliation may also be subject to policy 7280, Prohibition Against Retaliation.

G. TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

The board directs the superintendent to establish training and other programs that are designed to prevent discrimination and harassment and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. Information about the prohibited conduct and complaint procedure in this policy and those in policies 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, and 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, must be included in the training plan.

As funds are available, the board will provide students, employees, and volunteers who have significant contact with students with additional training regarding the board's efforts to address discrimination and harassment and will create programs to address these issues. The training or programs should (1) provide examples of behavior that constitutes discrimination or harassment; (2) teach employees to identify groups that may be the target of discrimination or harassment; and (3) train school employees to be alert to locations where such behavior may occur, including locations within school buildings, at school bus stops, on cell phones, and on the Internet.

H. RECORDS

The superintendent or designee shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of discrimination or harassment. The records must identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The superintendent also shall maintain records of training conducted and corrective action(s) or other steps taken by the school system to provide an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

I. CONTACTS FOR INQUIRIES

The superintendent has appointed individuals to coordinate the school system's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under federal nondiscrimination laws, including investigating any complaints communicated to school officials alleging noncompliance with those laws. Inquiries about the application of the nondiscrimination laws addressed in this policy may be referred to the designated civil rights coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education.

The contact information for the designated civil rights coordinators is as follows.

- a. The Section 504 Coordinator is: Dr. Paul Holden
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607
Email Address: holdenp@wataugaschools.org
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190
- b. The ADA Coordinator is: Dr. Mike Marcela
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607
Email Address: marcelam@wataugaschools.org
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190
- c. The Age Discrimination Coordinator is: Dr. Paul Holden
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607
Email Address: holdenp@wataugaschools.org
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190
- d. The Coordinator for Other Non-discrimination Laws is: Dr. Paul Holden
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607
Email Address: holdenp@wataugaschools.org
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190

The contact information for the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights with jurisdiction over North Carolina is as follows.

4000 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1475
Telephone: 202-453-6020 TDD: 800-877-8339
FAX: 202-453-6021 Email: OCR.DC@ed.gov

Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 110; Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 7905, 34 C.F.R. pt. 108; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 100; *Racial Incidents and Harassment Against Students at Educational Institutions; Investigative Guidance*, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (1994), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/race394.html>; *Notice of Non-Discrimination*, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010); *Dear Colleague Letter* (Harassment and Bullying), U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>; G.S. 115C-407.15 through -407.18; 126-16; State Board of Education Policy SSCH-000; *Parent Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education*, (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division), available at <https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/parent-resources/parents-rights-handbook>

Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 et seq., 34 C.F.R. pt. 110; Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq., 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 7905, 34 C.F.R. pt. 108; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq., 34 C.F.R. pt. 100; Racial Incidents and Harassment Against Students at Educational Institutions; Investigative Guidance, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (1994), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/race394.html>; Notice of Non-Discrimination, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010); Dear Colleague Letter (Harassment and Bullying), U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>; G.S. 115C-407.15 through -407.18; 126-16; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0107 State Board of Education Policy SSCH-000; Parent Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education, (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division), available at <https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/parentresources/parents-rights-handbook>

Cross References: Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 1725/4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 1726/4036/7237), Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 1730/4022/7231), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Responding to Complaints (policy 1742/5060), Grievance Procedure for Employees (policy 1750/7220), Prohibition Against Retaliation (policy 1760/7280), Hearings Before the Board (policy 2500), Staff-Student Relations (policy 4040/7310), School Plan for Management of Student Behavior (policy 4302), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 4329/7311), Visitors to the Schools (policy 5020), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030), Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace (policy 7232)

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: April 12, 2021

The board expects all employees to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their interactions with students. Employees are required to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning through consistently and fairly applied discipline and established and maintained professional boundaries. Employees are expected to motivate each student to perform to his or her capacity while modeling the behavior expected of students in staff-student relationships.

The interactions and relationships between staff and students must be based upon cooperation, mutual respect, and an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students inside and outside of the educational setting. Employees are expected to demonstrate good judgment and to avoid the appearance of impropriety in their interactions with students. Employees must consult their supervisor any time they suspect or are unsure whether conduct is inappropriate or otherwise constitutes a violation of this or other board policy.

For the purposes of this policy, the terms “staff” and “employees” include independent contractors, school safety officers, and volunteers, but do not include student employees or student volunteers.

A. ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL CONTACT PROHIBITED

All employees are prohibited from dating, courting, or entering into a romantic relationship or having sexual contact with any student enrolled in the school system regardless of the student’s age. Employees engaging in such inappropriate conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and may be subject to criminal action as provided in G.S. 14-202.4 and 14-27.32. Further, school system personnel shall provide no assistance to an employee in finding another job, beyond the routine transmittal of personnel or administrative files, if the employee engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor or a student in violation of the law.

B. RESTRICTIONS ON ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

1. In accordance with policy 7335, Employee Use of Social Media, employees are prohibited from communicating with current students through non-school-controlled social media without parental permission except to the extent that the employee and student have an appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting. Any communication through social media authorized under policy 7335 must meet the professional standards established in this policy and must otherwise be consistent with law and all other board policy.
2. Instant messages will be treated as a form of communication through social media subject to the terms of policy 7335 and subsection B.1 above, regardless of whether the messaging service is actually provided through a social media service or otherwise.
3. Employees are prohibited from engaging in other forms of one-to-one electronic

communications (e.g., voice, voice mail, email, texting, and photo or video transmission) with students without written prior approval of the employee's supervisor and the student's parent. This rule shall not apply, however, if one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- a. the communication (1) is for an educational purpose, (2) is conducted through a school system-provided platform which archives all such communications for a period of at least three years (this requirement does not apply to telephone or voice mail communications), or is conducted via an electronic video-conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Webex, Google Meet) that has been approved by the superintendent or designee for instructional use and (3) occurs after the employee has given prior notice to his or her supervisor or designee that such communications will occur and when they will occur;
- b. the communication serves an educational purpose and is simultaneously copied or transmitted to the employee's supervisor or designee and, upon request, to the parent or guardian;
- c. the communication is necessary in a bona fide emergency, provided the communication is disclosed to the supervisor and parent or guardian as soon as reasonably possible; or
- d. the communication derives from a relationship or association outside of the school setting and occurs with the consent of the parent or guardian, provided such communication does not otherwise violate this or other board policy.

Any one-to-one electronic communication permitted by this subsection must meet the professional standards established in this policy and must otherwise be consistent with law and all other board policies.

4. It is the duty of every employee to notify his or her supervisor of any unsolicited one-to-one communication, in any form, electronic or otherwise, received from a student when the communication lacks a clear educational purpose. School counselors are excluded from this requirement only to the extent that it conflicts with their professional duties.
5. Violations of this section will be considered unprofessional behavior subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Factors that may be relevant to the determination of an appropriate disciplinary response to unauthorized communications with students include, but are not limited to:
 - a. the content, frequency, subject, and timing of the communication(s);
 - b. whether the communication(s) was appropriate to the student's age and

maturity level;

- c. whether the communication(s) could reasonably be viewed as a solicitation of sexual contact or the courting of a romantic relationship, including sexual grooming;
- d. whether there was an attempt to conceal the communication(s) from the employee's supervisor and/or the student's parent or guardian;
- e. whether the communication(s) created a disruption of the educational environment; and
- f. whether the communication(s) harmed the student in any manner.

C. REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

1. Reporting by Employees

Any employee who has reason to believe any of the following shall immediately report that information to the superintendent or designee:

- a. that another employee is involved in a romantic or other inappropriate relationship or has had sexual contact with a student;
- b. that another employee has engaged in other behavior prohibited by this policy; or
- c. that the employee has witnessed behavior by another employee that has the appearance of impropriety, whether or not the behavior may have a valid purpose.

An employee who fails to inform the superintendent or designee as provided in this section may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

2. Reporting by Students

Any student who believes that he or she or another student has been subject to misconduct that violates this policy should immediately report the situation to the principal, school counselor, or the Title IX coordinator designated in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex.

3. Report of Criminal Misconduct

Any principal who has reason to believe that a student has been the victim of criminal conduct shall immediately report the incident in accordance with policy 4335, Criminal Behavior.

4. Report to State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Any administrator, including the superintendent, a deputy/associate/assistant superintendent, a personnel administrator, or a principal, who knows or has reason to believe that a licensed employee has engaged in conduct ~~which~~ that would justify automatic revocation of the employee's license pursuant to G.S. 115C-270.35(b) or involves physical or sexual abuse of a child shall report that information to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction within five working days of any disciplinary action, dismissal, or resignation based on the conduct. For purposes of this subsection, physical abuse is the infliction of physical injury other than by accidental means or in self-defense, and sexual abuse is the commission of any sexual act upon a ~~child~~ student or causing a ~~child~~ student to commit a sexual act, regardless of consent and the age of the ~~child~~ student. Failure to report such conduct may result in the suspension or revocation of an administrator's license by the State Board of Education.

This reporting requirement applies in addition to any duty to report suspected child abuse in accordance with state law and policy 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety, as applicable.

Legal References: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 7926; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; G.S. 14-27.32, -202.4; 115C-47(18), -270.35(b); 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0372, .0373 ~~-.0312, .0601, .0602~~; State Board of Education Policies EVAL-014, LICN-007, NCAC-039

Cross References: Governing Principle – Removal of Barriers (policy 1700), Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 1725/4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 1726/4036/7237), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety (policy 4240/7312), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 4329/7311), Criminal Behavior (policy 4335), School Volunteers (policy 5015), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Employee Use of Social Media (policy 7335)

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: April 12, 2021;

Criminal or other illegal behavior is prohibited. Any student whom the principal reasonably believes has engaged in criminal behavior on school premises or at school activities will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, as stated in applicable Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") policies, and also may be criminally prosecuted.

School officials shall cooperate fully with any criminal investigation and prosecution. School officials shall independently investigate any criminal behavior that also violates school rules or board policy.

A. STUDENTS CHARGED WITH OR CONVICTED OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

The superintendent and principal may take reasonable or legally required measures to preserve a safe, orderly environment when a student has been charged with or convicted of a serious crime, regardless of whether the alleged offense was committed on school grounds or was related to school activities. Depending upon the circumstances, including the nature of the crime or alleged crime, the child's age, and the publicity within the school community, reasonable or legally required efforts may include changing a student's classroom assignment or transferring the student to another school. Transfer to an alternative school may be made in accordance with the criteria established in policy 3470/4305, Alternative Learning Programs/Schools. The student will continue to be provided with educational opportunities unless and until the student is found to have violated board policy or school rules and is suspended or expelled in accordance with procedures established in board policy.

B. REPORTING CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

A school employee is permitted to report to law enforcement an assault by a student on a school employee. Principals or other supervisors shall not, by threats or in any other manner, intimidate or attempt to intimidate the school employee from doing so.

Principals must immediately report to law enforcement the following acts when they have personal knowledge or actual notice from school personnel that such acts have occurred on school property, regardless of the age or grade of the perpetrator or victim: (1) assault resulting in serious personal injury; (2) sexual assault; (3) sexual offense; (4) rape; (5) kidnapping; (6) indecent liberties with a minor; (7) assault involving the use of a weapon; (8) possession of a firearm in violation of the law; (9) possession of a weapon in violation of the law; and (10) possession of a controlled substance in violation of the law. A principal who willfully fails to make a required report to law enforcement will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

The principal or designee shall notify the superintendent or designee in writing or by e-mail of any report made by the principal to law enforcement. Such notice must occur by the end of the workday in which the incident occurred, when reasonably possible, but not later than the end of the following workday. The superintendent must inform the board of

any such reports. In addition, the principal or designee must notify the parents of students who are alleged to be victims of any reported offenses.

Certain crimes must be reported to the Department of Public Instruction ~~State Board of Education~~ in accordance with ~~State Board of Education Policy SSCH-000~~ 16 N.C.A.C. 6E.0107.

Legal References: Gun-Free Schools Act, 20 U.S.C. 7961; G.S. 14-17, -18, 27.21, -27.22, -27.24 through -27.27, -27.29, -27.30, -27.33, -32 through -34.10, -39, -87, -202, -202.1, -202.2, -269.2; ch. 90 art. 5; 115C-47(56); -288(g);- 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0107. ~~State Board of Education Policy SSCH-000~~

Cross References: Alternative Learning Programs/Schools (policy 3470/4305), Drugs and Alcohol (policy 4325), Theft, Trespass and Damage to Property (policy 4330), Assaults and Threats (policy 4331), Weapons, Bomb Threats, Terrorist Threats and Clear Threats to Safety (policy 4333), School-Level Investigations (policy 4340)

Adopted: February 9, 2015

Revised: January 11, 2016; November 14, 2016; August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); February 8, 2021 (Legal references only);

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Policy Code:

7232

The board prohibits unlawful discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, national origin, military affiliation, genetic information, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity), age (40 or older), disability, or other unlawful grounds. Harassment is a form of unlawful employment discrimination. The board recognizes that all forms of harassment of employees or applicants is harmful behavior that negatively impacts the workplace environment.

Any employee who engages in discrimination or harassment prohibited by this policy or who contributes to the development of a hostile work environment is subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

A. DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

Discrimination is any act or failure to act, whether intentional or unintentional, by an employee or agent of the school system that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership or that of an associate in a legally-protected class.

Discrimination in employment based on the characteristics listed above is prohibited in all employment-related practices, including hiring, compensation, terms, conditions, and other privileges of employment, except when sex, age, or physical requirements are essential occupational qualifications.

B. HARASSMENT PROHIBITED

Harassment prohibited by this policy is unwelcome conduct based on race, color, religion, national origin, military affiliation, genetic information, age (40 or older), sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity), or disability where:

1. enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment; or
2. the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive, even if the complaining individual is not the intended target.

A single incident of harassment, if physically threatening or humiliating, can create a hostile work environment. The complaining individual need not be the target of the harassment.

Examples of unwelcome conduct that may violate this policy include, but are not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference

with work performance.

Petty slights, annoyances, simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) are not harassment under this policy, nor are reasonable performance management actions taken to direct and control how work is performed or to monitor and give feedback on work performance. The exercise of legitimate authority administered in a professional and constructive manner is not harassment under this policy.

C. SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROHIBITED

Sexual harassment is a particular type of workplace harassment. Sexual harassment prohibited by this policy may also violate policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, and in such cases school officials must proceed in accordance with the requirements of that policy.

Prohibited sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or is directed at a person because of the person's sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity), when:

1. submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment;
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct is made the basis for decisions affecting a person's employment; or
3. the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility that is based on actual or perceived gender and sexual stereotypes, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Consensual conduct between adults that is not directed at a third party is not sexual harassment.

D. REPORTING DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Applicants and employees should promptly report orally or in writing any instance of alleged or potential discrimination, including harassment, to their principal or supervisor or the senior human resources official. Upon receiving a written complaint, the principal, supervisor, or senior human resources official shall promptly investigate the written complaint and cause or recommend appropriate corrective action if the written complaint is substantiated. Oral reports of violations may be investigated at the discretion of the school officials designated above. All reports and complaints of harassment under this policy will be investigated in a manner that protects the employee or applicant and maintains confidentiality to the greatest extent possible as permitted by law.

E. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

The board prohibits retaliation against any person for making a report or complaint of a violation of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or participating in the investigation of a reported violation of this policy. No reprisals will be taken by the board against a complaining party or other individual who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment. Any person who is found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Acts of retaliation may also be subject to policy 1760/7280, Prohibition Against Retaliation.

Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 110; Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e *et seq.*, 29 C.F.R. pt. 1604; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. 4301 *et seq.*; Bostock v. Clayton County, 590 U.S. ___, 140 S. Ct. 1731 (2020); G.S. 143-422.2

Cross References: Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 4020/7230), Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 1725/4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 1726/4036/7237), Prohibition Against Retaliation (policy 1760/7280), Recruitment and Selection of Personnel (policy 7100)

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: April 12, 2021



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

Watauga County Schools (WCS) Improvement Plan for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Mental Health (SMH) (per NC SBOE Policy SHLT-003)

Note: PSUs whose District MTSS teams have completed the Core SEL Practices course and developed a Core SEL implementation plan around instruction, curriculum, and environment will be well situated to develop a compliant local improvement plan for promoting student health and well-being by July 1, 2021, per SHLT-003 requirements.

In addition, it is strongly recommended that a local needs assessment and resource mapping be conducted prior to completing the improvement plan below. Completion of the SHAPE Quality Assessment and/or use of the needs assessment and resource mapping tools on the NCDPI SEL and Crisis Response Practice Guide will provide the data needed for the targeted improvement planning below.

WCS Compelling Why & Vision for SEL and School Mental Health Improvement: Watauga County Schools will provide students and staff with the necessary resources for mental health support, as well as providing students with a comprehensive program of social/emotional learning opportunities. The district will use experienced Student Services staff and professional external collaborators to accomplish positive outcomes in social/emotional learning and mental health support. These supports will lead to improved student academic performance and a school climate of health and safety.

CORE SEL and Mental Wellness Supports

Content	Action Items/Status	Person(s) responsible & Timeline	Helpful Resources
SEL and MH Prevention Strengths & Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District schools will implement SEL programming within the CASEL framework of competencies. Each district school will deliver SEL content across specific themes. District Central Office staff will continue to support and coach school staff on MTSS SEL/Behavior frameworks EC representatives and Student Services staff will continue to develop communication network for referral and placement in day treatment programs for elementary and middle school students Continue to strengthen CORE & Supplemental interventions of MTSS process at K-8 sites and Watauga High Continue process of increasing student knowledge and understanding of mental health literacy 	<p>Student Services Director and School Counselors assigned to each school site. An outline of themes for SEL implementation will be submitted to the director by September 30 of each school year</p> <p>Director of Continuous Improvement (MTSS Coordinator) will provide periodic coaching sessions</p> <p>Directors of Student Services & Exceptional Children Programs, EC Program Specialist, Behavior Liaisons, and representative School Social workers, & School Counselors will meet twice per year to review program protocols</p> <p>MTSS Coordinator & members of Curriculum Team will continue coaching with school-based MTSS teams- ongoing</p> <p>Student Services staff- classroom guidance lessons and ongoing interactions</p>	<p><u>FAM-S (MTSS)</u> YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) Annual School Health Services Report Healthy Active Children report PowerSchool data Say Something App data <u>SHAPE</u> (School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation) ECATS MTSS Early Warning System data <u>District Report Card</u> data <u>Racial Equity Report Card</u> data</p>
Describe existing WCS SEL/ MH prevention initiatives	<p>WCS Prevention Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compassionate Schools Model 	<p>All WCS schools have adopted the Compassionate Schools model</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTSS prevention activities • GEAR UP – Various SEL activities used at the high school level, and 7th & 8th grade • Collaboration with Watauga Compassionate Communities Initiative (WCCI) • Peer Group Connections (PGC) – High school upperclassmen mentor selected 9th grade students in transition to high school • Character Education & Comprehensive School Counseling (NC Guidance Essential Standards) 	<p>which emphasizes trauma-informed interventions – each school maintains a Compassionate Schools team –meets as needed</p> <p>District MTSS team meets weekly to plan. School-based teams meet as needed. Panorama platform is used for “playbook” resources and universal behavior screening</p> <p>GEAR UP coordinator and school counselors- ongoing</p> <p>School social workers and other staff plan trauma-informed activities with staff & students at all levels- ongoing</p> <p>GEAR UP coordinator, HS Student Services department chair, Healthful Living teachers- daily</p> <p>School counselors- daily</p>	
Build/Align Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCS will implement a 6 hour mental health training program for all certified staff (as well as teacher assistants) • Adopt Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) for district schools 	<p>District Leadership Team (Principals), Central Services Leadership Team (Student Services Director)- implemented in first 6 months of the 2021-22 school year</p> <p>Student Services staff will utilize the C-SSRS when warranted</p>	<p><u>FAM-S</u></p> <p><u>SEL in Homes and Communities</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Student Services support staffing ratios: Current ratios: School Counselors: (K-8) 1:286 (9-12) 1:359 School Social Workers: 1:917 School Psychologists: 1:1147 School Nurses: 1:509 Faith Partners Collaborative established in 2015. To engage faith-based organizations, with the goal of building school, family, and community partnerships to strengthen SEL and MH prevention School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) continues to promote mental health initiatives and staff wellness 	<p>Student Services Director- annually</p> <p>Student Services Director, School Social Workers, School Counselors, & other school personnel- meets quarterly</p> <p>SHAC Chair- meets quarterly</p>	
Align with Academic Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) provides a framework for classroom teachers, support personnel, and school administrators to align the facilitation of social/emotional learning (SEL) opportunities with academic objectives NC SEL standards become more fully integrated with content areas of district curriculum Educate the whole child by intentional integration of SEL into content areas, guided by the NC SEL Standards Final Mapping Documents 	<p>District MTSS team, MTSS coordinator, curriculum directors, & classroom teachers- daily</p> <p>District Leadership Team, curriculum directors, classroom teachers- daily</p> <p>District curriculum staff, school-based administration, & classroom teachers- daily</p>	<p>NC SEL Standards Mapping Documents</p> <p>Webinar Series Recordings: Integrating SEL into the Content Areas</p> <p>Aligning SEL and Academic Objectives</p> <p>Aligned SEL Sample Lesson Plan</p>
SEL/MH prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEL/MH Prevention Curricula: 	School-based SEL plans- ongoing	Evidence-based Programs Decision

curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Second Step *Coping Power *Superflex *Sanford Harmony *Zones of Regulation *Check & Connect *Check In/Check Out 		Tree NC Professional Teaching Standard II CASEL Supportive School/Classroom Environment
SEL/MH prevention instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *CORE Instruction *Explicit SEL Instruction *Healthful Living curriculum *Classroom Guidance (Various) 	Student Services staff implement programming- ongoing	
SEL/MH prevention environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *CASEL Framework 		
SEL and MH prevention Data Evaluation -student data (screening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panorama SEL survey of 3rd thru 12th grade students • MTSS process for continuous improvement using FAM-S instrument 	<p>Students will be screened by September 30 of 2021-22 school year</p> <p>MTSS coordinator; Spring, 2022</p>	Create SEL/ MH Data Evaluation Plan School Mental Health Quality Guide: Screening MTSS Assessment Guidelines

System of Interventions for SEL and Mental Health

Content & Time	Action Items/Status	Person(s) responsible & Timeline	Helpful Resources
<i>Early Intervention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify students who are at risk of developing SEL and/or mental health issues at school • Identify students experiencing SEL and/or mental health issues at school 	<p>Universal screening by use of Panorama program for 3rd thru 12th grade at least 3 times per school year</p> <p>Student Services teams meet weekly to identify MH issues with students</p>	<p>MTSS Module 2.4 Develop a Behavior/ Social-Emotional and Attendance Component to System of Interventions</p> <p>ECATS Early Warning System</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide intervention for at-risk or struggling students • Annually review of crisis intervention policies, practices, and personnel • Annually review of discipline policies, practices, and personnel • Ensure PSU is included in local community emergency preparedness plan 	<p>ASC center staffing at high school weekly to identify students with MH challenges</p> <p>District and school problem solving teams to provide ongoing review of individual assessment data</p> <p>Student Services staff on a daily basis will provide interventions with at-risk students</p> <p>District Crisis Team to meet three times per year to review policy & procedures</p> <p>Students Services Director, high school administrative team, and other selected participants to review discipline policies and practices- annually</p> <p>Student Services Director, selected staff, Emergency Management Director, SRO supervisor, and other selected emergency preparedness staff to review plans- annually</p>	
<i>Treatment, Referral, Re-entry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to school-based and community-based services for students and their families 	<p>Student Services Director updating MOA's with school-based therapy providers Children's Hope Alliance & Focus, Inc.- annually. Continue to pursue other services with LME/MCO Vaya approved providers</p>	<p><u>Resources for Early Intervention and Treatment</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide separate day treatment/mental health programs at both the K-5 and 6-8 grade levels ● Formalize protocol for students re-entering school following acute/residential mental health treatment 	<p>Staff of FOCUS, LLC.; EC faculty, Student Services and related staff at Blowing Rock School (K-5 grades program) & Cove Creek School (6-8 grades program); admin. Staff; EC Director, EC Program Specialist; & Student Services Director</p> <p>Student Services Director, EC Director, EC Program Specialist, and other selected staff- 2021-22 school year</p>	
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Improvement Plan Review

- Update at each team meeting
- Review quarterly based on evaluation data

WATAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS - Mental Health Training Plan

Introduction

In June, 2020, Session Law 2020-7 was approved by the North Carolina General Assembly. It is an act to require the state board of education to adopt a school-based mental health policy and to require PreK-12 school units to adopt and to implement a school-based mental health plan that includes a mental health training program and a suicide risk referral protocol.

The NC State Board of Education then adopted SHLT-003:School-Based Mental Health Policy that aligns with legislation and details compliance requirements.

Beginning July 1, 2021, current licensed staff, including principals, assistant principals, general education teachers, exceptional children program teachers, instructional directors, and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) identified by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, speech language pathologists, media coordinators) AND specific classified staff such as OT, PT, Behavior Support Liaisons, and teacher assistants who support classroom teachers will need to complete a minimum of six **(6) hours** of mental health and social/emotional training as outlined in this mental health training plan. The six (6) hours of training will be completed by each of the above-referenced staff using the Vector training modules. The online training must be completed by the identified Watauga Schools staff by **December 31, 2021.**

Newly hired personnel (starting August 10, 2021 and later) who meet the above designations will also complete these training modules by December 31, 2021.

In addition, newly hired personnel will also complete an additional two (2) hours of legislative required training on child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention.

Following the first year of adoption of these training requirements, staff members will be required to complete two (2) hours of training on child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention in even numbered years.

Professional development for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) beyond the Vector Solutions online training will be designed to meet the professional needs of the respective disciplines. The additional training must include the following topics: (1) The role of SISP; (2) Procedures for mental health referral and access for support; (3) Intervention strategies with students (SEL & mental health); (4) Referral and follow-up for services; (5) Training on the Columbia SSRS suicide risk protocol.

The Watauga Schools Human Resources Department will work with school administrators and the Student Services Director to award CEU credit for completing the training modules.

Below are training modules for employees to meet the requirements of the Watauga County Schools Mental Health Plan. Each employee can choose from the following list to meet the required six (6) hours needed by staff. These modules are to be completed by the staff member by December 31, 2021.

Vector Solutions: Vector Training, K-12 Edition

<u>Category</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Time</u>
Health	Student Mental Health: Awareness, Intervention & Referral	20 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Dating Violence	22 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Youth Suicide (Jason Flatt Act)	60 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Student Drug & Alcohol Abuse	33 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Prescription & Opioid Abuse: Impact on Students	25 minutes
Health	Stress Management	31 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Self-Injury & Cutting	23 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Gang Awareness	35 minutes
Social & Behavioral	De-escalation Strategies	23 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Students experiencing homelessness	28 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Bullying: Recognition & Response	23 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Making Schools Safe & Inclusive for LGBTQ Students	36 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Cultural Competence & Racial Bias	18 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Disruptive Student Behavior	35 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Communication Styles & Skills	11 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Hazing Awareness & Prevention	21 minutes

TOTAL TIME: Licensed personnel and classified staff who work directly with students must complete 360 minutes of the above choices.

Newly hired licensed personnel and classified staff who work directly with students (2021-22 school year hires) must complete the following additional courses (Two hours)

Social & Behavioral	Child Abuse: Mandated Reporting (NC)	32 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Child Abuse: Identification & Intervention	35 minutes
Social & Behavioral	Human Trafficking	60 minutes
<u>TOTAL TIME:</u>		<u>127 minutes</u>

A. PURPOSE

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) maintains high academic expectations for all students and believes that all students are capable of academic growth. Students should be afforded as many opportunities as possible to demonstrate academic achievement prior to progressing to the next level of study. Students will be promoted to the next level of study as described in this policy.

B. STUDENT PROMOTION STANDARDS

The superintendent shall develop (1) proposed promotion standards and (2) a process to be used in determining a student’s readiness to progress to the next level of study and shall submit the standards and process to the board for approval. The standards will be based, in part, upon proficiency in reading. The standards and process must provide multiple criteria for assessing a student’s readiness to progress to the next level of study, such as standardized test scores, formative and diagnostic assessments, grades, a portfolio or anthology of the student’s work, research-based standards for assessing developmental growth and, when appropriate, any other factors deemed relevant. The standards and process will incorporate all state law and State Board of Education policy requirements, including those for the assessment and promotion of third grade students as described in G.S. 115C-83.6 *et seq.* and State Board of Education Policies KNEC-002 and -003.

Principals shall ensure that the promotion standards are used by teachers and school administrators in assessing each student’s readiness to progress to the next level of study. Principals have the authority to promote or retain students based upon the standards approved by the board and any applicable standards set by the State Board of Education.

To reduce the number of students who do not meet promotion standards, the board directs school administrators and teachers to address the needs of students who are not making adequate academic progress as required by policy 3405, Students at Risk of Academic Failure.

C. DIPLOMA STANDARDS

To receive a North Carolina high school diploma, a student must complete the requirements set forth in policy 3460, Graduation Requirements.

D. APPEALS OF PROMOTION DECISIONS**1. Appeal to the Superintendent**

Within five workdays of receiving the principal’s written decision to promote or retain a student, the student’s parents may appeal the decision to the superintendent. The superintendent may overturn the principal’s decision only upon a finding that

the principal's decision was arbitrary and capricious (i.e., without a rational basis) or was otherwise an abuse of discretion.

The superintendent must render a decision within 10 workdays of receiving the appeal. The superintendent may support the principal's decision, remand it back to the principal for consideration of additional issues, or reverse the decision.

The superintendent's findings must be in writing and must be provided to the parents.

2. Appeal to the Board of Education

The superintendent's decision to promote or retain a student may be appealed to the board in accordance with the procedures set forth in subsection E.5 of policy 4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.

E. READING CAMPS

The board will provide reading camp opportunities as required by law at no fee for students who have not yet demonstrated reading proficiency on a third grade level at the end of third grade and for first and second grade students whose demonstrated reading comprehension is below grade level. The superintendent or designee shall encourage parents of eligible students to enroll their students in a reading camp. To the extent resources permit, the board will offer fee-based reading camp opportunities to students who have successfully demonstrated reading proficiency appropriate for a third grade student and to first and second grade students who have demonstrated appropriate developmental abilities in reading comprehension. Annually, the board will establish criteria for priority enrollment in its fee-based reading camps and will set the attendance fee at an amount not to exceed the statutory limit. The superintendent or designee shall notify interested parents of the application procedure for the fee-based reading camps.

F. PROMOTION STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

To the extent possible, students with disabilities must be held to the same promotion standards as all other students. However, for students who take alternative assessments in lieu of the end-of-grade (EOG) or end-of-course (EOC) tests, promotion decisions must be based on criteria recommended by the IEP team. The IEP Team shall make a recommendation to the principal for special placement. The principal shall determine the student's placement. The superintendent/designee shall review the recommendation before special placement is made. The school principal has the ultimate responsibility for placement and grading of students in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

All intervention strategies and other opportunities, benefits, and resources that are made available to students without disabilities must be made available to those students with disabilities who are subject to the student promotion standards. Such opportunities must be in addition to the special education services provided to the student.

G. CREDIT BY DEMONSTRATED MASTERY

The superintendent shall provide opportunities for students in grades 9 through 12 to earn course credit by demonstrating mastery of course material without first completing the regular period of classroom instruction in the course. Students in grades 6 through 8 may earn credit by demonstrated mastery for high school courses offered in middle school. To earn credit by demonstrated mastery, students must demonstrate a deep understanding of the content standards and application of knowledge through a multi-phase assessment, in accordance with standards established by the State Board of Education and any additional standards established by the superintendent.

H. CREDIT RECOVERY

Students who fail a high school course may retake parts of the course through credit recovery to earn credit for the course. Credit recovery delivers a subset of the blueprint of the original course in order to specifically address deficiencies in a student's mastery of the course and target specific components of a course necessary for completion. A pre-assessment of the student's understanding of the course material will be administered at the beginning of the course and the credit recovery will be tailored to meet the needs of the individual student. The length of a credit recovery course is dictated by the skills and knowledge the student needs to recover and not a fixed length of seat time.

Any EOC exam associated with the credit recovery course will be administered no later than 30 days upon completion of the credit recovery course. The credit recovery will be graded as pass or fail and will not impact the student's grade point average. The original grade for the course will remain on the student's transcript.

The superintendent shall develop procedures addressing the implementation of credit recovery opportunities across the school system.

I. REPEATING A COURSE FOR CREDIT**1. Repeating a Previously Failed Course**

As provided in State Board of Education policy CCRE-001, high school students who fail a course for credit may repeat that course. To take advantage of this option, the student must repeat the entire course. ~~Beginning with the 2015-16 school year,~~ When a student initially fails a high school course or college level course taken for high school credit and successfully repeats the course for credit, the new course grade will replace the original failing grade for the course on the student's transcript and in calculations of the student's GPA, class rank, and honor roll eligibility. The superintendent may develop procedures for students to indicate their intent to repeat a course for credit under this paragraph and may establish any other rules as necessary and consistent with State Board policy.

2. Repeating a Course for which Credit was Earned (Grade Replacement)

The board recognizes that high school students may need to repeat a course for which they have earned credit in order to increase their understanding of the course content, to improve skill mastery, or to meet postsecondary goals. Students may repeat a course for which they have previously earned credit, subject to the following preconditions and any other reasonable rules established by the superintendent:

- a. the student must have earned a letter grade of C or lower in the course on the first attempt;
- b. the student must make a written request to repeat the course;
- c. the principal or designee must approve the request;
- d. there must be space available after seats have been assigned to students who are taking the course for the first time or repeating a previously failed course;
- e. the course to be repeated must be a duplicate of the original class and must be taken during the regular school day;
- f. upon completion of the repeated course, the new course grade will replace the student's original grade on the student's transcript and in calculations of the student's GPA, class rank, and honor roll eligibility, regardless of whether the later grade is higher or lower than the student's original mark;
- g. credit towards graduation for the same course will be given only once;
- h. a course may be repeated only one time; and
- i. students may repeat a maximum of four previously passed courses during their high school careers.

The superintendent shall require notice to students and parents of these preconditions and of any other relevant information deemed advisable by the superintendent.

J. ACCELERATION

Some students may need less time to learn the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to challenge these students by expanding the curriculum, providing opportunities to explore subjects in greater detail or providing different types of educational experiences. To challenge a student sufficiently, the principal may reassign the student to a different class or level of study and/or may identify concurrent enrollment or other curriculum expansion options (see policy 3101, Dual Enrollment).

The principal, after consulting with the professional staff and the student's parents, may determine that skipping a grade level is appropriate.

K. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Superintendent's Report to the Board

At least on an annual basis, the superintendent shall provide the board with the following information for each school:

- a. aggregate student performance scores on state-mandated tests and any other standardized tests used by a school or the school system;
- b. the number and percentage of students retained and/or not meeting the standards for their grade level;
- c. the number and percentage of third grade students exempt from mandatory third grade retention by category of exemption as listed in state law; and
- d. remedial or additional educational opportunities provided by the school system and the success of these efforts in helping students meet promotion standards.

2. Report to the North Carolina State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction

Pursuant to statutory requirements and standards established by the Department of Public Instruction, all required information regarding student performance will be provided annually to the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction.

3. Publication on the School System Website

Information about the reading performance of first, second, and third grade students will be posted on the school system website in accordance with state law.

L. RESOURCES

Consistent with the objective of improving student performance, the board will provide schools with maximum flexibility in the allocation of state funds. School personnel are expected to budget financial resources in a manner that will meet the standards established in this policy. The board will consider requests to transfer funds from other funding allotment categories to intervention strategies as part of the school improvement plan submitted by school officials. All funds will be used in a fiscally sound manner in accordance with policy 8300, Fiscal Management Standards.

M. NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS

The superintendent or designee shall provide information regarding promotion standards to all students and parents. In addition, if a kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade student (1) is demonstrating difficulty with reading development or (2) is not reading at grade level, the student's teacher shall provide the student's parents timely written notice advising that if the student is not demonstrating reading proficiency by the end of third grade, the student will be retained, unless exempt from mandatory retention for good cause. Parents are encouraged to help their children meet the promotion standards and will have opportunities to discuss the promotion standards and procedures with teachers and the principal. Information provided to parents should be in the parents' native language when appropriate foreign language resources are readily available.

The teacher of a student who does not meet promotion standards must notify the student's parents that the student has failed to meet the standards for progression to the next level of study and must provide the parents with information concerning retesting, intervention, review, and appeal opportunities. When a student is to be retained, the principal shall provide the student's parents written notice of the retention and, if the student will be retained in accordance with G.S. 115C-83.7(a) for failure to demonstrate reading proficiency, (1) written notice of the reason the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption as provided in G.S. 115C-83.7(b) and (2) a description of proposed reading interventions that will be provided to the student to remediate identified areas of reading deficiency. Teachers shall provide parents of students retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a) at least monthly written reports on student progress toward reading proficiency. The evaluation of a student's progress will be based upon the student's classroom work, observations, tests, assessments, and other relevant information.

N. CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES

As required by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and policy 4155, Assignment to Classes, school administrators have the authority to exercise flexibility in waiving course or program prerequisites or other preconditions for the placement of children of military families in courses or programs offered by the school system.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -45(c), -47, -81.5, -83.2, -83.3, -83.6, -83.7, -83.8, -83.9, -83.10, -83.11, -105.21, -174.11, -288(a), -407.5; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, KNEC-002, KNEC-003

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 4010), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Dual Enrollment (policy 3101), Students at Risk of Academic Failure (policy 3405), School Improvement Plan (policy 3430), Graduation Requirements (policy 3460), Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Assignment to Classes (policy 4155), Fiscal Management Standards (policy 8300)

Other Resources: *Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners*, (N.C. Department of Public Instruction), available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing->

and-school-accountability/testing-policy-and-operations/testing-students-identified-english-learners; Read to Achieve Repository, available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/early-learning-read-achieve/k-3-literacy>

Adopted: July 11, 2016

Revised: July 10, 2017; March 15, 2018 (Legal references only); February 11, 2019; August 12, 2020 (Legal references only); _____

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Policy Code:

3460

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them to be career and college ready and productive members of society.

In order to graduate from high school, students must meet the following requirements:

1. successful completion of all course unit requirements as described in Section A; and
2. successful completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation instruction and pass a skills test.; and
3. successful completion of all other requirements mandated by the board, as provided in this policy.

The principal shall ensure that students and parents are aware of all graduation requirements. Guidance~~Guidance~~School counseling program staff shall assist students in selecting their high school courses to ensure that students are taking all of the required units and selecting electives consistent with their post-graduation plans. For students who have transferred to the school system during high school or who, for other reasons, have completed course work outside of the school system, the principal shall determine what course work will be applied as credit toward graduation. The principal shall consider the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and the requirements of subsection C.3 of this policy in determining the graduation requirements for children of military families.

A. COURSE UNITS REQUIRED

All students must fulfill the course unit requirements of the Future-Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. The table in subsection A.1 below lists the course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study applicable to students who entered ninth grade for the first time during the 2013-14 school year or thereafter. Students who entered the ninth grade for the first time before the 2013-14 school year should consult their school counselor to determine applicable course unit requirements for graduation.

In accordance with policy 3101, Dual Enrollment, and State Board of Education requirements, students may earn high school credit for college courses completed. In addition, students may earn credit for certain high school courses in the Future-Ready Core Course of Study completed while in middle school, as authorized by the State Board of Education. Students also have the opportunity to meet course unit requirements without completing the regular period of classroom instruction by demonstrating mastery of the course material in accordance with policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability, and State Board of Education requirements. Watauga High School students may earn one or two units of credit upon successful completion of a course, depending on how the course

is offered.

All awards of high school course credit must be consistent with State Board of Education requirements. Any inconsistency between board policy and State Board graduation requirements will be resolved by following the State Board requirements. While the board endeavors to keep its policy up to date with current State Board of Education graduation requirements, students should verify current requirements with their guidance/school counselors when planning course schedules or making other decisions based on graduation requirements. Watauga High School students may graduate and receive a high school diploma when a combination of the following state and local requirements are met:

1. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time before 2020-2021~~in 2013-2014 and Thereafter~~

Courses Required*	State Requirements/ Local Requirements
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)
Social Studies	4 (including American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics; American History Parts I and II; and World History)****
Health/P.E.	1 beginning for the Class of 2025/ 2- one in Health; one in P.E. for Class of 2021-Class of 2024
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)*****
Total Credits	22***** beginning with the Class of 2025 23 for Class of 2021- Class of 2024

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

** Students entering ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2014-15 school year have alternate math course options. See SBE Policy GRAD-004.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <http://maccss.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/file/view/Math%20Options%20Chart%209.5.2014.pdf/522504358/Math%20Options%20Chart%209.5.2014.pdf>

**** American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics must follow the North

Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by an AP/IB/CIE course, dual enrollment, or any other course that does not fully address the NCSCOS. See SBE Policy GRAD-004.

***** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two credits of a single world language.

***** Students may earn course credit for the successful completion of courses through a university, community college, or distance learning. (See Watauga County Board of Education Policy 3101: Dual Enrollment and Policy 3102: Online Instruction)

2. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required	State Requirements/ Local Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management)
Science	2 (including Applied Science and Biology)
Social Studies	2 (including American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics; and American History I or American History II)
Health/P.E.	1 beginning for the Class of 2025/ 2- one in Health; one in P.E. for Class of 2021-Class of 2024
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)
Occupational Preparation	6 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III, and IV, which require 150 hours of school-based training, 225 hours of community-based training, and 225 hours of paid employment*)
Electives	0
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of IEP objectives • Career Portfolio
Total Credits	22** beginning with the Class of 2025 23 for Class of 2021- Class of 2024

* Paid employment is the expectation; however, when paid employment is not available, 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship experience, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community service hours may substitute for 225 hours of paid employment.

**Students may earn course credit for the successful completion of courses through a university, community college, or distance learning. (See Watauga County Board of Education Policy 3101: Dual Enrollment and Policy 3102: Online Instruction)

B. HIGH SCHOOL FINAL EXAMS AND END-OF-COURSE TESTING

High school students must take all end-of-course (EOC) tests and Career and Technical Education (CTE) State Assessments required by the State Board of Education and pursuant to policy 3410, Testing and Assessment Program. Students shall attain passing scores on exit standards adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education and administered

by Watauga County Schools.

C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The board adopts the following policies with regard to graduation.

1. Honor Graduates

Honor graduates may be designated by principals on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent. Recognition of honor graduates may be included in graduation programs.

2. Students with Disabilities

Graduation requirements must be applied to students with disabilities to the extent required by state and federal law and State Board policy.

3. Children of Military Families

In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of military families, the board adopts the following policy provisions for students to whom the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children applies.

a. Waiver Requirements

Specific course work required for graduation will be waived if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another school system. If a waiver is not granted, school administrators shall provide the student with reasonable justification for the denial. If a waiver is not granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the superintendent or designee shall provide the student with an alternative means of acquiring the required course work so that the student may graduate on time.

b. Testing Requirements for Graduation

The superintendent shall accept the following in lieu of any local testing requirements for graduation: (1) the end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; (2) national norm-referenced achievement tests; or (3) alternative testing. If these alternatives are not feasible for a student who has transferred in his or her senior year, subsection c below will apply.

c. Transfers During Senior Year

If a child of a military family who has transferred at the beginning of or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the school system

after all of the alternatives listed above have been considered and the student meets the graduation requirements at his or her sending school, then school officials from the school system shall collaborate with the sending school system to ensure that the student will receive a diploma from the sending board of education.

4. Early Graduation

Graduation prior to that of one's class may be permitted on the basis of criteria approved by the board upon recommendation by the superintendent.

5. Graduation Certificates, Transcripts, and Participation

Graduation certificates will be awarded to eligible students in accordance with the standards set forth in State Board policy.

Transcripts may be issued to all students receiving a diploma or certificate. The transcript shall provide all information required by State Board of Education policy GRAD-009 and/or other State Board policies as appropriate.

Participation in graduation and baccalaureate ceremonies is optional. Students who have completed all graduation requirements, have paid all fees, and have the approved graduation attire and diploma may participate in graduation exercises.

Exceptional Children who have satisfactorily completed the course of study prescribed in their Individual Education Plans are eligible to participate in graduation exercises.

6. Diploma Endorsements

Students have the opportunity to earn one or more of the following diploma endorsements identifying a particular area of focused study: (1) Career Endorsement, (2) College Endorsement (two options), (3) North Carolina Academic Scholars Endorsement, and/or (4) a Global Languages Endorsement. No endorsement is required to receive a diploma.

7. Grade Replacement

Students are permitted to repeat a course for credit when they have failed a course. Students are permitted to repeat a passed course for grade replacement. The repeated course must be a seated class taken during the normal school day and must be taken within one year of initial completion of the course in question.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-12(40), 47, -81.25(c)(10)(c), -81.45(d)(1), -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5; GS 116-11(10a); 16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0309; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, GRAD-004, GRAD-007, GRAD-008, GRAD-009, GRAD-010, TEST-003

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Dual Enrollment (policy 3101), Online Instruction (policy 3102), Testing and Assessment Program (policy 3410), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Citizenship and Character Education (policy 3530), Children of Military Families (policy 4050)

Adopted: September 14, 2015

Revised: November 9, 2015; October 10, 2016; August 14, 2017; June 11, 2018; September 10, 2018; October 5, 2020; March 8, 2021

Replaces: Policy 4.04.50, Exit Documents at Graduation; policy 4.04.70, Graduation Requirements; policy 4.03.35 Accountability Standards (in part)

Student transportation services will be made available in a manner consistent with the board goals set out in policy 6300, Goals of Student Transportation Services.

A. SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The first priority of the school system transportation services is to provide eligible students transportation to and from school. The school system may make other transportation services available as funding permits and in accordance with legal requirements, Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") policy, and the following standards.

1. Yellow school buses may be used for instructional programs directly related to the curriculum when the trip and use of the bus are approved in accordance with board policy.
2. Yellow school buses may be used only for purposes expressly allowed by G.S. 115C-242.
3. Yellow school buses may not be used for athletic activities or extracurricular activities.
4. Activity buses and other vehicles meeting federal safety standards may be used for travel to athletic activities and travel to other approved school-related activities. In addition to students receiving regular school bus safety training, safety instruction will be provided to students traveling on activity buses or commercial buses, as needed.
5. The board encourages the superintendent and principals to provide transportation services to enable students at risk of not meeting promotion standards to take advantage of additional or enhanced opportunities for learning.

B. SPECIAL USE OF SCHOOL BUSES

The board may authorize special uses of yellow school buses as provided by G.S. 115C-242 and 115C-254 and of activity buses and yellow school buses as provided by G.S. 115C-243 and 115C-247. The board may also authorize the special use of activity buses for the purposes described in G.S. 66-58(c)(9b).

The superintendent shall present to the board any requests for special uses and the statutory support for allowing such authorization.

C. TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A student who is identified as having a disability following procedures in the North

Carolina *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities* will be provided with transportation services as required by law. When the school system's transportation services are unable to provide transportation for a student with a disability, the board may contract with public or private carriers to provide this service, pursuant to policy 6340, Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts.

Legal References: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*; 49 U.S.C. 30125, 30165; G.S. 66-58(c)(9a) and (9b); 115C-239, -242, -243, -247, -254; 16 N.C.A.C. 6B .0111; Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000; State Board of Education policies TRAN-000, -006; Memorandum to All Superintendents from Eddie M. Speas, Jr., Special Deputy Attorney General, January 14, 1988, available at <http://www.ncsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/AG-Memo-1988.pdf>

Cross References: School Trips (policy 3320), Goals of Student Transportation Services (policy 6300), Safety and Student Transportation Services (policy 6305), Drivers and Vehicles (6315), Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts (policy 6340)

Adopted: April 11, 2016

Replaces: Policy 2.06, Transportation

Revised: January 15, 2018;

ANNUAL INDEPENDENT AUDIT

Policy Code:

8310

The accounts of the school system and the individual schools will be audited as soon as possible after the close of each fiscal year by an independent, qualified auditor. The auditor will be selected by the Watauga County Board of Education (the "board"), and the terms and conditions will be specified in a written contract that complies with the requirements of 20 N.C.A.C. 03.0502(c). The auditor will report directly to the board.

The superintendent shall assist the board in providing for an annual independent audit that meets all requirements as provided by G.S. 115C-447 and any other relevant statute. All employees and agents of the school system having custody of public money or responsibility for keeping records of public financial or fiscal affairs shall produce all books and records requested by the auditor and provide any information relating to fiscal affairs requested by the auditor. Any employee who fails to cooperate may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and also may be found guilty of criminal conduct.

The board will receive the report and opinion of the auditor and will arrange for the auditor to present to the board the audited financial statements, compliance reports, if any, and other information as specified in the audit contract. The presentation must be in an official meeting in open session, held as soon as the audited financial statements are available but not later than 45 days after the submission of the audit report to the Secretary of the Local Government Commission.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-447; 20 N.C.A.C. 03.0502

Cross References: Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal (policy 7930), Classified Personnel: Suspension and Dismissal (policy 7940)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Replaces: Policy 6.01, Audits

Revised:

A. APPLICABILITY TO CERTAIN CLAIMS

On occasion, the Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") is presented with claims against the board from students, parents or other citizens for injuries to person or property sustained while on a board property or at a school-sponsored event. The board adopts this policy in order that it may consider and process all such claims in a fair and equitable manner, taking into consideration the economic resources available to the board.

The board will only consider claims under this policy when the applicable insurance agreement and/or coverage agreement, if any, does not provide for the consideration, settlement and/or adjustment of claims prior to legal action being filed by the claimant in a court of competent jurisdiction. Upon the filing of a complaint, the board will immediately refer all claims to the appropriate insurance company or coverage provider for appropriate action.

B. PROCEDURE FOR FILING CLAIM

All claims must be made to the superintendent in writing and must include a detailed account of how the injury occurred, whether board employees were involved, and the amount of damages suffered by the claimant. The claimant should include all supporting documentation and any other information he or she believes is relevant. The superintendent or designee shall investigate the incident and, if necessary, provide supplemental information to the board.

After receiving the claim, the board, in consultation with its attorney, will determine whether to pay the claim, deny the claim or make an offer to settle the claim.

C. SETTLEMENT

The resolution of claims requires the exercise of discretion by the board. Therefore, to treat similarly situated claimants (claimants who are alike in all relevant respects) alike, the board will be consistent in its settlement practices by using the factors listed below to evaluate all claims. The board recognizes, however, that separate claimants often will be dissimilar with respect to one or more of the relevant factors, so the final decision regarding each claim will be based upon the specific circumstances. All factors need not be given equal weight and no one factor will be controlling. In determining whether to settle a claim prior to the filing of a legal action, the board will consider the factors listed below. Before any final decision is reached, the board attorney shall ensure that these factors were considered by the board in arriving at its final decision.

1. ~~Whether there is a reasonable possibility that the potential defense costs to be paid by the board, including an estimate of personnel time and school system resources, will exceed the amount for which the case can be settled.~~

- 2.1. Whether there was a negligent act or omission by an employee or agent of the board. The extent to which an employee's actions or omissions may have caused, or contributed to, an injury.
2. Whether an employee or agent of the board intentionally caused an injury.
3. Whether an employee or agent of the board violated any board policies.
4. ~~Whether there are any affirmative~~ What, if any, defenses are available to the board in the event of litigation and the viability of those defenses based upon the facts known at the time of settlement consideration. However, the board will not assert or consider the availability of Sovereign/Governmental Immunity for any pre-litigation claim.
5. The claimant's likelihood of success in litigation.
6. The likely costs of defending the case.
- 3.7. The administrative burden and disruption that litigation would likely cause.
- 4.8. Whether the demand is within the retention or deductible level for monetary payments pursuant to any applicable insurance or liability coverage agreement and whether there is, or is likely to be, coverage under such agreements, if known.
9. Goodwill on behalf of the citizens of the school community.
10. The best use of public funds in an effective manner.

~~Each claim will be evaluated based upon the specific circumstances. All factors need not be given equal weight, and no one factor will be controlling.~~

The payment of any claim will be subject to the claimant's execution of a full release of liability in favor of the board, its employees and its agents. The release ~~will~~must be on a form approved by the board attorney.

By considering whether to settle a claim, the board does not waive any affirmative defenses available to it or its employees, including but not limited to the defenses of governmental, sovereign, qualified or public official immunity, or contributory negligence. The board may assert these defenses should the claimant choose to file a lawsuit.

Legal References: Clayton v. Branson, 170 N.C. App. 438 (2005); Dobrowolska v. City of Greensboro, 138 N.C. App. 1 (2000)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Replaces: Policy 1.10, Limited Claim Settlement

Revised:

As an individual, each employee of a local board of education retains all the rights and obligations of citizenship provided in the Constitution and laws of the State of North Carolina and the Constitution and laws of the United States of America. Employment or volunteer service with the school system does not preclude an individual from participating in political activities, such as ~~The employee's right of citizenship, involving registering, discussing political issues, and voting, campaigning for candidates or issues, running for or serving in public office, attending political events, and contributing funds to partisan groups or candidates, and participating on a committee or board that seeks to serve the welfare of the community, will not be infringed upon due to employment by the school system.~~

These political activities must not:

1. take place during work hours~~school time~~ and/or while on duty while performing official services as an employee of the board of education;
2. involve school system funds~~monies~~, materials, or resources; or
3. make use of an official school position to encourage or to coerce students, ~~or other employees, or others of the system~~ to support in any way ~~or oppose~~ a political party, candidate, or issue.

No employee of a local board of education shall:

1. Actively participate in managing a political campaign, campaign for political office, or otherwise engage in political activity while on duty or within any period during which he or she is expected to perform services for which the employee receives compensation from a local board of education.
2. Use the authority of his or her position, or utilize public funds, supplies, equipment, or vehicles to secure support for or oppose any candidate, party, or issue in an election involving candidates for office or party nominations, or affect the results thereof.
3. Utilize public funds, supplies, equipment, or vehicles for partisan purposes, political purposes, or to engage in advocating for or against issues of local, State, or federal policy.

No member of a local board of education or employee of the local board of education exercising supervisory authority shall make, issue, or enforce any rule or policy the effect of which is to interfere with the right of any employee of the local board of education as an individual to engage in political activity while not on duty or at times during which he or she is not performing services for which the employee receives compensation from the local board.

As specified in policy 1360, Official School Spokesperson, the chairperson of the board or

designee and the superintendent or designee are the official spokespersons for the school system. Employees, when exercising their rights as citizens, should take steps to ensure that their personal political activities or opinions are not erroneously attributed to the school board or the school system.

This policy should not be construed as prohibiting the impartial study and discussion of political or other controversial issues in the classroom setting. However, employees must be mindful of their responsibility to deliver the curriculum of the school system and may not present their personal political views to students in the classroom or when otherwise engaged in the instruction of students.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47(18) Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; G.S. 115C-46.1, -47(18); Boring v. Buncombe County Bd. of Educ., 136 F.3d 364 (4th Cir. 1998); Lee v. York County Sch. Div., 484 F.3d 687 (4th Cir. 2007)

Cross References: Official School Spokesperson (policy 1360)

Adopted: January 11, 2016; January 9, 2017

Replaces: Policy 3.07.10, Political Activities

Revised: