



# **ROBERTSON COUNTY SCHOOLS**

## **2023-2024 PERSONNEL HANDBOOK**

Revised November 2023

## INTRODUCTION

The material covered within this handbook is intended as a method of communicating general district employment information, rules and regulations and is not intended to diminish or enlarge any Board policy, administrative procedure or negotiated agreement. Materials contained in this handbook may be superseded by such Board policy, administrative procedure, negotiated agreement or changes in state or federal law. This handbook contains excerpts from the Robertson County Board of Education Policy Manual and is compiled as a reference for the convenience of school personnel. The excerpts should in no way be interpreted to replace the entirety of any specific Board policy. No information in this document shall be viewed as an offer, expressed or implied, as a guarantee of any employment of any duration.

### District Mission Statement

The mission of Robertson County Schools is to ensure each student is prepared to succeed in life.

### Core Beliefs

#### **Purpose**

We believe there is no profession with a greater purpose than ours. We understand our responsibilities are complex. We develop minds and character. We inspire those in our care to think, to question, and to imagine a life better than the present. We recognize there is a ripple effect within our work: well-rounded, educated students lead to improved communities, a stronger nation, and an informed society.

#### **Trust**

We believe that trust is the foundation from which all other core beliefs develop. Trust is essential if an organization is to thrive and succeed. We recognize trust is multifaceted - it involves competence, character, and contractual obligations. It is developed and earned over time through our words and our actions. We acknowledge that trust generates commitment, fosters teamwork, and promotes progress.

#### **Communication**

We believe effective communication determines whether we fall short or succeed as an organization. At a basic level, efficient communication provides guidance for our daily work. In voicing our expectations, we must be intentional and consistent. At a deeper level, our communication practices value the ideas and opinions of all involved. These practices are open, honest and purpose driven.

#### **Collaboration**

We believe collaboration creates a culture of continuous improvement. We know effective collaboration is driven by a common mission. It occurs within a context of trust and respect. Through collaboration, we support innovation, solve problems and provide for high levels of student learning. We recognize our work is too important to attempt in isolation.

#### **High Expectations**

We believe high expectations result in high performance and are the right of every individual connected to our school community. Equality, appropriate levels of challenge and accountability are necessary in a culture of high expectations. We support this belief through the decisions we make and the resources we provide. We expect success - wasted time and mediocrity are unacceptable.

#### **Respect**

We believe respect is dependent upon feeling safe, supported, engaged and valued. We know fairness, equality, truth, and civility are precursors to earning one's respect. We recognize and appreciate everyone's voice. We value diversity in individuals' backgrounds, experiences, approaches and ideas.

## **Knowledge**

We believe operating without accurate knowledge is educational malpractice. It is our responsibility to continually seek current and relevant knowledge to guide our practices. We believe this is how we reach excellence. It is also our responsibility to transfer the need for knowledge to our students. A life-long learner seeks improvement for self and for the community as a whole. Knowledge sustains our journey.

## **District Shared Vision**

Robertson County Schools will enable all students to reach or exceed high academic and career standards while empowering them to succeed in a technologically advanced and culturally diverse society.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND HIRING PRACTICES**

### **Board Policy 5.101 – Lines of Authority and Supervision**

Charts depicting the administrative organization of the school system shall be developed, maintained, and revised periodically by the director of schools. The director of schools shall establish lines of authority which shall be approved by the Board and shown on the system organizational chart.

All personnel are expected to keep the person to whom they are immediately responsible informed of their activities and shall refer matters requiring administrative action to the administrator to whom they are responsible. The administrator shall refer such matters to the next higher administrative authority when necessary.

Lines of authority do not restrict the cooperative, sensible working together of all staff members at all levels. The established lines of authority represent direction of authority and responsibility and avenues for a two-way flow of ideas to improve the program and operations of the school system.

Supervision of administrative and supervisory personnel shall be provided by the director of schools. Apprentice teachers shall be assisted by supervising teachers in the development of competencies required by the Board. Support personnel shall be supervised by the person designated on the approved job description.

The immediate supervisor has the responsibility of assigning specific duties and for giving guidance to the employee for the satisfactory performance of those duties.

### **Board Policy 5.102 – Classification Qualifications**

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL**

To be considered for certificated administrative or supervisory positions, the applicant must show the following qualifications:

1. Professional teaching certification; and
2. Administrative supervisory certification and experience in accordance with state law and State Board Rules and Regulations in the appropriate area based on the minimum of a master's degree.

Classified administrative and supervisory personnel shall possess sufficient training and experience to perform the services required and such additional qualifications as the Board and the director of schools shall determine.

## **Board Policy 5.104 – Equal Opportunity Employment**

The Board provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information or predisposition, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions are based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training.

## **Board Policy 5.106 – Application and Employment**

### **APPLICATION**

An individual desiring a position with the board shall make application to the director of schools on forms developed by his/her office. To ensure the safety and welfare of students and staff, the district shall require criminal history background checks and fingerprinting of applicants for teaching positions and any other positions that require proximity to children. If applying for a teaching position, the Director of Schools shall also check the applicant's license status in the State Board of Education's database to determine if there is a hold on that applicant's license, and if so, the reasoning behind the hold.

*(The district online application may be accessed at the district website: [rcstn.net](http://rcstn.net))*

Knowingly falsifying information shall be sufficient grounds for termination of employment and shall also constitute a Class A misdemeanor which must be reported to the District Attorney General for prosecution.

Any costs incurred to perform these background checks and fingerprinting prior to employment shall be paid by the applicant.

### *Certified Employees*

The application shall include a transcript of credits earned at the colleges or universities attended along with references from persons such as previous employers, college professors, and supervisors of student teachers. Other information shall include whether such applicant has been dismissed for cause from a school district. If previously employed by a local board of education, the applicant shall provide evidence or acceptable resignation.

No person shall be employed:

1. Who does not hold a valid license to teach or a temporary permit to teach from the State Board of Education
2. Who has been identified by the Department of Children's Services as a perpetrator of child abuse, severe child abuse, child sexual abuse, or child neglect or who poses an immediate threat to the health, safety, or welfare of children
3. Who is listed on the state's abuse of vulnerable persons registry maintained by the Department of Health or on a similar registry in another jurisdiction;
4. Who does not present a physician's certificate showing a satisfactory health record or has any contagious or communicable disease in such form that might endanger the health of school children
5. Who refuses to take and subscribe to an oath to support the Constitution of the State of Tennessee and of the United States of America

6. Who fails to make a full disclosure of any prior criminal record and any prior dismissals from employment for cause
7. Who does not receive a satisfactory background check
8. Who does not receive a satisfactory pre-employment drug screen

#### *Classified Employees*

No person shall be employed:

1. Who has any contagious or communicable disease in such form that might endanger the health of the children
2. Who has been identified by the Department of Children's Services as a perpetrator of child abuse, severe child abuse, child sexual abuse, or child neglect or who poses an immediate threat to the health, safety, or welfare of children
3. Who is listed on the state's abuse of vulnerable persons registry maintained by the Department of Health
4. Who has not complied with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
5. Who fails to make a full disclosure of any prior criminal record and any prior dismissals from employment for cause
6. Who does not receive a satisfactory background check
7. Who does not receive a satisfactory pre-employment drug screen.

#### *Pre-employment Testing*

All applicants being considered for employment by the Robertson County Board of Education shall be required to submit to a urinalysis test for the detection of the illegal use of drugs, as part of the currently required post-offer, pre-employment physical. Applicants for positions shall be given a copy of this policy in advance of the post-offer, pre-employment physical.

Applicants must acknowledge having read or had this policy explained to them and should understand that as a condition of employment they are subject to its contents. Applicants shall sign an acknowledgement prior to substance screening, permitting the summary result to be transmitted to the Executive Director of Human Resources. An applicant refusing to complete any part of the drug testing procedure shall not be considered as a valid candidate for employment, and such will be considered as a withdrawal of the individual's application for reemployment. The applicant shall not be permitted to reapply for employment with the Robertson County Board of Education for at least twelve (12) months and not until the applicant shows proof of successful completion of a drug rehabilitation program or proof that the applicant has otherwise rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in illegal drug use.

If substance screening shows a confirmed positive result for which there is no current physician's prescription, a second confirming test may be required by the Executive Director of Human Resources. If the first or any requested second confirming test is positive, any job offer may be revoked.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

#### *Certified Employees*

After checking references and receiving written recommendations, the director of schools shall hire and assign qualified applicants.

#### *Initial Employment for Certified Employees*

The Director of Schools shall notify such person, in writing, of the offer and conditions of employment. Upon receipt of employment notification, such person shall respond within the timeline established by state law.<sup>12</sup>

From the date of the written acceptance, such person is considered to be under employment with the district and is subject to all rights, privileges and duties.

#### *Classified Employees*

After checking references and receiving written recommendations from principals and/or supervisors, the director of schools shall hire and assign qualified applicants. The contract of each support employee shall contain a statement regarding the required ninety (90) day probationary period.

#### **Board Policy 1.801 – School Day**

The minimum length of the school day shall be seven (7) hours total for all grades. All teachers shall be on duty at least seven and one-half (7.5) hours and such additional time as the administrative organization requires.

#### **Board Policy 5.114 – Personnel Records**

The director of schools or his/her designee(s) shall be authorized to maintain personnel records and to permit inspection of the same, except for matters deemed confidential by law. The following personnel records shall be maintained for all employees as appropriate:

1. Employee applications and contracts
2. Professional certificates and other documents required by state and federal laws and regulations
3. Evaluations
4. Cumulative information files
5. INS Form I-9

The following guidelines shall be followed:

1. Information contained in personnel records shall be limited to job-related matters.
2. The director of schools shall be responsible for notifying all employees of the types of records kept and uses made of such records.
3. Employees shall be granted an opportunity to respond in writing to material placed in records.
4. Employee records are public records, except for matters deemed confidential by law, and shall be open for inspection during regular business hours.
5. In accordance with federal law, the district shall release information regarding the professional qualifications and degrees of teachers and the qualifications of paraprofessionals to parents upon request for any teacher or paraprofessional who is employed by a school receiving Title I funds and who provides instruction to their child at that school.
6. Members of the public may not obtain the home telephone number, personal cell phone number, bank account information, social security number, residential street address, driver license information (except where driving or operating a vehicle is considered to be a part of the employee's duties, or the results of individual teacher evaluations of an employee or of the immediate family members or household members of an employee, unless release of this information is expressly authorized by the employee.
7. A record of the person inspecting and the date of inspection shall be recorded.
8. Copies of records may be made under rules determined by the director of schools.

#### **Board Policy 5.118 – Criminal Background Investigations**

To ensure the safety and welfare of students and staff, the district requires all prospective employees to submit to a criminal background check with includes fingerprinting and a TBI and FBI criminal background check and a search of the Department of Children's Services Tennessee Sex Offender and Child Abuse Registries. All job offers and approval of

contact with students are contingent upon satisfactory results of the criminal background check. All applicants for employment must give written authorization to submit to a criminal records check. Failure on the part of an applicant to cooperate in the criminal background check process will result in denial of employment.

### **Board Policy 5.700 – Interim Employees**

Vacancies occurring after the beginning of the school year created by an employee taking a leave of absence as set for in TCA 49-5-702 may be filled on an interim basis for the remainder of the school year. Individuals filling any temporary vacancy shall have no expectation of continued employment. Said positions will be filled at the discretion of the director of schools in a manner that is the least disruptive on the educational process of students. Said positions shall be filled as quickly as possible to ensure a continuous function of the specified position.

### **TEACHER LICENSURE**

#### **Rules of the State Board of Education, Chapter 0520-02-03-.01(a)**

**Securing a license:** The educator shall be responsible for securing a license, verifying its accuracy, maintaining its validity, registering it with the employing board of education, and meeting the requirements of T.C.A. 49-5-101.

### **COMPENSATION**

#### **Tennessee Code Annotated 49-5-402(c) – Salary Ratings**

The salary ratings of principal-teachers, teachers and the director of schools and other personnel employed on a system-wide basis shall be determined on the basis of information available in the office of the commissioner on December 1 of the current school year. In the event there is no information available in the office of the commissioner on December 1 of the current year on which to rate any teacher, principal-teacher, director of schools or other personnel employed on a system-wide basis, the salary rating of such teacher, principal-teacher, director of schools or other personnel employed on a system-wide basis shall be the minimum salary as provided by the applicable state salary schedule.

#### **RCS TIMELINE TO PAY FOR TEACHING DEGREES AND EXPERIENCE**

***Degree:*** *It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the application to add a degree is submitted to the State of Tennessee Department of Education and to inform the Human Resources Department and the Payroll Department of the degree change. Official transcripts documenting the degree change must be submitted to Human Resources and placed in teacher's personnel file.* Teachers who graduate and earn a degree change prior to December 1<sup>st</sup> of the fiscal year will receive retro pay for only that current school year. No retro pay will be received for any additional degree(s) or experience submitted after one school year. Teachers will only be paid on the degree recognized on their most current teaching license. Changes to pay as a result of an additional degree will not be made until the additional degrees show on TN Compass.

**EXPERIENCE:** The form that the Tennessee Department of Education requires to verify teaching experience is available at the Robertson County Schools Finance Department. Teachers need to send a copy of the form to each school system where they have been employed. If you were employed in a Tennessee public school system prior to the current year, you should only need to verify your most recent experience. All other experience should already be on TN Compass. The experience form must be signed by the previous district's Director or Human Resources Supervisor. Forms cannot be accepted if they are signed by the principal of the school or an administrative assistant. If you have been employed in a private school, the form should be sent to the administrator for completion.

## **VERIFICATION FOR PAYMENT TO AN EMPLOYEE**

**Public School Experience:** You will be paid for public school experience that is already posted on TN Compass and for any other public school experience for which we have received the completed Tennessee experience form. It is to your advantage to have the form(s) completed as soon as possible.

**Private School/University Experience:** We will send the experience form that is completed by your private school/university to the State as soon as they show you have applied for a Tennessee teaching license. They do not accept experience forms until you have applied for your teaching license in Tennessee.

You will be paid for private or public school/university experience on the total number of years of experience verified by the State of Tennessee Department of Education starting the year that the State of Tennessee credits the experience. There will be no retro pay.

## **Board Policy 5.144**

### **Payroll Procedures**

If a payday falls on a non-working day, payroll will be on the last working day of that pay period. No advance payments will be made.

Payroll procedures shall be as follows:

1. All certified personnel shall be paid on twelve (12) month installments.
2. All ten (10) month classified personnel shall be paid on twelve (12) monthly installments.
3. All twelve (12) month classified personnel have the option to be paid on twelve monthly installments or on a biweekly schedule.
4. Substitute teachers shall be paid on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) of each month. If their payday falls on a non-working day, checks will be available on the last working day prior to the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>).

## **Board Policy 2.803 – Salary deductions**

Upon appropriate written authorization, the Board shall make deductions approved by the Board from the salary of the employee. Authorization must be made on forms provided by the Board and filed in the office of the director of schools.

Any employee may change or terminate any salary deduction upon written notification to the Board.

## **Board Policy 5.110 – Compensation Guides & Contracts**

Certified personnel must make a written contract with the Board at a fixed salary per month before entering upon their duties. The director of schools shall establish the salary rating of each person employed and shall recommend such salary rating to the Board for its approval.

Contracts for administrators and system-wide certified personnel shall include two-hundred (200) days of responsibility, plus twenty (20) days for each additional month assigned by the Board. Each contract shall provide:

1. A minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) working days;
2. A minimum of five (5) days for professional development;
3. Twelve (12) vacation days; and
4. Three (3) days as designated by the Board (teachers shall use one (1) day for parent-teacher conferences).

The school calendar adopted by the Board each year shall become part of each employee's contract.



Salaries and supplements may be paid from revenue derived from sources other than taxes, provided the revenue is deposited with and salaries paid through the Board. This includes donations or contributions from individual, civic, or other non-school related sources of funds from individual school activity funds, such as gate receipts and concessions.

### **Board Policy 5.602 – Work Schedules and Time Records**

#### **CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES**

The workday for certified employees will be a minimum of seven hours and thirty minutes and will continue until professional responsibilities to the student and the school are completed. Administrative meetings, curriculum development, student supervision, assigned duties, parent conferences, group or individual planning and extra-curricular activities may require hours beyond the stated minimum. Full-time classroom teachers shall be allotted an individual duty-free planning period of two and one-half (2 ½) hours each week to provide time for planning, preparation for effective teaching and attention to major program improvement.

#### **CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES**

Work schedules for classified employees will be established by the director of schools or the employee's immediate supervisor, consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act and provisions of this policy. Supervisors will make every effort to avoid circumstances which will require non-exempt employees to work more than forty (40) hours each work week. For purposes of compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, the workweek for school district employees will be 12:00 A.M. Saturday until 11:59 P.M. Friday.

#### **OVERTIME**

Any work performed by non-exempt employees that exceeds forty (40) hours in one workweek is considered "overtime" and will be compensated at time and one-half (1 ½) of the employee's regular rate of pay. Holidays, sick days, and other paid time off are not considered as hours worked for purposes of overtime. Non-exempt employees are prohibited from working overtime without receiving prior approval from an immediate supervisor. Supervisory personnel shall monitor employees' hours to ensure that overtime provisions of this policy are followed and ensure that all employees are properly compensated for any overtime worked. Supervisory personnel may need to adjust daily schedules to prevent non-exempt employees from working more than forty (40) hours in a work week. The Board is committed to compensating non-exempt employees for each and every hour worked. As such, the District does not expect, permit, or allow any of its employees to work "off the clock" or on an unpaid basis at any time, even if they are asked to do so by a supervisor or administrator. Examples of prohibited off-the-clock work include but are not limited to:

- Performing work outside of the regularly scheduled hours without reporting time worked;
- Performing work during the employee's meal period and not reporting the missed or interrupted meal period;
- Performing work at home and not reporting the time worked; and
- Sending or responding to school-related emails at home.

Non-exempt employees who perform work outside normal working hours are required to keep track of all time worked and immediately report that time to the employee's direct supervisor on the next regularly scheduled work day. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that all hours worked are accurately recorded. It is a violation of this policy for anyone to instruct or encourage another employee to work off-the-clock, incorrectly report hours worked, or to alter another employee's time records. Employees who are aware of possible violations of this policy should immediately report their concerns to the Department of Human Resources.

## EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

### Board Policy 5.109 – Evaluation

The evaluation of performance and its effectiveness must be a cooperative and shared endeavor on the part of the director of schools and administrative and supervisory personnel. The Board shall use a state-approved model for evaluating administrative and supervisory personnel and shall approve standard forms to be used in evaluating support personnel. The director of schools is responsible for ensuring that all administrative and supervisory personnel are evaluated annually.

#### **CERTIFIED PERSONNEL**

The Board adopts the State evaluation model. The director shall draft procedures to ensure that the model is implemented through the school system. Additionally, the director of schools shall provide information to all licensed teaching personnel regarding the nature of the evaluation and the grievance procedures prescribed by the Tennessee State Board of Education.

#### *Local Grievance Procedure*

The director of schools shall develop procedures consistent with State Law, for processing evaluation grievances.

**\*\*\*TEAM Grievance Forms and procedures are available from the district's website at the following link:**

<https://www.rcstn.net/cms/One.aspx?portalId=7606&pageId=16389>

#### **CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL**

Classified employees shall be evaluated at least once per school year. Evaluations shall be used as an aid in improving employee's performance and as a basis for continuing employment. Evaluation reports shall be discussed with the evaluated employee. Each employee shall be given a copy of the evaluation and shall sign the supervisor's copy as evidence it has been discussed.

## IN-SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### Board Policy 5.113 – In-Service and Professional Learning Opportunities

#### **IN-SERVICE EDUCATION**

In-service education is a program of planned activities designed to increase the competencies needed by all personnel in the performance of their responsibilities. Competencies are defined as the knowledge, skills and attitudes which enable personnel to perform their tasks with maximum effectiveness to increase student achievement.

#### *Administrative and Supervisory Employees*

Administrative and supervisory employees shall show evidence of continual professional growth by attendance at in-service programs and institutes, studying professional literature, meeting with other professionals for discussion, and otherwise keeping abreast of research in methodology, curriculum, and student growth and development. Each principal and administrator shall be required to attend the principal-administrator academy for instruction as required by state law and/or the Tennessee State Board of Education's rules and regulations.

#### *Certified Employees*

A system-wide in-service committee, composed of membership from a cross-section of other personnel, shall assess system-wide needs, establish priorities, develop objectives, design activities, and evaluate the in-service program. In-service credit shall not be given while performing duties which are required as part of regular teaching assignments.

### *Classified Personnel*

The immediate supervisors of classified personnel shall be responsible for providing in-service trainings. Absences to attend meetings relating to the employee's job description may be granted by the director of schools.

### **PROFESIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM**

Professional learning programs and activities shall reflect the current Tennessee State Board of Education's Standards for Professional Learning as listed below and shall reflect the needs identified in school improvement plans. The Board may pay expenses of selected personnel who participate in the training sessions conducted by the State Department of Education. The director of schools shall involve central office personnel and other employees as needed in developing the system-wide professional learning program and shall recommend it to the Board for approval.

## **EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Board Policy 5.602**

#### **ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS**

**All employees are expected to be present during all work hours. Absence without prior approval, chronic absences, habitual tardiness or abuses of designated working hours are all considered neglect of duty and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.**

### **Board Policy 5.600 – Staff Rights & Responsibilities**

In fulfilling any rights and responsibilities, employees shall give proper consideration to the educational welfare of students and ensure that no conflict exists with their actual duties.

Each staff member has the right to a work environment free from sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination/harassment.

Each staff member has the responsibility to:

1. Make themselves familiar with and abide by the laws of the state as these affect their work, the policies of the Board and the procedures designed to implement them.
2. To adhere to the Teacher Code of Ethics.
3. Exercise good judgment in selecting issues for discussion and balance the relative maturity of students and the students' right to know.
4. Be courteous and helpful in interacting and responding to parents, visitors and members of the public.
5. Keep all records and prepare and submit promptly all reports that may be required by state law, state board regulations, board policy and administrative procedures.
6. Wear appropriate dress for work according to board guidelines and local school rules

### **Board Policy 5.603 – Staff Meetings**

Staff meetings shall be held in each school for the purpose of promoting school improvement and professional growth and may be conducted by the principal, teachers or committees. Meetings shall not be called on Fridays or any day immediately preceding any holiday or other day upon which teacher attendance is not required at school except in case of emergency. The notice and agenda for any faculty meeting shall be given to the teacher involved at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meetings, except in an emergency. Teachers shall have the opportunity to suggest items for the agenda.

All staff members are expected to attend all meetings called by the administration and all in-service programs designed to improve the total school, unless excused by the person calling the meeting. Teachers' meetings may include but not be limited to:

1. Meetings of the entire staff of school
2. Meetings of teachers in the same subject area or on the same grade level
3. System-wide in-service meetings
4. Committee meetings dealing with specific problems

All professional personnel have the same responsibility to attend faculty meetings, in-service meetings, assemblies and other school activities as do other teachers.

## **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

### **Board Policy 5.108 - Notification of Arrests or DCS Investigation**

#### *Duty to Report Arrests/Criminal Citations*

All employees shall report any arrest, criminal citation or conviction to the Office of Human Resources or their immediate supervisor within 24 hours of the incident, regardless of whether or not school is in session. If the incident is reported to the employee's immediate supervisor, then the supervisor shall report the incident to the Office of Human Resources immediately. After the initial report is made, the employee must report all court appearances and changes in the status of the case to the Office of Human Resources no later than the first workday following the court appearance or change.

#### *Duty to Report DCS Investigation*

Personnel who have been named by DCS as an indicated perpetrator of child abuse are required to immediately notify the Director of Schools. Personnel under investigation by DCS for possible suspicion of child abuse may not return to his/her employment assignment until the case has been reviewed by the Director of Schools.

Failure to fully comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Board Policy 1.804 – Drug-Free Workplace**

No employee shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use on or in the workplace alcohol or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance, as defined in federal law. "Workplace" shall include any school building or any school premise; any school-owned or any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities; and off-school property during any school-sponsored or school approved activity, event or function.

Any employee who violates the terms of this policy shall be suspended and shall be subject to dismissal and referral for prosecution. The director of schools shall be responsible for providing a copy of this policy to all school system employees.

### **Board Policy 5.403 – Drug & Alcohol Testing for Employees**

#### **REASONABLE SUSPICION DRUG TESTING**

Trained supervisors have the responsibility to observe and document the cause for reasonable suspicion and when appropriate, refer the matter to the director of schools/designee. It is not the supervisor's responsibility to attempt diagnosis. All information, facts and circumstances leading to and supporting this suspicion, should be included in a

written report detailing the basis for the suspicion. After the report is filed, the employee should be notified. Any employee may be required to submit to substance screening if the following conditions exist: (list is not inclusive)

1. Observed use, possession or sale of illegal drugs and/or use, possession, sale, or abuse of alcohol and/or prescription drugs.
2. Apparent physical state of impairment of motor functions.
3. Marked changes in personal behavior not attributed to other factors.
4. Employee involvement in or contribution to an accident where the use of alcohol or drugs is reasonably suspected or employee involvement in a pattern of repetitive accidents whether or not they involve actual or potential injury.
5. Post-accident drug testing when victim must be treated away from scene.
6. Violation of criminal statutes involving the use of illegal drugs, alcohol or prescription drugs and/or violations of drug statutes.

### **TESTING FOR CDL EMPLOYEES**

All drivers and applicants for driver positions who are required to hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to perform their job function must adhere to the requirements of this policy and all procedures relating to this policy. The use, possession, sale, purchase or transfer of any controlled substances except medically prescribed drugs on school property, while on school business, or while operating school vehicles and equipment is prohibited. Drinking alcoholic beverages during working hours, four (4) hours before reporting to work or having any measurable amount of alcohol in their system during working hours is prohibited, whether on or off school property. Working hours include all breaks. Off-duty use of drugs and alcohol is prohibited to the extent that it affects driver's attendance or performance and their ability to pass required DOT alcohol and controlled substance tests. Any violation of this policy is grounds for termination as an employee of the Board and possible legal prosecution. The use of any prescription drug that could affect the central nervous system or one that would impair reaction time shall be reported to the director of schools/director of transportation. Notice shall be given of non-prescription (over-the-counter) drugs being taken on a regular basis. The notice shall include the duration of ingestion and possible side effects.

### **Procedures**

The execution and enforcement of this policy will follow set procedures to screen bodily fluids, conduct breath testing, and/or search all employee/applicants for alcohol and drug use, and those employees suspected of violating this policy who are involved in a reportable accident or who are periodically or randomly selected. Drug screens shall be required for employees who are involved in a reportable accident, an accident when the victim is treated away from the screen, an accident when the vehicle is towed, and when a driver is issued a citation while on the job (including break periods.) The procedures are designed not only to detect violations of this policy, but also to ensure fairness to each employee. Disciplinary action will be taken as necessary.

### **Teacher Returning to Employment**

A teacher who has attained tenure status in the school system and later resigns shall serve a two-year probationary period upon reemployment, unless the probationary period is waived by the Board upon request of the Director of schools. Upon completion of the two-year period, the teacher shall either be recommended by the director for tenure or non-renewed. If tenure is not granted, the teacher cannot continue in employment.

### **Board Policy 5.606 – Employee Political Activities & Use of Social Media**

Employees have a right to express their views on any issue, but must in each case make clear that the view expressed does not represent the official view of the Board or school system. Employees may, on their own time, campaign for or against any candidate or referendum, but are prohibited from using system owned property to engage in political activity. System owned property includes, but are not limited to all buildings, signage, message boards, telephonic

equipment, electronic equipment and email accounts. Employees shall not use audio or video messages to engage in any political promotion or solicitation during school hours.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

For the purposes of this policy, social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including on an employee's own or someone else's web page or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether associated with the school district or not, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principals and guidance found throughout the Board policies apply to employees' activities online. Ultimately, employees are solely responsible for what they post online. The Board encourages employees to exercise good professional judgment and care when creating online content. Employees are cautioned that any online conduct that adversely affects an employee's job performance, the students, families, others who work on behalf of the school district or the community may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. All employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner inside the classroom, outside the classroom, and in online/electronic forums accessed by parents, students, and/or members of the general public or community.

- 1. Know and Follow the Rules.** In addition to these guidelines, the Board's existing policies may apply to an employee's online activities. Inappropriate and/or unprofessional postings may include, but shall not be limited to, discriminatory remarks, harassment, bullying, intimidation, disclosure of confidential student or student's family information that would violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unprofessional conduct. Said conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.
- 2. Be Respectful.** Employees should be fair and courteous to colleagues, students, student families, others who work on behalf of the school district, and members of the community. If an employee decides to post complaints or criticism, the use of statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, disparaging to students, families, or colleagues, or that might constitute harassment, defamation, intimidation or bullying, should be avoided. This section should not be read to discourage certified employees from using social media or another electronic medium to engage in concerted activities for the purposes of mutual aid and benefit.
- 3. Be Honest and Accurate.** Employees should be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if a mistake is made, it should be promptly corrected. Remember that the internet archives almost everything: therefore, even deleted postings can be searched and discovered. Employees should not post any information or rumors that they have not personally verified or any information that the employee knows to be false about the school district, colleagues, students, student families, others working on behalf of the school district, or the community.
- 4. Be Professional.** Employees should post only appropriate, respectful and professional content.
  - Employees should not create a link from a personal blog, website, or other social networking site to a Robertson County Schools website without identifying themselves as an employee of the district.
  - Employees should never represent themselves as a spokesperson of the district. If the school district is the subject of the content an employee is creating, he or she must be clear and open about the fact that they are an employee of the school district and make it clear that their views do not represent those of the Board, Robertson County Schools, or anyone working on behalf of the school district. It is best to include a disclaimer such as, *"The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Robertson County School Board."*
  - Employees are expected to use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their professional responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvement with individual students. Romantic, amorous or sexual relationships, comments, or

communications in any form between employees and students are strictly prohibited. This includes unprofessional and inappropriate communication on social media sites or other online communications.

### **USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WHILE AT WORK**

The use of social media for personal reasons while on work time is prohibited. Employees should not use "rcstn.net" email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use. Social media accounts affiliated with a school, school-sponsored group, or District department must be approved in writing by the director of schools or designee. Employees may not circumvent or otherwise disable the district's internet filter to allow access to any social media site or other prohibited web address.

### **RETALIATION**

The Board prohibits taking adverse action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against someone who reports a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

No employee should speak to the media on behalf of the school district without first contacting the director of schools and/or his/her designee. All media inquiries should be directed to the director of schools or his/her designated staff.

### **Board Policy 5.610 – Student-Staff Relations**

Employees shall maintain professional relationships with students at all times and develop wholesome and constructive relationships with them. Employees shall be expected to regard each student as an individual and to accord each student the rights and respect that is due.

Employees shall promote a learning environment that encourages fulfillment of each student's potential in regard to their program, consistent with district goals and with optimal opportunities for students. This goal may be reached by adapting instruction to individual needs by:

1. Insisting on reasonable standards of scholastic accomplishment for all students
2. Creating a positive atmosphere in and out of the classroom
3. Extending courtesy and respect to students
4. Treating all students with consistent fairness

Employees shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvement with individual student. Any appearance of impropriety shall be avoided. Sexual relationships between employees and students shall be prohibited.

### **Board Policy 1.805 – Use of Electronic Mail (e-mail)**

Electronic mail capability among board members and district staff exists for the purpose of enhancing communication to better perform tasks associated with their positions and assignments. Therefore all staff and board members who have access to the district network shall adhere to the following guidelines when sending or receiving messages via system-wide electronic mail (e-mail):

1. Because all computer hardware and software belong to the Board, all data including e-mail communications stored or transmitted on school system computers shall be monitored. Employees/board members have no right to privacy with regard to such data. Confidentiality of e-mail communication cannot be assured. E-mail correspondence may be a public record under the public records law and may be subject to public inspection.
2. Messages shall pertain to legitimate board/district business; e-mail shall not be used to circumvent requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

3. Staff/board members will be asked to sign an application for terms and conditions for *Use of the Internet*. Staff/board members shall not reveal their passwords to others in the network or to anyone outside of it. If anyone has cause to believe that a password has been lost or stolen or that e-mail has been accessed by someone without authorization, s/he shall contact the technology coordinator immediately.
4. It is the responsibility of the sender not to violate copyright laws.
5. Messages shall not be sent that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as obscene or that are racist, sexist or promote illegal or unethical activity.

Any usage contrary to the above shall be reported immediately to the director of schools and may result in the suspension and/or revocation of system access or if deemed necessary, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.

#### **Board Policy 1.803 – Tobacco-Free Schools**

All uses of tobacco and tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes and associated paraphernalia are prohibited in all of the school district's buildings and in all vehicles that are owned, leased or operated by the district. Smoking shall be prohibited in any public seating areas including, but not limited to, bleachers used for sporting events or public restrooms.

District employees and students enrolled in the district's schools will not be permitted to use tobacco or tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes and associated paraphernalia while they are participants in any class or activity in which they represent the school district.

#### **Board Policy 5.611 – Ethics**

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, all employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships. These standards include the following:

1. The maintenance of just and courteous professional relationships with students, parents, staff members and others
2. The maintenance of their own efficiency and knowledge of the developments in their fields of work
3. The transaction of all official business with the properly designated authorities of the school system
4. The establishment of friendly and intelligent cooperation between the community and the school system
5. The representation of the school system on all occasions that the contributions of the school system to the community are recognized
6. The welfare of children as the first concern of the school system when placing professional personnel. The use of pressure on school officials for appointments or transfers is unethical.
7. Restraint from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or selfish propaganda of any kind
8. The responsibility to make any criticism of other staff members or of the school system directly to the particular school administrator who has the administrative responsibility for improving the situation and then to the director of schools, if necessary
9. The proper use and protection of all school properties, equipment and materials
10. Shall not intentionally expose any student to embarrassment or disparagement

### **LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND VACATION**

#### **Board Policy 5.300 – Short Term Leaves of Absence**



Short term leaves of absence shall consist of the following: Court Appearance & Jury Duty, Sick, Personal and Professional leave.

### **Board Policy 5.301 - Court Appearance & Jury Duty Leave**

#### **JURY DUTY**

The following procedures shall regulate the leave for jury duty for all employees:

1. Upon receiving a summons to report for jury duty, the employee shall present the summons to his or her immediate supervisor on the next work day.
2. The employee will be excused from work for each day the employee's service as a juror exceeds three (3) hours.
3. The employee shall be entitled to the usual compensation during the time spent serving as a juror provided that the employee provides his/her immediate supervisor with a statement showing the number of hours and days spent serving as a juror.

Special Procedures for Teachers:

If a teacher summoned for jury duty is eligible for a postponement of jury service, that teacher shall request a postponement until a time outside the academic year so that disruption to the instructional year may be avoided.

#### **COURT APPEARANCES**

Employees who voluntarily appear in court because of a personal interest, whether as a plaintiff, defendant or witness or voluntarily appears on behalf of family or friends, may utilize vacation of personal leave or request leave without pay in accordance with the established board policies on leaves.

Employees who are summoned to appear in court as a witness shall present the subpoena or other documents which give reporting instructions to their immediate supervisor on the next work day. The employee will be excused from work, without pay, for each day they are required to serve as a witness.

### **Board Policy 5.302 – Sick Leave**

#### **ACCRUAL**

*Certified Employees* shall earn one (1) day of sick leave for each month employed during the school year, and these days shall accumulate for an unlimited number of days. Newly employed certified employees shall be allowed an initial allotment of up to five (5) days of sick leave. If a certified employee uses a part of all of this initial allotment, these days shall be charged to sick leave later accumulated by the same employee. Sick leave shall be cumulative for all earned or transferred days not used.

*Classified Employees:* Classified personnel shall earn one (1) day of sick leave for each month an employee is employed. At the termination of the employment of any employee, all unused sick leave accumulated by the employee shall be forfeited.

#### **PERMISSIBLE USES**

- *Illness or Death:* Sick leave may be used for the employee's own illness from natural causes or accident, quarantine; or the illness or death of a member of the employee's immediate family, including the employee's wife or husband, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, and sister-in-law.
- *Birth or Adoption of a Child:* Any employee on maternity leave shall be permitted to use accumulated sick leave during the period of actual physical disability only. A physician's statement will be required when determining the period of actual physical disability. Any employee who is eligible for the leave provided

above due to lack of actual physical disability may use up to thirty (30) days of accumulated sick leave following the birth or adoption of a child. If both parents are teachers, only one parent may request leave. In the case of adoption of a child, written verification from the adoption agency or other entity handling the adoption shall be required before the leave is granted.

If an employee's absence exceeds three or more consecutive work days, the employee will be required to submit documentation from a physician verifying that the sick leave was used for a permissible purpose.

A signed statement listing the reason for absence shall be provided by the employee on forms furnished by the director of schools and shall promptly be given to the immediate supervisor in support of all claims for sick leave pay. A falsified statement shall be grounds for dismissal.

### **Board Policy 5.303 - Personal, Professional, and Bereavement Leave**

All employees shall earn personal leave at the rate of one day for each half-year employed for a total of two (2) days per year. Additional personal leave may be granted as outlined in the board approved Memorandum of Understanding reached through collaborative conferencing. Any unused personal leave remaining at the end of a year shall be credited to sick leave.

If, at the termination of services, any employee has been absent for more days than leave has been earned, an amount sufficient to cover the excess days used shall be deducted from the employee's final salary payment.

Subject to the following conditions, personal leave may be taken at the discretion of the employee:

1. Except in emergency, each employee shall give the principal at least three days' notice in writing of intent to take leave.
2. The approval of the principal shall be required:
  - a. If more than ten percent (10%) of the teachers in any given school request its use on the same day
  - b. If requested during any prior established student examination period
  - c. If requested on the day immediately preceding or following a holiday or vacation period
  - d. If personal leave is requested for days scheduled for parent-teacher conferences, according to a school calendar adopted by the local board of education prior to the commencement of the school year
3. Leave shall not be taken for less than one-half day.

#### **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE (CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES)**

Professional leave is a short, temporary leave of absence for the purpose of attending workshops and other meetings relating to school business or serving on boards and commissions which meet during daytime hours when appointed by a mayor, city council, county executive or county commission. Requests should be submitted to the principal at least five (5) days prior to requested leave of absence for professional leave.

#### **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Employees who experience the death of an immediate family member or relative during a regularly scheduled work week, shall be entitled to bereavement leave in accordance with the following schedule:

- Up to five (5) consecutive paid days shall be granted upon the death of an employee's spouse or child.
- UP to four (4) consecutive paid days leave shall be granted upon the death of an employee's parent.
- Up to three (3) consecutive paid days of leave shall be granted in the event of the death of an employee's brother, sister, grandparent, mother-in-law, or father-in-law, or grandchild.

- One (1) paid day shall be granted in the event of the death of an individual residing in the employee's household who is not a spouse, relative, or family member.

While these days do not have to be consecutive, they must be used within a reasonable amount of time at the immediate supervisor's discretion.

Employees who wish to utilize leave under this policy should notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible. If an employee requires additional time off for personal reasons, they may utilize accrued paid time off or sick leave in accordance with the Board's existing policies.

#### **Board Policy 5.304 – Long-Term Leaves of Absence for Certified Personnel**

All certified personnel shall be granted leave for military service, legislative, service, maternity, adoption, recuperation of health, or visitation of a spouse, child or parent deployed for military duty out of the country who has been granted rest and recuperation leave. Such personnel may be granted leave for educational improvements or other sufficient reasons as determined by the director of schools. If granted, such leave shall not result in the forfeiture of accumulated leave credits, tenure status or other fringe benefits.

All leaves shall be requested in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance on forms provided by the director of schools. The 30 day notice may be waived or reduced by the director of schools upon submission of a certified statement by a physician. The application for leave forms shall require:

1. A description of the type of leave requested
2. The requested dates for beginning and ending the leave
3. A statement of intent to return to the position from which leave is granted

Each request for leave must be acted upon by the director of schools within fifteen (15) days. Each applicant shall be notified in writing of the action of the director and the beginning and ending dates of the leave which is granted.

All leaves, except military leave, shall be from a specific date to a specific date. However, any leave may be extended by the director of schools upon written request from the teacher. Military leave shall be granted for whatever period may be required. The procedure and condition for extending a leave are the same as those used when originally requesting and granting the leave.

Leave to visit a spouse, child, or parent deployed for military duty out of the country who has been granted rest and recuperation leave shall be granted under this policy for no longer than ten (10) days.

Positions vacated for less than twelve (12) months by teachers on leave shall be filled with an interim teacher while the teacher is on leave. If the teacher returns from leave within 12 months, the interim teacher shall relinquish the position. If the leave exceeds twelve (12) months, the teacher shall be placed in the same or a comparable position upon return.

Any teacher on leave shall notify the director of schools at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she is on leave. Failure to give such notice shall be considered breach of contract.

#### **PAY AND BENEFITS**

All leave granted in conformance with this policy shall be without pay except as may be covered by sick leave in the case of maternity and recuperative leaves or other paid leave policies. Employees shall have the opportunity to continue participation, at their own expense, in group insurance plans subject to restrictions of the insuring carrier.

### **Board Policy 5.305 – Family and Medical Leave**

#### **PURPOSE**

To provide eligible employees up to 12 workweeks (or 26 workweeks for military caregiver leave) of unpaid job-protected leave for certain family and medical reasons during a 12-month period.

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have been employed by the district for at least twelve (12) months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of leave.

#### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

FMLA may be taken by eligible employees for the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child or to care for a newborn child\*
2. The placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care or to care for the newly placed child
3. To care for a spouse, child or parent (but not in-law) who has a serious health condition
4. An employee's own serious health condition
5. For qualifying military caregiver leave (to care for a covered service member or veteran's serious injury or illness arising out of the armed forces)
6. For qualifying exigency leave arising out of a family member's active duty in the armed forces

\*Note: Eligible employees are entitled to up to four (4) months of leave for pregnancy, childbirth, or adoption under state law. FMLA leave for birth and care of a newborn child or for placement of a child for adoption or foster care, shall run concurrently with the state leave.

#### **USE OF LEAVE**

Employees are not required to use their leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the Board's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies arising out of a family member's active duty may also be taken on an intermittent basis. Leave may not be taken on an intermittent basis when used to care for the employee's own child during the first year following birth, or to care for a child placed with the employee for foster care or adoption unless the director or designee approves such leave.

#### **RESTRICTIONS**

1. For foreseeable leave, the employee shall provide at least thirty (30) days written notice before the beginning of the anticipated leave and shall follow the Board's procedures for requesting leave.
2. The district may require that a request for leave be supported by certification issued by a health care provider with the following information:
  - a. The date on which the serious health condition commenced
  - b. The probable duration of the condition
  - c. The appropriate medical facts within the knowledge of the health care provider regarding the condition
  - d. A statement that the eligible employee is needed to care for the son, daughter, spouse or parent and an estimate of the amount of time that such employee is needed

If there is any reason to doubt the validity of the certification provided, the director may require, the director may require, at the expense of the school system, an opinion of a second health care provider.

Spouses who are both eligible employees of the school district are limited to a combined total of 12 workweeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period if the leave is taken for birth and care of a newborn child, for placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent who has a serious health condition.

### **Special Rules for Certified Employees**

- a. Limitations on Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave – When a certified employee request, intermittent leave or reduced leave for certain qualifying reasons that would exceed 20% of the total number of working days over the period the leave would extend, the district may require that such employee elect to either take the leave for a period of particular duration, not to exceed the duration of the planned medical treatment or to transfer temporarily to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified, that has equivalent pay and benefits and better accommodates recurring periods of leave.
- b. Limitations on Leave Near the End of an Academic Term – If leave is taken more than five (5) weeks prior to the end of the term, less than five (5) weeks before the end of the term, or less than three (3) weeks prior to the end of a term, the director of schools may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term depending on the anticipated length of the leave and reason for leave.

Use of Paid Leave Required – FMLA leave runs concurrently with leave afforded under other board policies. This means employees are required to use any available accrued paid leave (including vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave) for the duration of their FMLA leave until all available paid leave is exhausted.

### **MAINTENANCE OF BENEFITS**

During FMLA leave, employees are entitled to continued group health plan coverage under the same conditions as if they were working. To the extent that FMLA leave is paid, the employee's portion of health insurance premiums will be deducted from his/her salary. For the portion of FMLA leave that is unpaid, the employee must contribute his/her share of the premium at the same time as if made by payroll deduction. If payment of health insurance premiums is more than thirty (30) days late, the Board may discontinue health insurance coverage upon notice to the employee.

If the employee elects not to return to work for at least thirty (30) calendar days at the end of the leave period, the employee will be required to reimburse the Board for the cost of the premiums paid by the Board for maintaining coverage during the unpaid leave, unless the employee cannot return to work because of a serious health condition or other circumstances beyond the employee's control.

Other benefits, such as 401 (k), life insurance, short and long-term disability will be governed in accordance with the terms of each benefit plan. Employees will not accrue vacation, personal or sick time while on unpaid FMLA. Any changes in plan provisions or cost will apply to employees on FMLA as the same basis as to active employees.

### **JOB RESTORATION**

Upon return from FMLA leave, eligible employees shall be restored to the same position of employment or an equivalent position with no loss of benefits, pay or other terms of employment to the extent required by the FMLA.

### **Board Policy 5.306 – Military Leave**

Employees who are members of any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States shall be granted leave of absence for all periods of military service during which they are engaged in the performance of duty or training in the service of the state of the United States. Reservists who anticipate military duty during the school year must give written notice to the director of schools within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the school year of the dates of the anticipated duty. While performing such duty or training, the employee shall be paid his/her regular salary up to a

maximum of twenty (20) working days in any one (1) calendar year, plus such additional days as may result from any call to active state duty. An employee called to active duty by the governor to enforce the laws of the state shall be paid his/her regular salary for such time as he/she is engaged in the performance of his/her duty, and any time spent in active state duty shall not count against the twenty-day period of leave allowed for military service.

Requests for leaves and extension of leaves shall conform to state law and board policy governing all leaves of absence. Failure to comply with applicable laws and policies shall constitute grounds for dismissal.

The employee shall supply a copy of the orders for duty, including the dates of departure and return it to the director of schools prior to or simultaneous with requesting leave.

#### **Board Policy 5.307 – Physical Assault Leave**

A certified employee who is absent from assigned duties as a result of personal injury caused by physical assault or another violent criminal act committed in the course of the certified employee's employment duties, shall receive his/her full salary and full benefits until the teacher is released by his/her physician to return to work or his/her physician determines the teacher is permanently unable to return to work. If the teacher receives workers' compensations or other similar benefits, the Board shall pay the difference between the amount and the teacher's full salary.

A signed statement listing the cause of the absence shall be provided by the teacher on forms furnished by the Director of Schools and shall promptly be given to the immediate supervisor in support of all claims. A certificate from the physician on forms furnished by the Director of Schools may also be required to verify the extent of the injury.

#### **Board Policy 5.309 – Legislative Leave**

Certified employees who have been elected to state or local law-making bodies shall be entitled to use personal leave or be granted leave without pay for the time those law-making bodies are in official session or while attending official meetings outside the session.

In addition, certified employees shall be granted leave to serve on any board or commission of the state when the appointment is made by the Governor or General Assembly. Such leave shall not be counted against any other accumulated leave credits. The employee shall notify the principal at least five (5) days prior to leave being taken.

#### **Board Policy 5.310 – Vacations and Holidays**

##### **HOLIDAYS**

The following holidays are pay established for administrative and professional employees of the district. Depending on the length of an employee's contract, paid holidays are as follows:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day (11 and 12 month employees only)
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day (12 month employees only)
- Labor Day

Columbus Day  
 Day before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving, and the day following Thanksgiving  
 Christmas Eve  
 Christmas Day

Permanent part-time employees (10 month and summer only) shall be granted holidays with pay as noted above when the holiday falls within the term of employment.

Equivalent days, as approved by the director of schools, may be taken when these days fall on weekends or when school is in session.

**VACATIONS**

School personnel who are employed on a 12 month basis shall be eligible for vacation pay after one full year of employment. The director of schools shall approve the time of the vacation. No more than one year of vacation days may be carried over to the next year. Vacation will not be reimbursed upon termination of employment. Personnel employed for less than twelve months are not eligible for vacation with pay.

**CERTIFIED PERSONNEL**

Certified personnel who are employed on a 240 or 260-day-contract shall be entitled to vacation and holidays with pay according to the table:

Contract	Vacation Days	Holidays
240 Days	14	13
260 Days	16	14

**CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL**

*Vacations*

All non-certificated personnel shall be entitled to vacation with pay according to the table:

220 days		240 days		260 days	
Experience	Vacation	Experience	Vacation	Experience	Vacation
0-3 years	5 days	0-3 years	7 days	0-3 years	10 days
4-6 years	7 days	4-6 years	9 days	4-6 years	13 days
7-9 years	8 days	7-9 years	11 days	7-9 years	16 days
10 and more	10 days	10 and more	14 days	10 and more	19 days

*Holidays*

All non-certificated personnel shall be entitled to holidays with pay according to the table:

Contract Length	220 days	240 days	260 days
Days of Holiday	6	10	14

Specific Holidays:

- (6) New Year's Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (3 days), Christmas Day
- (10) Above and Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Columbus Day
- (14) Above and Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Christmas Eve

Equivalent days, as approved by the Director of Schools, may be taken when these days fall on weekends or if school is in session.

## **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

### **Board Policy 1.802 – Section 504 and ADA Grievance Procedures**

The Board is committed to maintaining equitable employment/educational practices, services, programs and activities that are accessible and usable by qualified individuals with disabilities.

#### **DEFINITION**

*Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* provides that: No otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States...solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

*Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990* provides that: No otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall be discriminated against in regard to job application procedures, the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

#### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator will hear ADA/Section 504 complaints of employees. Complaints shall be submitted orally or in writing to the coordinator who will endeavor to accomplish prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by the ADA/Section 504. The coordinator will respond to all complaints within twenty (20) days with a written response as well as information on further grievance procedures that may be followed if the complaining party is not satisfied with the coordinator's proposed resolution.

***(Employees should contact the Supervisor of Human Resources, at 615-384-5588 or by email at [michele.galluzzi@rcstn.net](mailto:michele.galluzzi@rcstn.net) regarding any Section 504 or ADA complaints or concerns.)***

### **Board Policy 5.500 – Discrimination/Harassment of Employees**

The Board is committed to ensuring a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. It is the policy of the Board to ensure that each employee has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment and prohibits discriminatory or retaliatory practices, including harassment. The Board strictly prohibits, and will not tolerate any such discrimination or harassment of any employee by another employee, student, supervisor, administrator, parent, outside service provider, or vendor on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information or predisposition, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law.

#### ***Harassment Defined:***

1. Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that may be reasonably perceived as denigrating or showing hostility towards an individual because of that individual's race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, veteran status, genetic information or predisposition, or any other status protected by federal state, or local law, and that (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's job performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.
2. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: (i) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly on a term or condition of an individual's employment; (ii) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (iii) such conduct has the



purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**Even when the conduct is not sufficiently severe or pervasive to constitute actionable discrimination or harassment, the Board prohibits such conduct.**

*Reporting Procedure:*

Any employee who witnesses or experiences conduct that they believe constitutes discrimination or harassment has an affirmative duty to immediately report that conduct promptly to his or her immediate supervisor, unless the immediate supervisor is the offending party. If their immediate supervisor is the offending party, the report may be made to the Director of Human Resources of the Director of Schools. Allegations of discrimination/harassment shall be fully investigated in accordance with the procedures outlined below. An oral complaint may be submitted; however, such complaint should be reduced to writing to ensure a more complete investigation. The complaint should include the following information:

- Identity of the complainant and/or victim and respondent
- Location, date, time, and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident
- Description of what happened
- Identity of witnesses
- Supporting documentation or other available evidence

*Link to the district's Civil Rights Complaint Form:*

[https://www.rcstn.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_7522/File/HR/Robertson%20County%20Schools%20Civil%20Rights%20Complaint%20Form.pdf](https://www.rcstn.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server_7522/File/HR/Robertson%20County%20Schools%20Civil%20Rights%20Complaint%20Form.pdf)

*Investigation & Resolution:*

Any employee who receives a harassment or discrimination complaint shall immediately refer the complaint to the Director of Human Resources, who will determine the appropriate procedure to ensure a prompt, thorough, and equitable investigation and resolution of the complaint.

The Director of Human Resources or his/her designee is responsible for investigating the complaint or appointing a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf. The investigator selected by the Director of Human Resources will conduct the investigation in a manner appropriate in light of the circumstances of the complaint, which will typically include interviews with the complainant, the respondent, and any witnesses. The investigation will be conducted in a manner that is prompt, thorough, equitable, and respectful of individual privacy concerns. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will prepare a written report containing his or her findings and recommendations as to whether or not a violation of the Board's policy occurred with the director of schools. If a complaint of sexual harassment contains allegations involving the director of schools, the written report shall be filed with the Board. The director of schools shall keep the Board informed of all complaints.

Upon receipt of the investigator's report, the director of schools shall render a written decision within five (5) days of the receipt of the report that shall be provided to the employee. A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective action up to and including suspension.

*Confidentiality:*

The privacy and anonymity of all parties and witnesses to complaints will be respected. However, because an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with obligations to cooperate with police investigations or legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation or to take necessary

action to resolve a complaint, the identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

*Retaliation Prohibited:*

There will be no retaliation against any person who reports discrimination/harassment or participates in an investigation. However, any employee who refuses to cooperate or gives false information during the course of any investigation may be subject to disciplinary action. Any individual who makes a report that is later found to have been intentionally false or made maliciously without regard for its truth may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Board Policy 5.501 – Employment-Related Complaints and Grievances**

The Board believes that differences of opinions arising in the course of employment should be resolved as quickly as possible and at the lowest supervisory level. In instances of questions by an individual staff member concerning the interpretation of policies and procedures to that staff member, administrative practices within the staff member’s particular school, or relationships with other employees, the staff member concerned must consult the administrative or supervisor personnel to whom they are responsible. If a satisfactory resolution of the problem cannot be reached after ample opportunity for consideration of the matter, the staff member concerned may discuss the matter with the next level of supervision up to and including the director of schools. Instances where an individual staff member feels, for personal reasons, that they cannot discuss a problem with their immediate supervisor, the staff member may take the problem directly to the director of schools. After review of the case, the director of schools shall take action as he/she deems appropriate and within a prompt, reasonable time shall notify all parties concerned of the decision.

**GENERAL POLICIES**

**MANATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

Everyone in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter can remain anonymous. Failure to report abuse is a violation of the law and a Class A misdemeanor, carrying a sentence of up to three months imprisonment, a fine or both. Those who report and “act in good faith” are immune from any civil or criminal charges which may result. The reporter has the right to remain confidential and anonymous. Tennessee Code Annotated 37-1-403(i) (1) requires all persons to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. “Any person who has knowledge of or is called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition shall report such harm immediately if the harm is of such a nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality abuse, or neglect or that, on basis of available information, reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect.”

- **Report Child Abuse: 1-877-237-0004**
- **Web: <https://apps.tn.gov/carat/> in non-emergency situations only.**
- **Fax: 615-254-6018 for non-emergency situations only.**

**Board Policy 5.115 – Assignment / Transfer**

**ASSIGNMENT**

The director of schools shall assign personnel to the various schools or departments by June 15 preceding the school year for which such persons are employed while allowing each principal or immediate supervisor to assign more specific

responsibilities within each school. Assignment of employees shall be made by the director of schools based on the recommendation of the appropriate division director and/or building principal. The assignment shall be determined by the applicant's training, experience, ability to perform the duties of the position and in the best interest of the schools.

**TRANSFER (to move from one school or administrative unit to another)**

The director of schools shall transfer employees as necessary for the efficient operation of the schools. Transfers shall be non-discriminatory and shall not be arbitrary or capricious. The director of schools is responsible for developing and disseminating procedures for transfers. All employees transferred shall receive written notification of the transfer with reason(s) prior to the transfer. The Board shall be notified of transfers at its next regular scheduled meeting. Transfers shall be made in accordance with board policy and state law.

*TRANSFER PROCEDURE: A transfer request should be completed and submitted on the district's online SearchSoft Applicant Tracking System. Transfer requests will be accepted for posted vacancies at the link below:*

[https://ats4.searchsoft.net/ats/app\\_login?COMPANY\\_ID=IA000024](https://ats4.searchsoft.net/ats/app_login?COMPANY_ID=IA000024)

**REASSIGNMENT (to move to another assignment within the same school or administrative unit)**

Reassignments shall be non-discriminatory and shall not be arbitrary or capricious. Employees shall be reassigned as necessary for the efficient operation of the schools. The director of schools is responsible for developing and disseminating procedures for reassignments. Reassignments shall be made by the employee's immediate supervisor with approval by the director of schools.

**Board Policy 5.116 – Staff Positions**

**CREATION OF POSITION**

All staff positions shall be approved through the budget process in accordance with an organizational plan submitted by the director of schools. Before an additional position is established, the director of schools shall present the Board a job description, qualifications, performance responsibilities and the method by which the performance of these responsibilities will be evaluated.

The director of schools may revise the organizational plan as long as budgetary amounts are not exceeded and board policy is not violated. In the event of reorganization, the director of schools shall adhere to all applicable reduction in force guidelines and shall inform, in a timely manner, the Board of the change and include the change in the director's report at the next board meeting. If changes in personnel create additional encumbrances on a future budget, prior approval of the Board is required.

**REDUCTION IN FORCE**

When it becomes necessary to reduce the number of positions in the system because of a decrease in enrollment or for other good reasons, the Board shall abolish the positions. The Board of the director of schools, as appropriate, shall dismiss such employees as may be necessary.

**Certified Personnel**

Reductions in staff shall be made in an attempt to have the least detrimental effect on children. In general, this objective dictates a staff reduction policy which:

1. Retains the most effective teachers;
2. Avoids undue increases in class size; and
3. Provides consideration for the exceptional teacher without exclusive emphasis on seniority.

The elimination of a position does not necessarily mean the person occupying the position will be dismissed. When an employee is released, the director of schools shall make the decision based upon a composite of the following criteria:

1. Effectiveness in teaching and in related professional responsibilities evidenced by teacher evaluation;
2. Adaptability to other assignments (academic and extracurricular);
3. Evidence of professional growth as well as specialized or advanced training;
4. Previous history of grade levels and subject areas taught; and
5. Type, length and quality of service made to the teaching profession and the school system.

When a teacher is released because of reduction in staff, the teacher shall be given written notice of the release explaining the circumstances or conditions making the dismissal necessary.

#### **RE-EMPLOYMENT**

Teachers rated in the three (3) highest categories based on evaluations who have been dismissed because of elimination of position shall be eligible for re-employment in accordance with the procedures set forth in state law.

#### **Board Policy 5.117 – Procedure for Granting Tenure**

To attain tenure status, a teacher shall: (1) meet tenure eligibility requirements; (2) be renewed and recommended by the Director of Schools; and (3) receive a majority vote of the Board.

#### **TENURE ELIGIBILITY**

A teacher that meets the following requirements is eligible for tenure:

1. Has a degree from an approved four-year college or any career and technical teacher who has the equivalent amount of training established and is licensed by the State Board of Education
2. Holds a valid teacher license issued by the State Board of Education, based on training covering the subjects or grades taught
3. Has completed a probationary period of five (5) school years or not less than forty-five (45) months within the last seven-year period with the last two (2) years being employed in a regular teaching position rather than an interim teaching position
4. Has received evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations” as provided in the evaluation guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education, during the last two (2) years of the probationary period

If a teacher has met all other requirements for tenure eligibility but has not acquired an official evaluation score during the last one (1) or two (2) years of the probationary period due to allowable circumstances outlined in state law, he/she may utilize the most recent two (2) years of available evaluation scores achieved during the probationary period to become eligible for tenure.

#### **ACQUISITION OF TENURE STATUS**

Once a teacher is eligible for tenure, he/she shall be either recommended by the Director of Schools for tenure or nonrenewed. If tenure is denied by the Board, the teacher shall be dismissed.<sup>4</sup>

The following additional guidelines shall apply:

1. The Director of Schools will recommend teachers eligible for tenure at a board meeting in ample time to send notice of non-renewal to each teacher not recommended for tenure within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year.
2. The decision to grant tenure is solely within the discretion of the Board.<sup>6</sup> Only those teachers who receive a majority vote of the membership of the Board will be granted tenure.

3. A teacher who is eligible for tenure, but tenure is denied by the Board, shall not be rehired beyond the current contract year.

#### **TEACHER RETURNING TO EMPLOYMENT**

A teacher who has acquired tenure status in the school district and later resigns shall serve a two-year probationary period upon reemployment, unless the probationary period is waived by the Board upon request of the Director of Schools. Upon completion of the two-year period, the teacher shall either be recommended by the Director of Schools for tenure or non-renewed. If tenure is denied by the Board, the teacher shall be dismissed.

#### **TEACHER TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT**

A tenured or nontenured teacher with five (5) or more years of prior service that transfers from another school district to begin employment in the Robertson County School District shall serve the regular probationary period. The Board, upon the recommendation of the Director of Schools, may waive the probationary period and grant tenure status or shorten the probationary period.

If a nontenured teacher with fewer than five (5) years of service transfers from another school district, such teacher shall not be eligible for tenure status until the teacher has served at least five (5) years when service in both school districts is counted.

All tenure decisions made under this section are subject to the requirements concerning overall teacher performance effectiveness levels.

#### **TEACHER RETURNING TO PROBATIONARY STATUS**

Any tenured teacher who receives two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of "below expectations" or "significantly below expectations" shall be returned to probationary status by the Director of Schools until the teacher has received two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of "above expectations" or "significantly above expectations."

When a teacher who has returned to probationary status has received two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of "above expectations" or "significantly above expectations," the teacher is again eligible for tenure and shall be either recommended by the Director of Schools for tenure or nonrenewed; provided, however, that the teacher shall be dismissed if tenure is denied by the Board.

This section does not apply to teachers who acquired tenure prior to July 1, 2011

#### **Board Policy 6.415 – Student Suicide Prevention**

##### **PREVENTION**

All district employees shall attend either the annual in-service training in suicide prevention or participate in other equivalent training approved by the director of schools. The training shall include, but not be limited to, identification of risk factors, warning signs, intervention and response procedures, referrals, and postvention.

##### **INTERVENTION**

Any employee who has reason to believe that a student is at imminent risk of suicide shall report such belief to the principal or designee. Reasonable belief that a student is at imminent risk of suicide shall include, but not be limited to, the student indicating through actions, speech, or writings that he or she has desire to commit suicide or engage in self-injury, the student displays at-risk behaviors or exhibits evidence of self-harm, or a student self refers.

Robertson County Schools has developed a suicidal ideation protocol which shall be followed in cases where a student displays at-risk behaviors or risk of self-injury. Upon notification, the principal or designee shall ensure the student is placed under adult supervision until a parent/guardian or other authorized individual accepts responsibility for the

student's safety. Emergency medical services shall be contacted immediately if an in-school suicide attempt occurs. The principal or designee shall contact the director of schools or designee as soon as practicable.

Prior to a student returning to school, Robertson County School's re-entry protocol shall be followed to ensure that the student is not presently expressing suicidal ideation and is not at risk for serious self-injurious behavior and that appropriate safeguards are in place to support the student's return.

#### **POSTVENTION**

Immediately following a student suicide death, Student Services personnel work with teachers to identify the students most likely to be impacted by the death in order to provide additional assistance and counseling if needed.

#### **REPORTS**

Schools will compile information related to suicide threats during the school year which require implementation of this policy and submit a report to the director of schools/designee at the end of each school year.

#### **Board Policy 1.8011 – Emergency Closings**

The Board authorizes the director of schools to close schools in the event of hazardous weather or any other emergency which presents a threat to the safety of students, staff members or school property. As soon as the decision to close schools is made, the director of schools will notify the public media and request that an announcement be made. If school is not in session or is dismissed early due to snow or inclement weather, the director of schools in consultation with the principal(s) of the impacted school(s) shall determine if all scheduled activities in which students are involved shall be postponed or cancelled.

#### **Board Policy 4.803 – Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs & Holidays**

No religious belief or nonbelief shall be promoted or belittled by the school system or its employees. All students and staff members shall be tolerant of the views of others and not discriminate against anyone for a religious viewpoint or lack of a religious viewpoint.

#### **STUDENTS' EXPRESIONS OF RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINTS**

A student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject shall be treated in the same manner as a student's voluntary expression of a secular viewpoint. Students may express religious beliefs in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. These assignments shall be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance and against other legitimate academic concerns. A student shall not be penalized or rewarded on account of the religious content of the student's work.

#### **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

Observance of religious holidays shall be as follows:

1. The several holidays through the year which have both a religious and a secular basis may be observed in the schools.
2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
3. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.

4. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday are permitted as a teaching aid or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature.
5. The school district's calendar shall be prepared so as to attempt to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths. All students and staff members shall be tolerant of the views of others. Students and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs.

#### **Board Policy 4.805 – Prayer and Period of Silence**

There shall be no school-sponsored or school-directed public prayer at any school-sponsored or school directed activity, but a period of silence may be observed. Schools shall establish a daily time for students to observe a moment of silence. No other action shall be taken by a teacher than to maintain silence during this time.

#### **Board Policy 3.218 – Service Animals in District Facilities**

An individual with a disability may be accompanied by a service animal at any RCS school site, school activity, or other RCS activity consistent with the provisions of this policy, related procedures, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other applicable state and federal laws. The definition of "service animal" shall be that found in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Definition.** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals as dogs or miniature horses (range in height from 24 to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds) that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

The Superintendent of Schools, or the Superintendent's designee, shall establish procedures to be followed for the use of service animals by RCS students and employees. Failure to abide by any of the requirements of this policy may result in the use of the service animal being restricted.

RCS students and employees who are present where a service animal is in use shall not:

1. Touch or pet the animal unless invited to do so by the handler
2. Feed the animal
3. Deliberately startle or otherwise interfere with the work being performed by the animal
4. Distract the animal from its work
5. Separate or attempt to separate the animal's handler from the animal
6. Inquire about the nature of the individual's disabilities

#### **Board Policy 3.300 – Equipment and Supplies Management**

Employees of the system are responsible for the materials, equipment and supplies assigned to them. In addition, employees are responsible for the reasonable preservation and protection of materials, equipment and supplies not under their direct control.

Employees transferring from one school to another shall be responsible for reporting to the building principal of the school that they are leaving so the principal can review the inventory of classroom materials, including textbooks, teachers' editions, and other materials purchased with system, school or support organization funds. These materials are designated for that particular school and must remain at that school. The employee transferring is responsible for returning all keys to the building principal.

#### **Board Policy 3.404 – Private Vehicles**

The Board recognizes that certain employees may need to use their private vehicles for school purposes. With the use of private vehicles, the following policy shall be observed:

1. To use a private vehicle for school purposes, the employee must have:
  - a. Written permission of the director of schools/designee
  - b. A valid driver's license
  - c. Proof of vehicle liability insurance coverage (in the amount of \$100,000/\$300,00/\$100,000) which includes a copy of the insurance certificate issued to the driver
  - d. A specific permit for each trip involving students, including field trips
2. The school shall maintain a copy of the insurance card and the driver's license.
3. The school system shall assume no responsibility for liability in case of accident, unless the employee has the proper authorization by the director of schools or his/her designee.
4. The Board specifically forbids any employee to transport students for school purposes without prior authorization by the director of schools or his/her designee.
5. Privately-owned school buses and drivers of such shall meet all requirements of state law and state Board Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards.
6. No student shall be sent on errands, personal or school-related, in a vehicle owned by the student, an employee, or the school system.
7. No employee may ask for or give permission to students to transport other students to and from any school or school-related activity without written parental permission and proof of student insurance.

The Board recognizes that volunteer parent drivers are often needed to use their private vehicles for school purposes. The volunteer parent drivers who use a private vehicle must comply with the same policies as employee drivers.

#### **Board Policy 4.408 – Use of Multimedia**

All multimedia used in the classroom must either be provided by the school or have the prior approval of the principal. Movies, songs or other multimedia may be rented or purchased for use in the classroom for education purposes only. No movie, song or other multimedia will be used for entertainment purposes.

#### **Board Policy 4.800 – Controversial Issues**

The discussion of issues in the classroom which are politically, philosophically or socially controversial shall be relevant to the subject matter being taught, related to educational objectives, appropriate for the age and maturity of students, and shall not materially or substantially disrupt or threaten to disrupt the discipline of the school. To ensure that controversial issues are presented and discussed fairly and objectively and with instruction as their goal, the following guidelines shall be observed:

1. All personnel will seek to create an atmosphere in which differences of opinion can be voiced without fear and hostility and with mutual respect for all viewpoints.
2. Teachers will encourage students to withhold judgment and to avoid making of conclusions until all relevant and significant facts have been assembled, critically examined, and checked for accuracy.



3. Teachers will seek to develop in students a sense of responsibility for their beliefs, opinions, attitudes and actions.
4. If the subject matter being taught involves conflicting opinions, theories or schools of thought, the teacher will ensure that differing sides of an issue are explored in order to help students develop their own critical faculties.

### **Board Policy 5.601 – Conflicts of Interest**

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Administrative, supervisory, and certified personnel shall have no financial interest, directly or indirectly, in supplying books, maps, school furniture, or apparatus for the schools or to act as agent for any author, publisher, bookseller, or dealer in school furniture or apparatus, however a spouse or family member of a principal, teacher or other school administrative employee may participate in business transactions with the school system where a sealed competitive bid system is used, provided that the employee does not have discretion in the selection of bids or specifications. It shall be a misdemeanor for the director of schools to take any other contract under the Board, to perform any other service for additional compensation, to act as principal or teacher in any school, or to become the owner of a school warrant other than that allowed for his/her service as director of schools or as secretary to the Board.

#### **APPEARANCE OF CONFLICT**

No employee of the Board shall engage in, or have financial interest in, any activity that raises a reasonable question of a conflict of interest with their duties and responsibilities as an employee of the Board. This includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

1. School employees may not purchase any goods or equipment for resale to students or render any service to the school system on a commission basis.
2. Employees who have patented or copyrighted any device, publication, or other item will not receive royalties for use of such item in the school system.
3. Employees will not engage in any type of work where the source or information concerning a customer, client, or employer originates from information obtained through the school system.
4. The Board shall make no purchase of supplies, materials, or equipment from a school system employee; and
5. Employees shall not solicit for the purpose of selling instructional supplies, equipment and reference books in a territory that includes the parents of the children of the school in which the employee is assigned.

### **Board Policy 5.605 – Staff Gifts and Solicitations**

#### **GIFTS**

Employees of the Board shall not accept gifts from students unless the gifts are for token value only. Individual employees of the Board will refrain from giving gifts to staff members who exercise administrative or supervisory jurisdiction over them, either directly or indirectly. The collection of money for group gifts is discouraged except in special circumstances such as bereavement, serious illness, or for mementos at retirement.

Employees are prohibited from accepting things of material value from individuals, companies or organizations doing business with the school system. Exceptions to this policy are the acceptance of minor items which are generally distributed to all by the companies through public relations programs.

Gifts/gift cards should not be used in lieu of appropriate payroll procedures. If gift cards are given to employees as tokens of appreciation they should not be lavish or extravagant. There should be no negotiation in advance for the gift. Such gift cards should be restricted or non-negotiable (cannot be cashed, sold, or used to reduce an outstanding

balance). Gifts should only be presented as a token of appreciation to an employee when a valid and documented business purpose exists.

### **SOLICITATIONS**

No organization may solicit funds from employees within the schools. Flyers or other materials related to fund drives shall not be distributed through the schools without the written approval of the director of schools. Employees will not be responsible for the collection of any money or the distribution of any fundraising materials unless such activity has the director of schools' written approval.

### **Board Policy 5.607 – Non-School Employment**

#### **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL**

A given professional position may require additional hours during evenings or other times when offices may be closed. Outside employment is regarded as employment for compensation that is not within the duties and responsibilities of the employee's regular position with the school system.

An employee will not perform any duties related to an outside job during their regular working hours or during the additional time that the responsibilities of the position require, nor will an employee use any district facilities, equipment or materials in performing outside work. This includes the Board's computer systems and networks and any configuration of hardware and software. The systems and networks include all the computer hardware, operating system software, stored text and data files. This includes but is not limited to electronic mail, local databases, externally accessed databases (such as the Internet), CD-ROM, optical media, clip art, digital images, digitized information, communications technologies, and new technologies as they become available. The Board reserves the right to have all technology and resource activity monitored.

The Board's technology resources will be used only for learning, teaching and administrative purposes consistent with the Board's mission and its goals. Commercial use of the Board's system is strictly prohibited.

When periods of work are such that certain evenings, days or vacation periods are duty-free, the employee may use such off-duty time for the purposes of compensation provided all the following conditions are met:

1. The work in no way interferes with the degree of effectiveness of their work in the school system.
2. The work in no way reflects detrimentally upon the school system or its prestige.
3. Such outside obligations do not prevent the individual from assuming duties required by the regular position.

#### **CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL**

Classified personnel shall not be prohibited from holding employment outside the school system so long as such employment does not interfere with regular and overtime scheduled duties for the school system.

### **Board Policy 5.608 - Tutoring for Pay**

Any teacher may enter into an agreement with parents for tutoring children for a fee, but this practice must be limited to those children who the teacher is not currently exercising teaching, administrative, or supervisory responsibility. School facilities may not be used for private profit.

### **Board Policy 1.808 – Registered Sex Offenders**

Individuals registered as sex offenders in Tennessee or any other state are prohibited from the premises of any school in this district, except for the limited circumstances stated in this policy.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

An individual listed by the State of Tennessee or any other state as a registered sex offender is ineligible for employment within the school district.

## **PRESENCE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

No registered sex offender, other than a student enrolled in the school in question, shall come on, about, or within 1,000 feet of a local school's property line, except as provided below. If any employee of the school district becomes aware of any registered sex offender's presence on school property, he/she shall immediately inform the principal, who shall direct the individual to leave the premises immediately. The principal shall request assistance from local law enforcement authorities if offender resists the principal's directives. If the registered sex offender repeats this restriction of coming on to school property, the principal may confer with legal counsel to take appropriate legal action. Neither this policy nor state law impose any duty upon a principal or any other employee of the local school district to review sex offender registry for individuals who may come upon the property.

## **PARENTS WHO ARE REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS**

A parent or legal guardian of a child who is enrolled in the school may attend a conference with school officials with written permission of the school's principal. An offender may come within 1,000 feet limit provided that the individual is dropping off or picking up a child or children enrolled in the school. Principal shall speak with the parent upon learning of their status as a sex offender to communicate the restrictions of this policy and to establish open dialogue with the parent, as much as is possible or reasonable. The principal shall take all appropriate measure to protect the privacy of the sex offender's child.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

### **Board Policy 2.500 – Deposit of Funds**

#### *Central Office*

All income payable to the Board will be deposited with the county trustee, who will credit it to the appropriate account.

#### *Individual Schools*

All money collected at the building level shall be cleared through the principal's office, and money collected for the School Nutrition Program shall be cleared through the cafeteria manager's office.

The principal/cafeteria manager shall deposit funds daily if possible, but no later than three (3) days after being received. Collections should be deposited intact, and no funds should be withheld from the deposit for any reason. School money should never be taken home by individuals for safekeeping or left at a school overnight unless it is stored in a school safe or vault. Deposit slips shall be completed in duplicate. All checks shall be listed individually on the deposit slip or an attached list, itemizing the name of the payer and the amount. The receipt numbers comprising the deposit shall be written on the deposit slip. The validated duplicate deposit slip or the duplicate deposit slip with deposit receipt attached shall be given to the bookkeeper or the cafeteria manager.

Any money collected at the building level must be deposited to one of three bank accounts:

1. General School Fund
2. Restricted Fund
3. School Nutrition Fund

### **Board Policy 2.808 – Purchase Orders and Contracts**

#### *General*

All purchases made by the school system shall be by purchase order or formal contract, and no purchase shall be made nor payment approved unless covered by an approved purchase order. Purchase orders will include the following essentials:

1. A specification which adequately describes to the supplier the characteristics and the quality standards of the item required
2. A firm, quoted, net delivered price, whenever possible
3. Signature of purchasing agent

### **Board Policy 2.900 – Student Activity Funds Management**

#### *Individual Schools*

The activity funds of each school shall include athletic and student organization funds and any other fund belonging to any student group, class, or activity. Whatever the source, all student activity funds shall be under the jurisdiction of the Board and under the specific control of the school principal. Contracts with fund-raising agencies must comply with board policy and be approved by the director of schools. Principals and/or sponsors who knowingly authorize/allow unapproved fund-raising activities shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Student activity funds shall be deposited in respective school activity accounts. Proper records of receipts and disbursements shall be maintained in accordance with the *Tennessee Internal School Uniform Accounting Policy Manual*.

Revenue raised for specific purposes must be expended for that purpose, unless otherwise authorized in writing by both the activity group sponsor and the principal. An annual audit of the account and records of all student activity funds shall be conducted as a part of the audit of all other district funds. Any unencumbered class or activity funds automatically revert to the general activity fund of the school when a class graduates or an activity is discontinued.

Contracts with fund-raising agencies must comply with board policy and be approved by the principal. Funds derived from activities sponsored by parent-teacher associations, parent-teacher organizations or other support organizations are not subject to this policy, unless such funds are in sole custody of the school. Such organizations shall comply with the provisions of state law.

### **Board Policy 2.901 – Use of Credit Cards**

Robertson County School Credit/Purchasing cards are to be used for school/system purchases only. No card shall be used for personal use. Employees must use care when carrying purchasing cards and safeguard against fraudulent use of Robertson County School Accounts. Credit cards shall be assigned to the employee user for no longer than four (4) days.

### **Board Policy 2.902 – Gift Cards**

When gift cards are given as awards to students, a listing should be prepared to document and account for all gift cards purchased. At a minimum, the listing must include columns for:

1. The dollar amount(s) for each individual card
2. The individuals who were awarded the respective cards
3. The signature of the recipient to indicate that they received the gift card

The reason for the awards should also be documented.

The practice of purchasing gift cards that are then given to school employees to make school purchases is prohibited.

## **SAFETY**

### **Board Policy 3.201 – Safety**

In accordance with board policy, the principal of each school shall develop procedures for keeping school facilities safe and free from hazards. Additionally, each school shall establish a safety committee which meets regularly.

All staff members shall report current and potential hazards to their immediate supervisor(s).

Each principal is responsible for seeing that safety is a part of the instructional program of the school as required by law.

The safety program shall include:

- Fire prevention
- Accident prevention
- Warning systems
- Emergency drills
- Traffic safety
- Safety inspections
- First aid
- Disaster preparation

Only students assigned to the school, the staff of the school, parents of students, and other persons with lawful and valid business shall enter onto the grounds or into the buildings of a school during the hours of student instruction. All staff members shall report all persons appearing to be improperly on school premises to the principal.

The principal shall secure assistance from law enforcement officials when he/she deems it is necessary in order to maintain order or security. In addition, the director of schools or designee shall provide the local law enforcement agency with all safety and security plans.

In the event of any threats to safety, students will be retained at school when less than one hour of warning time is given, unless parents or persons authorized by the parents pick up the children.

## **SEPARATION & SUSPENSION PRACTICES**

### **Board Policy 5.200 – Separation Practices Tenured for Teachers**

#### **SUSPENSION PENDING AN INVESTIGATION**

The Director of Schools may suspend a teacher at any time that may seem necessary, pending investigation or final disposition of a case before the Board or an appeal. If the matter under investigation is not the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation or a Department of Children's Services investigation, and if no charges for dismissal have been made, a suspension pending investigation shall not exceed ninety (90) days in duration. Under no circumstances shall the Director of Schools suspend a teacher with pay. If vindicated or reinstated, the teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension.

**SUSPENSION OF THREE DAYS OR LESS** The Director of Schools/designee may suspend a teacher for incompetence, inefficiency, neglect of duty, unprofessional conduct, and insubordination. Before an employee is suspended, he/she shall be: (1) provided with written notice, including the reasons for the suspension along with an explanation of the evidence; (2) given an opportunity to respond to the Director of Schools at a conference, if requested within five (5) days; (3) given a written decision of the suspension within ten (10) days. Both parties may be represented by counsel at the conference, which shall be recorded.

Under no circumstances shall a Director of Schools suspend a tenured teacher with pay. If reinstated, the tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension, unless suspension without pay is deemed to be an appropriate penalty.

#### **DISMISSAL OR SUSPENSIONS GREATER THAN THREE DAYS**

When a tenured teacher is charged with offenses that may justify dismissal or a suspension greater than three (3) days, the charges shall be made in writing, specifically stating the offenses that are charged and shall be signed by the party or parties making the charges.

If, in the opinion of the Board, the charges are of such nature as to warrant the dismissal or a suspension greater than three (3) days of the teacher, the Director of Schools shall give the teacher a written notice of this decision, a copy of the charges against the teacher, and a copy of a form provided by the Commissioner of Education advising the teacher of his/her legal duties, rights and recourse.

A tenured teacher who has been given notice of charges against him/her may within thirty (30) days after receipt of notice give written notice to the Director of Schools of his/her request for a hearing.

The Director of Schools shall, within five (5) days after receipt of request, assign a hearing officer from the list maintained by the Board.

The Board shall maintain a list of qualified individuals who have indicated a willingness to act as impartial hearing officers as defined under Tennessee law.

The hearing officer shall notify the parties, or their attorney, of the officer's assignment and direct the parties or the attorneys for the parties, or both, to appear before the hearing officer for simplification of issues and the scheduling of the hearing. That hearing shall be set no later than thirty (30) days following receipt of the initial request for a hearing. In the discretion of the hearing officer, all or part of any prehearing conference may be conducted by telephone if each participant has an opportunity to participate, be heard, and to address proof and evidentiary concerns. The hearing officer is empowered to issue appropriate orders and to regulate the conduct of the proceedings.

Either party may appeal to the Board of Education an adverse ruling by giving written notice of appeal within ten (10) working days of the hearing officer's delivery of the hearing officer's written findings and conclusions. The Director of Schools shall prepare a copy of the proceedings, including all transcripts and evidence, documentary or otherwise, and transmit the same to the Board within twenty (20) days of the receipt of the notice of appeal.

The Board shall hear the appeal on the record, and no new evidence may be submitted by either party. The appealing party may appear before the Board to argue why the adverse ruling should be over- turned. In no event should such argument last more than fifteen (15) minutes, unless the Board votes to extend additional time. At the conclusion of the hearing, any member of the Board may vote to sustain the decision of the Hearing officer, send the record back for additional evidence, revise the penalty or reverse the decision. The Board shall render its decision within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the hearing. In the event that the decision of the Board is appealed to the Chancery court, the Board shall transmit the entire record prepared by the Director of Schools and reviewed by the Board to the Chancery court for its review.

#### **RESIGNATION**

A teacher shall give the Director of Schools notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation. A teacher who fails to give such notice, in the absence of justifiable extenuating circumstances, shall forfeit all tenure status. The Board may waive the thirty (30) days' notice requirement and permit a teacher to resign in good standing.<sup>5</sup>

The conditions under which it is permissible to break a contract with the Board are as follows:

1. The incapacity on the part of the teacher to perform the contract as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the Board; or
2. The release by the Board of the teacher from the contract which the teacher has entered into with the Board

Any teacher on leave shall notify the Director of Schools in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she has taken leave. Failure to render such notice may be considered a breach of contract.

Upon a breach of contract, the Board, upon a motion recorded in its minutes, may file a complaint with the State Board of Education and request the suspension of a teacher's license. After the State Board of Education has provided the teacher an opportunity for defense during a hearing, the State Board of Education may suspend the license for no less than thirty (30) days and no more than three hundred sixty-five (365) days.

#### **RETIREMENT**

Retirement is a termination of services under conditions which will allow the employee to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or Social Security benefits.

Teachers eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system. Central office personnel shall assist teachers in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to provide verification of eligibility in writing from the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to file for benefits.

#### **Board Policy 5.201 – Separation Practices for Non-Tenured Teachers**

#### **SUSPENSION PENDING AN INVESTIGATION**

The director of schools may suspend a teacher at any time that may seem necessary, pending investigation or final disposition of a case before the board or an appeal. If the matter under investigation is not the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation or a department of children's services investigation, and if no charges for dismissal have been made, a suspension pending investigation shall not exceed ninety (90) days in duration. Under no circumstances shall the director of school suspend a non-tenured teacher with pay. If vindicated or reinstated, the non-tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension.

#### **SUSPENSION OF THREE DAYS OR LESS**

The Director of Schools/designee may suspend a teacher for incompetence, inefficiency, neglect of duty, unprofessional conduct, and insubordination. Before a teacher is suspended he/she shall be: (1) provided with written notice, including the reasons for the suspension along with an explanation of the evidence; (2) given an opportunity to respond to the Director of Schools at a recorded conference, if requested within five (5) days; and (3) given a written decision of the suspension within ten (10) days. Both parties may be represented by counsel at the conference, which shall be recorded.

Under no circumstances shall the Director of Schools suspend a non-tenured teacher with pay. If reinstated, the non-tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension unless suspension without pay is deemed to be an appropriate penalty.

#### **DISMISSAL OR SUSPENSION GREATER THAN THREE DAYS**

The Director of Schools may dismiss or suspend for more than three (3) days any non-tenured teacher during the contract year for incompetence, inefficiency, insubordination, improper conduct, or neglect of duty after giving the non-tenured teacher, in writing, due notice of the charges.

The Director of Schools shall give the non-tenured teacher an opportunity for a full and complete hearing before an impartial hearing officer.

The Board will appoint an impartial hearing officer to conduct such hearings. The hearing officer will hear the case and the teacher shall have the right to:

1. Be represented by counsel
2. Call and subpoena witnesses
3. Examine all witnesses
4. Require that all testimony be given under oath

Factual findings and decisions in all dismissal cases shall be reduced to written form and delivered to the affected teacher within ten (10) working days following the close of the hearing. The teacher may appeal the decision to the Board within ten (10) working days of the hearing officer rendering the written decision to the teacher. Written notice of appeal to the Board shall be given to the Director of Schools. Within twenty (20) days of receipt of notice, the Director of Schools shall prepare a copy of the proceedings, including all transcripts and evidence, documentary or otherwise and provide the Board a copy of the same.

The Director of Schools shall also have the right to appeal any adverse ruling by the Hearing Officer in same manner as the non-tenured teacher.

The Board shall hear the appeal. No new evidence shall be introduced. The non-tenured teacher may appear in person or be represented by counsel and argue why the decision should be modified or reversed. The Board shall take one of the following actions:

1. Sustain the decision
2. Send the record back if additional evidence is necessary
3. Revise the penalty or reverse the decision

Before any decision to dismiss is made, a majority of the membership of the Board shall concur in sustaining the charges. The Board shall render a decision on the appeal within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the hearing.

Within twenty (20) days after receipt of notice of the decision of the Board, either party may appeal to the chancery court in the county where the school district is located. The Board shall provide the entire record of the hearing to the court.

#### **NONRENEWAL**

1. Non-tenured teachers are subject to the same rules and regulations and are entitled to the privileges of employment enjoyed by tenured teachers except that they have no claim upon continuing employment or tenure protections.
2. The principal is responsible for discussing deficiencies as part of the evaluation process with the non-tenured teacher and providing assistance for overcoming these deficiencies.



3. The Director of Schools is under no obligation to re-employ non-tenured teachers at the end of their contract period. If the Director of Schools determines not to renew the contract of a non-tenured teacher, the following action shall be taken:
  1. The Board shall be notified at the next regular board meeting.
  2. Written notice of non-renewal shall be sent to the teacher by certified mail or overnight carrier, or by email within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year. If the reason for nonrenewal is due only to a loss of funding for the position, then the notice shall include a statement listing it as the cause for nonrenewal.

### **RESIGNATION**

A teacher shall give the Director of Schools notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation.<sup>4</sup> The Board may waive the thirty (30) days-notice requirement and permit a teacher to resign in good standing.

The conditions under which it is permissible to break a contract with the Board are as follows:

1. The incapacity on the part of the teacher to perform the contract as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the Board.
2. The release by the Board of the teacher from the contract which the teacher has entered into with the Board.

Any teacher on leave shall notify the Director of Schools in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she has taken leave. Failure to render such notice may be considered a breach of contract.

Upon a breach of contract, the Board, upon a motion recorded in its minutes, may file a complaint with the State Board of Education and request the suspension of a teacher's license. After the State Board of Education has provided the teacher an opportunity for defense during a hearing, the State Board of Education may suspend the license for no less than thirty (30) days and no more than three hundred sixty-five (365) days.

### **RETIREMENT**

Retirement is a termination of services under conditions which will allow the employee to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or Social Security benefits.

Teachers eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system. Central office personnel shall assist teachers in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to provide verification of eligibility in writing from the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to file for benefits.

(Note: Nonrenewal of non-tenured teachers after the contract year is not suspension or dismissal and does NOT follow the suspension/dismissal procedures outlined in this policy. Rather, nonrenewal of non-tenured teachers after the contract year follows the nonrenewal procedures outlined in this policy.)

### **Board Policy 5.202 – Separation Practices for Classified Employees**

#### **SUSPENSION**

A director of schools/designee may suspend an employee at any time when deemed necessary. Under no circumstances shall a director of schools suspend an employee with pay. If reinstated, the employee shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension, unless suspension without pay is deemed to be an appropriate penalty. Before the director of schools suspends an employee, he/she shall:

1. Provide the employee with written reasons for the suspension

2. Give the employee an opportunity to explain his/her side of the story
3. Give the employee a written decision of the suspension

### **DISMISSAL**

All classified employees are employed at the will of the director. The director of schools may dismiss any classified employee at any time with or without cause and with or without notice.

### **RESIGNATION**

Classified employees may elect to voluntarily terminate their employment at any time, without notice. Classified employees are encouraged, but not required, to attempt to provide their immediate supervisor written notice of resignation at least two (2) weeks (ten (10) working days) in advance of the effective date of resignation. The immediate supervisor shall forward the notice of resignation to the central office on the same day it is received. The payroll department will issue the employee's final payment on the next scheduled payday.

### **RETIREMENT**

Retirement shall mean a termination of services under conditions which will allow the employee to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or social security benefits. Employees eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system. Central office personnel shall assist employees in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring employee to obtain verification of eligibility in writing from TCRS to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring employee to file for eligible benefits. Employees who retire under TCRS may be employed up to one-hundred-twenty (120) days per year without loss of retirement benefits.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### **Group Health Benefits**

*The benefits officer, Bonnie Head, for Robertson County BOE is located at the Robertson County Finance Department at 523 South Brown Street, Springfield, TN 37172. She can be reached at 615-384-0202 or [bhead@robcofn.org](mailto:bhead@robcofn.org). During your new hire process, a benefits meeting will be provided by the benefits officer.*

### **Retirement Account/Pension – Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System**

#### **Legacy Teachers**

Teachers who became certified before July 1, 2014 and have not cashed out your TCRS (Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System) retirement account.

These teachers will have one TCRS retirement account known as a defined benefit plan that the employee is required to contribute 5% (no more, no less) to the account each pay period. Based on actuarial studies completed each year by the State of TN, a percentage is determined for the BOE (Board of Education) to contribute on your behalf. Details such as being vested, transferring, and retirement details are listed on the TCRS flyer you receive during your new hire process.

If this is your first time in a TCRS defined plan, you will receive a welcome packet from TCRS after your first contribution from your first check is sent. The welcome packet will give you details about your defined plan and then instruct you to log into the TCRS Concord System to appoint beneficiaries for this defined plan. You will NOT be able to log into TCRS

Concord until you receive the welcome packet from TCRS. Please be sure to keep beneficiaries and addresses current on your accounts.

If you were in the TCRS plan before you joined Robertson, then your accounts will combine automatically. Log in instructions for TCRS accounts are included in your packet. You may log in at your convenience. Be sure to update beneficiaries on the TCRS Concord system.

Lastly, you have an option to begin a voluntary retirement account through State of TN. This is a new option for teachers offered by the State of TN that is managed by Empower Retirement. You will receive a letter from Empower offering you the opportunity to participate in this plan. This is a 401 K deferred compensation plan that only the employee contributes and is payroll deducted. The BOE does not contribute to this account for LEGACY teachers. To begin this account respond to the letter from Empower or contact them. Informational flyer will be in your packet received during your new hire process.

### **HYBRID Teachers**

Teachers who became certified after July 1, 2014 OR teachers who became certified before July 1, 2014 but cashed out your retirement plan at some point or did not become vested before you left the TCRS employer, therefore you start over.

As a hybrid, you will have TWO retirement plans. One is referred to as TCRS (Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System) defined benefit plan. The other plan is referred to as State of TN 401 K deferred compensation plan.

### **TCRS Defined Plan**

The employee is required to contribute 5% (no more, no less) to this account each pay period. The BOE (Board of Education) will contribute 4% to this account monthly.

If this is your first time in a TCRS defined plan, you will receive a welcome packet from TCRS after your first contribution from your first check is sent. The welcome packet will give you details about your defined plan and then instruct you to log into the TCRS Concord System to appoint beneficiaries for this defined plan. You will NOT be able to log into TCRS Concord until you receive the welcome packet from TCRS. Please be sure to keep beneficiaries current on your accounts. Details such as being vested, transferring, and retirement details are listed on the TCRS flyer you receive during your new hire process.

### **401 K Deferred Compensation Plan**

This is a new retirement account for teachers offered by the State of TN that is managed by Empower Retirement. You will receive a letter from Empower in the weeks ahead stating you have been automatically enrolled in the State of TN 401 K deferred compensation plan. An automatic 2% will be taken from your payroll to contribute to this account per pay period. You have the option to opt-out of this 2% or to increase the percentage contribution. To make any of these changes, you MUST respond to the letter you will receive from Empower Retirement. The BOE will contribute 5% to this 401 K account monthly. Upon receipt of the letter, you will need to log into the system to appoint a beneficiary and it is recommended that you manage the account as well. Even if you do not contribute, the BOE will continue to contribute to this 401 K on your behalf and the funds will need to be managed. Information regarding this new type of retirement account will be included in your new hire packet.

NOTE: Hybrid teachers expect information from two different entities regarding retirement. One regarding TCRS defined plan that welcomes you and instructs you on choosing beneficiaries for the defined plan. You will receive a letter from Empower describing the 401 K plan and you also will need to follow instructions to choose beneficiaries and to manage the 401 K account.

### **Legacy Classified Staff**

The classified staff will have one TCRS retirement account known as a defined benefit plan that the employee is required to contribute 5% (no more, no less) to the account each pay period. Based on actuarial studies completed each year by the State of TN, a percentage is determined for the BOE (Board of Education) to contribute on your behalf. Details such as being vested, transferring, and retirement details are listed on the TCRS flyer you receive during your new hire process.

If this is your first time in a TCRS defined plan, you will receive a welcome packet from TCRS after your first contribution from your first check is sent. The welcome packet will give you details about your defined plan and then instruct you to log into the TCRS Concord System to appoint beneficiaries for this defined plan. You will NOT be able to log into TCRS Concord until you receive the welcome packet from TCRS. Please be sure to keep beneficiaries current on your accounts.

If you were in the TCRS plan before you joined Robertson, then your accounts will combine automatically. Log in instructions for TCRS accounts are included in your packet. You may log in at your convenience. Be sure to update beneficiaries on the TCRS Concord system.

**Fee Discount** The fee discount program is a state program which provides a 25 percent discount on enrollment fees for undergraduate courses, generally referred to as tuition, to the child of a full-time employee of the executive, judicial, or legislative branch of State government – this includes properly licensed full-time teachers. Rules for Fee Discount If an employee qualifies for this benefit, a form signed by the Director of Schools is required each semester. This form can be obtained from the district office.

### **Board Policy 5.302 - Sick Leave**

#### **SICK LEAVE BANK**

##### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the sick leave bank is to provide sick leave to participating employees who have suffered disabling illness, injury, disability, or quarantine and whose accumulated sick leave, personal leave, and/or annual leave, including all Board paid extensions, have been exhausted. The administration and operation of the sick leave bank including eligibility, membership, and usage, shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the applicable Committee of Trustees and consistent with state law.

The district has approved two sick leave banks:

- ***Certified Sick Leave Bank*** which services certified members who joined within an enrollment period.
- ***Classified Sick Leave Bank*** established for classified employees who joined during an open enrollment period.

##### **SICK LEAVE BANK RULES AND REGULATIONS:**

Rules and regulations for district sick leave banks may be accessed at the link below.

<https://www.rcstn.net/cms/One.aspx?portalId=7606&pageId=16389>

**\*\*\*For further information regarding the sick leave banks, please contact Annette Weeks at the Central Office:  
Phone: 615-384-5588; email: [annette.weeks@rcstn.net](mailto:annette.weeks@rcstn.net)**

**Board Policy 3.602 – Workers’ Compensation**

**WORKERS’ COMPENSATION COVERAGE**

The Board shall maintain adequate workers’ compensation coverage according to state laws. A printed notice shall be posted and maintained in a conspicuous place on the business premises regarding worker’s compensation as prescribed by the commissioner of labor and workforce development. The Board shall establish a medical panel consisting of at least three (3) or more reputable physicians or surgeons who are not associated together in practice, if available. The names of the physician’s or surgeons shall be posted in conspicuous places throughout the maintenance, transportation, clerical, and professional areas of participating schools. Any claimant may select an operating surgeon or attending physician listed on the medical panel for treatment of on-the-job injuries. Any specialized treatment of injures must be administered by practitioners or specialist upon referral by the medical panel. When workers’ compensation benefits are not involved, sick leave benefits shall be paid to employees.

**\*\*\*Procedure: Employees injured on-the-job should contact their school nurse (or departmental supervisor) and complete the Workers’ Compensation packet. Questions about the district Workers’ Compensation plan should be directed to Melissa Arms, RCS Benefits Coordinator. Phone: 615-384-5588; email: [melissa.arms@rcstn.net](mailto:melissa.arms@rcstn.net)**

**Receipt of Robertson County Employee Handbook**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Robertson County Employee Handbook. I understand that no information in this document shall be viewed as an offer, expressed or implied, as a guarantee of any employment of any duration. I understand that any rules, policies and procedures described in the handbook may be modified, varied, or deleted by Robertson County at any time. I understand that this Employee Handbook contains excerpts of selected Board policies, which may be accessed in entirety through individual school libraries, the Robertson County District Office, or the district’s website at [www.rcstn.net](http://www.rcstn.net).

Today’s Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Director’s Name: Dr. Chris J. Causey

Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

