



**WATAUGA COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

***WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA
January 16, 2024***

- | | | |
|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 5:15 p.m. | 1. CALL TO ORDER | Board Chair |
| 5:18 p.m. | 2. CLOSED SESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Approval of the Minutes for 12/11/2023B. Reportable Offenses – N.C.G.S.115C-288(g)C. Student Records - N.C.G.S.143-318.11(a)(1)D. Personnel – N.C.G.S.143-318.11(a)(6)E. Attorney-Client - N.C.G.S 143-318.11(a)(3) | Board Chair |
| 6:00 p.m. | 3. OPEN SESSION CALL TO ORDER /
MOMENT OF SILENCE | Board Chair |
| 6:03 p.m. | 4. DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA | Board Chair |
| 6:05 p.m. | 5. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT | Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:10 p.m. | 6. VALLE CRUCIS SCHOOL UPDATE | Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:15 p.m. | 7. PUBLIC/SPECIAL RECOGNITION <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Regional Teacher of the Year★ School Board Appreciation Month | Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:20 p.m. | 8. STUDENTS’ REPORT | Ms. Mia Llibre
Ms. Ellary Smith |
| 6:25 p.m. | 9. CONSENT AGENDA <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Approval of the Minutes for 12/11/2023B. Field Trip Requests | Dr. Leslie Alexander |

- C. Declaration of Surplus
- D. 2023-24 Budget Amendment #1
- E. Personnel Report

6:30 p.m.	10. PUBLIC COMMENT	Board Chair
6:40 p.m.	11. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND READ ● 4002: Parental Involvement ● 5210: Distribution and Display of Non-School Material ● 6220: Operation of School Nutrition Services ● 6401/9100: Ethics and the Purchasing Function ● 6430: Purchasing Requirements for Equipment, Materials, and Supplies ● 9125: Participation by Minority Businesses	Dr. Wayne Eberle
6:50 p.m.	12. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ ● 4040/7310: Staff-Student Relations ● 7100: Recruitment and Selection of Personnel ● 7130: Licensure ● 7510: Leave ● 7520: Family and Medical Leave ● 7730: Employee Conflict of Interest ● 3320: School Trips ● 3320-R: Field Trip Procedures ● Watauga County Field Trip Request Form	Dr. Wayne Eberle
7:05 p.m.	13. BOARD OPERATIONS ● Marshall Ashcraft will serve on a NCSBA Committee. ● Spring NCSBA LEAD Survey	Board Chair
7:10 p.m.	14. BOARD COMMENTS	Board Chair
7:15 p.m.	15. ADJOURNMENT	Board Chair



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

DATE: December 11th, 2023

PRESENT:

- Gary Childers, Steve Combs, Marshall Ashcraft (remote), Jay Fenwick, *BOE Members*
- Dr. Leslie Alexander, *Superintendent*

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Margaret E. Gragg Education Center

CALL TO ORDER

Steve Combs made a motion at 5:54 p.m. to go into open session. Jay Fenwick seconded, and all Board members approved.

WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Board Chair Dr. Gary Childers welcomed those attending the meeting. He began with a request to observe a moment of silence.

Steve Combs announced that he will not be running for re-election in the fall.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Dr. Alexander opened the floor for nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair.

Jay Fenwick nominated Gary Childers for Board Chair, and it was unanimously approved.

Marshall Ashcraft nominated Steve Combs for Vice-Chair, and it was unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA

There was no discussion and no adjustment of the agenda.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- There have been lots of holiday celebrations across the district including impressive performances by Chorus/Orchestra/Band students, Kindergarten carolers from Green Valley at the Central Office, and a competitive holiday door contest at Bethel. Members of the Watauga Education Foundation and several people from the Central Office/Transportation team participated in the Boone Holiday parade.
- The Watauga Education Foundation continues to be a great partner to our school district by supporting our teachers in their efforts to offer innovative activities for our students. This year, WEF awarded about \$30,000 in grants for teachers across the district.
- Erik Mortensen (Watauga High School Automotive Teacher) was named the 2024 Northwest Regional Teacher of the Year on Friday, December 1st. The North Carolina Teacher of the Year, Board members, and many students and colleagues were present to surprise and honor this very deserving teacher!
- December 6th was a Professional Development Day for K-8 Teachers. There was LETRS training for K-5 teachers, and I-Ready training for middle school Math. Brian Bettis worked with our Teacher Assistants on delivering Tier 2 math interventions.
- Students and parents continue to support our goal of high student attendance with our *Every Minute Matters* campaign. Principals are working with their schools to “Strive for 95,” as we work toward the goal of 95% attendance across our district.
- December 2 was National Special Education Day.
- Important upcoming dates:
 - December 15th: Early Release
 - December 18th-January 1st: Christmas Break
 - January 2nd: Students return

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

NCSBA “Champion of Education” Award:

Dr. Gary Childers, Chairperson of the Watauga County Board of Education, earned a prestigious honor for his dedication to local education for more than fifty years. The “Champion of Education” award, given by the North Carolina School Boards Association, recognizes individuals, businesses, community members, employees, or school board members who have demonstrated ongoing dedication to the success of K-12 students and betterment of NC public schools. The press release from the North Carolina School Boards Association included the following statement: *“His extensive leadership roles, numerous awards, and active involvement in community services showcase not only his professional excellence but also his unwavering dedication to the well-being of children and families. With his unquestioned integrity and thoughtful leadership, Dr. Childers stands as a beacon in strengthening public education and creating opportunities for a better life for all.”* Gary Childers received his award and was recognized at the NCSBA annual conference on November 14th.

Retirement of Patty Buckner:

Parkway Principal Patty Buckner will retire at the end of December. She started with Watauga County Schools in 2004 as a Teacher’s Assistant at Cove Creek. She taught at Bethel and Parkway, and she served as an Assistant Principal at Parkway before taking the Principal position in 2017. As a leader,

Patty has led with heart and compassion while holding high expectations. She has been an amazing asset to Watauga County Schools in many ways, and her presence and dedication will definitely be missed.

Bright Ideas Grant Recipients:

Five educators were recently awarded *Bright Ideas* grants through Blue Ridge Energy.

- TYLER HAGAN (Cove Creek) ~ \$778 for “Cove Creek Cultivation Culture”: The grant allows students to bridge STEM with agricultural concepts to design, build, and manage a low-maintenance, sustainable food production and agroforestry system.
- ALEX MILLER (Green Valley) ~ \$899 for “Indoor Hydroponic Growing System”: The grant will purchase a next-generation hydroponic growing system for the self-contained classroom.
- HOPE MOUGH (Bethel) ~ \$442 for “Spikeball for All”: The grant will purchase six Spikeball game sets for the physical education classes.
- CARLY PUGH (Cove Creek) ~ \$481 for “Social Studies through Stories”: The grant will enrich students’ understanding of modern civilization and American history through historical fiction novels.
- ERIN THOMPSON (Valle Crucis) ~ \$376 for “Vertical Learning Surfaces”: The grant will purchase non-permanent surfaces or ‘Wipebooks’ to facilitate group discussions and collaboration.

Watauga Education Foundation Grant Recipients:

27 grants were awarded through the 2023-2024 Watauga Education Foundation Classroom Grants program. The total given for all of the grants was \$29,055.

- HAYLEE BARE (Watauga High) ~ \$1700.00 for “Trailer and Outdoor Upgrades”: This grant will purchase a utility trailer and lumber/building materials needed for upgrades to outdoor facilities.
- KIRBI BELL (Green Valley) ~ \$300.00 for “Constitution Week Enhancements Through Literature”: This grant will purchase books to accompany the teaching of the *Preamble to the Constitution*.
- JACKIE BLOW (Watauga High) ~ \$978 for “Launch It!”: This grant will purchase Go Direct Projectile Launchers which will enhance study in Physics classes.
- BRITTANY BOLICK (Blowing Rock) ~ \$750.00 for “National Archery in Schools Program”: This grant will purchase archery equipment to teach the National Archery in Schools Program.
- OLIVIA BOUDWIN and SHANNON ROBERTS (Bethel) ~ \$1300.00 for “The World Around Us”: This grant will purchase materials for a project to create a space for children to explore science through their senses.
- JANE BROWN and ELISA LOVEJOY (Valle Crucis) ~ \$375.00 for “Literacy Enrichment Stations”: This grant will allow for the creation of interactive learning stations in the library to enable the librarian to provide individualized support and recommendations to each child.
- CAROL CRITCHER (Blowing Rock) ~ \$885 for “Makey, Makey Engineers: Empowering Inventive Thinking in Students”: This grant will purchase invention kits to teach students the basics of coding, circuitry, and engineering.
- LAUREN NICHOLS COURTNER, MIRANDA HIGGINBOTHAM, SAVANNAH LIBASSI, and TERRY LYON (Countywide) ~ \$1500.00 for “WCS All-County Choir”: This grant will purchase sheet music for each student, funds to hire a piano accompanist, and funds to hire a guest clinician to direct the students in the all-county choir concert.
- SUNNEE FREED (Mabel) ~ \$1050.00 for “Creating A Neurodiverse Library Environment For All Patrons”: This grant will purchase new furniture for the library specially designed for social-emotional regulation and a variety of learning disabilities.
- MARY RUTH HAGAMAN (Valle Crucis) ~ \$2000.00 for “Muddy Sneakers - The Joy of Learning Outside”: This grant will continue funding for the Muddy Sneakers Program, which allows field expeditions to nearby public lands to study interactive STEM lessons outdoors.

- SHELBY HATTON (Valle Crucis) ~ \$260.00 for “VC Little Library”: This grant will purchase the building materials for a free “Little Library” for the Valle Crucis Community.
- JONI HORINE and MITZI TRIPLET (Hardin Park) ~ \$965.06 for “Hardin Park Elementary Math Intervention Support Through Hands-On Learning”: This grant will fund a project to provide mathematical support to support hands-on learning for students needing Tier III math interventions.
- ALLEN INGRAM (Valle Crucis) ~ \$500.00 for “Potatoes from Around the World”: This grant will purchase the materials needed to plant potato seedlings (from diverse areas around the world) and the planters/materials to care for them.
- CARRIE INGRAM (Blowing Rock) ~ \$464.66 for “’Twas the Night Before Christmas, but Where?”: This grant will purchase materials to provide background knowledge and collaboration for students in grades K-5 who will attend a performance of “’Twas the Night Before Christmas.”
- LAUREN JOHNSON (Green Valley) ~ \$890.01 for “Building Strong Readers: Implementing the Science of Reading with Young Readers”: This grant will purchase research-based phonemic awareness and phonics materials that will be used to build the essential foundational reading skills in early struggling readers.
- RENEE KAPP (Hardin Park) ~ \$2000 for “Lovevery Play Kits”: This grant will purchase developmentally-appropriate play kits designed to support brain development.
- MITZI LONDON (Green Valley) ~ \$2000 for “Watauga County Schools Elementary and Middle School Battle of the Books”: This grant will purchase books on the Elementary and Middle School North Carolina Battle of the Books lists.
- ERIK MORTENSEN (Watauga High) ~ \$1745.00 for “Automotive Improvement Plan”: This grant will purchase a new scan tool that will allow students to talk to the computers on modern cars and trucks.
- CONNIE PEELER and CANDACE COLLIE (Hardin Park) ~ \$1752.00 for “Be Active and Be Awesome!”: This grant will purchase specialized adaptive physical education and physical therapy equipment.
- CARLY PUGH (Cove Creek) ~ \$210.28 for “Social Studies through Stories”: This grant will purchase copies of a historical fiction novel called Ties That Bind. Ties That Break.
- AMANDA QUILLIAMS and ROBIN SMITH (Countywide) ~ \$1250.00 for “Cultivating Collaboration with Where the Red Fern Grows”: This grant will purchase copies of Where the Red Fern Grows to allow for collaborative study and interaction that will culminate with a trip to attend a theatrical production of the novel.
- GWEN REEVES and HAILEY ALDRIDGE (Green Valley) ~ \$604.99 for “Reading and Writing: It is the WAY”: This grant will purchase decodable books to assist students with specific learning disabilities.
- ASHLEY TATE, COURTNEY McWHORTER, and LINDSEY POSTLETHWAIT (Countywide) ~ \$2000.00 for “Needle Felting: Making 3D Art from Natural Materials”: This grant will purchase fiber art tools and materials for the visual art programs at six K-8 schools.
- SUSAN TREW (Blowing Rock) ~ \$2000.00 for “Granting Great Reads! This grant will purchase small group sets of book titles with 3rd-6th grade reading levels to develop skills in all students.
- ALEX VINES (Hardin Park) ~ \$650.00 for “Better Button Bureau- A Middle School Guide Through Entrepreneurship”: This grant will purchase supplies to explore the world of entrepreneurship. Students will design and make spirit buttons to be sold in the Spirit Store, and analyze profit margins and production costs.
- CANDIS WALKER (Countywide) ~ \$675 for “School Tools for Emotional Regulation”: This grant will purchase one additional Calm Corner Tool Box for each school in Watauga County.
- JENNIE WESCHLER and ANNIE RUSS (Green Valley) ~ \$250.00 for “G.O.L.D. (Growing in Our Love of Diverse) Mentor Texts”: This grant will purchase mentor texts (that follow monthly themes) which will teach core reading and writing strategies.

Tamara Stamey Memorial Fund Recipients:

Dr. Scott Elliott shared comments about The Tamara Stamey Memorial Fund, which was created in memory of longtime Watauga County Schools’ educator Tamara Stamey. She served in various capacities beginning in 1996, with her most recent role being the district’s Chief Academic Officer. Mrs. Stamey

attained her National Board Certification in 2003 and worked throughout the course of her career to encourage and help others undergo the process. Because of her passion to support all teachers achieving certification, her family established a memorial fund to honor her impact and to carry on her important legacy of selfless service. Dr. Elliott said that “supporting teachers in their pursuit of National Board certification is the most fitting tribute to Ms. Stamey that I can imagine.”

National Board Certification represents the highest professional standard that a public school educator can achieve in their work. Because the cost of the process can be an inhibitory factor, the Stamey Memorial Fund was created to help incur the expenses involved with pursuing the process. The Tamara Stamey Memorial Scholarship selection committee chose four recipients who embody a wide range of content areas and years of experience. The four teachers awarded the Tamara Stamey Memorial Fund in this inaugural year are:

- LISA CLINARD (Blowing Rock)
- TERRY GUNNELL-BECK (Watauga Virtual Academy)
- MISTY HYLER (Hardin Park)
- BRITTANY MAGGARD (Watauga High School)

Watauga County Schools has one of the highest rates of Nationally Board Certified Teachers in the nation.

VALLE CRUCIS SCHOOL UPDATE

Dr. Alexander reported that there has been much visible progress in the last month. The steel and glulam has been set for areas B and C. Framing and outside sheeting has started in Area C, and the roof has been dried on this area.

- Area A: Cafeteria/Kitchen; Gym
- Area B: Administrative Offices; Band
- Area C: Classrooms Really great progress

STUDENTS' REPORT

- Senior Release: Seniors are now permitted to leave school three minutes early at the end of the day (3:27 p.m.), which should help improve traffic flow in the afternoons.
- “Mr. WHS”: The Watauga High School Student Council held the 24th annual “Mr. WHS” all-male talent show on December 2nd, and senior Wesley Coatney was crowned the winner. The fundraiser helps to raise money for families facing financial hardships, often from medical costs. This year’s event raised over \$27,000 (with donations ongoing), and all proceeds will go to support the Hollar family, the McKinney family, and the Lewis family.
- DECA Competition: DECA, which is a club for students interested in business, marketing, hospitality, and finance, attended the District 9 DECA competition on November 30. Eighty-five students competed, and dozens of medals were given to students in grades 9-12. Rebecca Billette, Everett Hayward, and Jordan Lemus won first place in their respective categories. Juna Gersonde and Raffaell Vazquez-Gutierrez received second place, and Elizabeth Pierce and Abby Pitts won third place awards.
- WHS Holiday Kaleidoscope Concert: Watauga High School held their 3rd annual Holiday Kaleidoscope concert on December 5th and 7th featuring the Band, Choir, and Orchestra. They performed around 40 songs that brought out the Christmas spirit.

- Information was shared from representatives of five service clubs at Watauga High School:
- Athletes for Good: Grayson Elliott, Kasey Gragg, Lauren Patterson talked about AFG, which is a community service-based club consisting of over 100 members. They do monthly service projects benefiting agencies including Casting Bread Food Pantry, High Country Breast Cancer Foundation, Hope Pregnancy Center, OASIS, and Operation Christmas Child.
 - Interact: Sienna Davidson and Hannah Rabinowitz told about the Interact Club, which is sponsored by the Boone Sunrise Rotary Club. Their motto is “service above self.” Some of their service projects have included cleaning roadways and Greenway river sections, raising money for the Center for Alzheimer’s Research, volunteering at the Humane Society, and organizing the Prom Dress Shop.
 - Key Club: Ellary Smith highlighted some of the club’s activities of volunteering at Parkway’s Fall Festival, and coordinating a booth at Trunk or Treat.
 - Manos Unidas/United Hands: Sisters Naomi Escobar Jaramillo and Lucera Escobar Jaramillo, who were instrumental in forming this new club, expressed that the purpose is to provide an affirming place for Latino students to celebrate their culture/diversity and to give back to the community.
 - Sustainability Club: Wesley Coatney, Vivian Rushing, and Leila Zwetsloot explained that the Sustainability Club promotes environmental and social sustainability on campus and in the community including resource conservation, civic involvement, social justice, and environmental stewardship. They raise money for campus sustainability improvements, and educate each other through common readings and field trips.

Board members expressed their pride in and gratitude to the students for being such positive and inspiring role models.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for 11/6/2023
- B. Field Trip Requests
- C. Declaration of Surplus
- D. Lottery Applications
- E. Policies
 - 4130: Discretionary Admission
 - 4150: School Assignment
 - 4334/5036/7345: Use of Unmanned Aircraft (Drones)
 - 6230: School Meal and Competitive Food Standards
 - 7232: Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace
 - 7820: Personnel Files
- F. 2023-24 Revised Mabel School Improvement Plan
- G. Personnel Report
- H. 2024-2025 School Calendar

Jay Fenwick made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Steve Combs seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no citizens who made public comments.

POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ

- 4002: Parental Involvement
- 5210: Distribution and Display of Non-School Material
- 6220: Operation of School Nutrition Services
- 6401/9100: Ethics and the Purchasing Function
- 6430: Purchasing Requirements for Equipment, Materials, and Supplies
- 9125: Participation by Minority Businesses
- Notice of Parental Concern Form

Dr. Wayne Eberle presented the policies, and they will be brought back for “second read” in January.

2023-24 BUDGET RESOLUTION

Ly Marze presented the Budget Resolution for Watauga County Schools for fiscal year 2023-24.

There was discussion about lowering a line item in order to provide financial support for NBPTS.

Jay Fenwick made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Steve Combs seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

BOARD OPERATIONS

- Steve Combs made a motion to support/fund the NCSBA Action Center. Jay Fenwick seconded, and it was approved by all Board members.
- The January Board of Education meeting will be Tuesday, January 16th.
- Marshall Ashcraft proposed possibly revising the Board policy so that the Superintendent approves overnight field trips. Dr. Eberle will give an update on the policy at the January BOE meeting.
- A reminder was given for all Board members to provide feedback to the Board Workshop that was held in November.

BOARD COMMENTS

Gary Childers is pleased with the strides that have been made in the NCSBA conferences.

Steve Combs commended the district team for the excellent work they are doing.

ADJOURNMENT

Steve Combs made a motion to adjourn, Jay Fenwick seconded, and it was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

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

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

Sponsoring teacher: (Print) LTC Wes Young School: Watauga High
Cell phone number: 845-660-7404 Grade(s): 9-12 Number of students: 12
Departure time/date: 0500 13 Jan 2024 Return time/date: 1700 13 Jan 2024

Educational purpose:

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

Daniel Boone High School, Gray, TN

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: _____

Drill Competition

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: Det Sgt Mike Maylum

Names of all non-school chaperones: N/A

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

Are all site(s) accessible to students with disabilities? yes no How will students with disabilities be accommodated for site access and transportation? _____

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

Transportation plan:

Mode of transportation: X Activity bus _____ Rental car/mini-van _____ Charter bus _____ Other: _____

(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

\$8153 Reserved

Driver/s: 1st Sgt Mike Mayhew Round trip mileage: 140 # of buses needed: 1 Small

Total cost per student \$ 13.⁰⁰ Source of funds: JROTC District Funds

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

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: [Signature] Date: 01 / 02 / 24

Principal approval: [Signature] Date: 1 / 2 / 24

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: 1 / 5 / 24

Superintendent approval: [Signature] Date: 1 / 9 / 24

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

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

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

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

Sponsoring teacher: (Print) LTC Wes Young School: Watauga High
Cell phone number: 845-667-4049 Grade(s): 9-12 Number of students: 10
Departure time/date: 0500 / 27 Jan 2024 Return time/date: 1700 / 27 Jan 2024

Educational purpose:

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

Liberty High School, Liberty, SC

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: _____

Raider Competition

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: LTC Wes Young

Names of all non-school chaperones: N/A

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

Are all site(s) accessible to students with disabilities? yes no How will students with disabilities be accommodated for site access and transportation? _____

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

Transportation plan:

Mode of transportation: ☒ ^{Small}Activity bus _____ Rental car/mini-van _____ Charter bus _____ Other: _____

(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

Driver/s: WCC Wes Young Round trip mileage: _____ # of buses needed: _____

Total cost per student \$ 5.00 Source of funds: JROTC District Funds

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

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: [Signature] Date: 01 / 02 / 2024

Principal approval: [Signature] Date: 1 / 2 / 24

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: 11/5/24

Superintendent approval: [Signature] Date: 1 / 9 / 24

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

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

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

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

Sponsoring teacher: (Print) LTC Wes Young School: Watauga High
Cell phone number: 845-667-4049 Grade(s): 9-12 Number of students: 12
Departure time/date: 1230 / 31 Jan 2024 Return time/date: 2100 / 31 Jan 2024

Educational purpose:

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

Daniel Boone High School, Gray, TN

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: _____

Air Rifle Competition

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: LTC Wes Young

Names of all non-school chaperones: N/A

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

Are all site(s) accessible to students with disabilities? yes no How will students with disabilities be accommodated for site access and transportation? _____

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

Transportation plan:

Mode of transportation: ☒ Activity bus _____ Rental car/mini-van _____ Charter bus _____ Other: _____

(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

Driver/s: LTC Wes Young Round trip mileage: 140 # of buses needed: 1 Small
Total cost per student \$ 12.50 Source of funds: JROTC In-House Funds

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

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: [Signature] Date: 01 / 03 / 2024

Principal approval: [Signature] Date: 1 / 3 / 24

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: 1 / 5 / 24

Superintendent approval: [Signature] Date: 1 / 9 / 24

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

Declaration of Surplus Items - January '24

Date Approved: _____

Bethel

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
51686	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
33429	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1

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Blowing Rock

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
32546	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1
200840	1	SMARTBOARD		1
200899	1	DOC CAMERA- ELMO		1

3

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3

Cove Creek

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
NONE	1	PROJECTOR		1
800632	1	DVD/VCR- PLAYER		1

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Green Valley

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
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Hardin Park

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
33523	1	CHROMEBOOK 300e		1
NONE	1	CHAIR- DESK		1

2

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2

Mabel

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
600082	1	DOC CAMERA- ELMO		1
28431	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1
600069	1	SMARTBOARD 680		1

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3

Parkway

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
908003	1	FLAT PANEL- VIEWSONIC		1

1

0

1

Valle Crucis

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
52239	1	CHROMEBOOK GEN 2		1
300278	1	SMARTBOARD		1
300112	1	SMARTBOARD		1
33841	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1
300147	1	DOC CAMERA- ELMO		1
NONE	1	4 DRAWER WOODEN CAB	1	
29652	1	DESKTOP- OPTIPLEX		1
NONE	1	MONITOR W/ SPEAKERS- DELL	1	

8

2

6

Watauga High School

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
80740	1	PRINTER- BROTHER		1
39042	1	CHROMEBOOK		1
	2		0	2

Central Office

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
	0		0	0

Technology Department

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
35969	1	BACK UP BATTERY- TRIPLITE		1
35968	1	BACK UP BATTERY- TRIPLITE		1
34744	1	BACK UP BATTERY- TRIPLITE		1
200166	1	BACK UP BATTERY- APC		1
200039	1	BACK UP BATTERY- SMART UPS		1
50573	1	BACK UP BATTERY- APC		1
35973	1	BACK UP BATTERY- SMART UPS		1
	7		0	7

Transportation Department

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
	0		0	0

Maintenance Department

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>

0

0

0

Child Nutrition

Asset #

Quantity

Description

Usable

Unusable

0

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0

0



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Margaret E. Gragg Education Center
175 Pioneer Trail, Boone, NC 28607

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Leslie Alexander Superintendent
Members, Watauga County Board of Education

FROM: Ly Marze, Finance Officer

DATE: January 16, 2024

RE: 2023-24 Budget Amendment #1

Attached is Budget Amendment #1 that changes totals in Watauga County Schools 2023-24 adopted budget.

After approval of this Budget Amendment, the budget for all funds will appear as follows:

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Adopted Budget</u>	<u>Amendments</u>	<u>Amended Budget</u>
Local Current Expense	\$ 15,505,022	\$ 0	\$ 15,505,022
State Public School	35,350,953	1,491,295	36,842,248
Federal Grants	3,795,212	0	3,795,212
School Nutrition	2,444,400	0	2,444,400
Extended Learning Centers	729,850	0	729,850
Capital Outlay	5,974,932	372,425	6,347,357
Special Revenue/Scholarship	524,000	0	524,000
 Total	 \$ 64,324,369	 \$ 1,863,720	 \$ 66,188,089

Watauga County Schools
BUDGET AMENDMENT #1
January 16, 2024

Be it resolved that the following amendments be made to the Budget Resolution for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

BA #1-1 Explanation:

This amendment is to budget state transfers and additional state allotment dollars as reflected in DPI revisions #1-27.

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1.5110.001.121	Classroom Teachers	(243,368)
1.5110.003.162	Non-Instructional Support	(37,921)
1.5210.006.133	School Psychologists	(42,705)
1.5120.013.121	Career and Technical Education - MOE	(272,646)
1.5120.014.121	Career and Technical Education - Program	272,488
1.5110.015.311	School Technology Fund	55,479
1.5110.027.142	Teacher Assistants	(44,681)
1.5210.029.121	Behavioral Support	140,000
1.5850.039.149	School Safety Grants	109,998
1.5110.046.180	Third Grade Read to Achieve Bonus	26,086
1.5410.048.180	Test Result Bonus	141,265
1.5110.055.411	Watauga Innovative Academy	200,000
1.6550.056.165	Transportation	13,789
1.5110.061.411	Classroom Materials and Supplies	(1,941)
1.5210.063.142	Special Program Funds - EC	67,500
1.5110.071.181	Teachers Supplemental Funds	717,762
1.5120.083.333	CTE - Credential Program Support	36,114
1.5110.085.462	Literacy Intervention	148,246
1.5110.131.413	Textbooks and Digital Resources	205,830
Total Appropriations		1,491,295

Revenues:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1.3100	State Allocation	1,491,295
Total Revenues		1,491,295

BA #1-2 Explanation:

This amendment is to budget 2022-23 carryover Capital Outlay projects.

Appropriations:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
4.5110.901.529.067.336	House Project A 6/7	247,425
4.5110.901.529.336	WHS Athletic Fields	125,000
Total Appropriations		372,425

Revenues:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
4.4910.002	Restricted Fund Balance - Voc. Ed. House	247,425
4.4910	Fund Balance - SCIF Grant	125,000
Total Revenues		372,425

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes the critical role of parents in the education of their children and in the schools. The board directs school administrators to develop programs that will promote and support parental involvement in student learning and achievement at school and at home and encourage successful progress toward graduation. Each parent is encouraged to learn about the educational program, the educational goals and objectives of the school system, and his or her own child’s progress. The board also encourages parents to participate in their children’s education and in activities designed by school personnel to involve them, such as parent conferences, in order to foster effective teacher and parent communication. Parents are responsible for cooperating with school employees to facilitate their children’s compliance with board policies concerning homework, school attendance, and behavior. As required by law, the board shall post a list of specific parent rights with regards to their child’s education with any corresponding policy numbers on the school district website..

For purposes of this policy, “parent” includes parents, legal guardians, and legal custodians of students who are under 18 years old and who have not been emancipated.

A. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PLANS

1. Parental Involvement Plan as Part of the School Improvement Plan

The board directs each principal to ensure that the school improvement team develops a plan for the school’s parental involvement program as a part of the school improvement plan. The principal shall publicize drafts of the parental involvement plan prior to finalization and solicit input from parents of students in the school. This plan must include, at a minimum, efforts to enhance parental involvement by promoting the following priorities:

- a. regular, meaningful, two-way communication between home and school;
- b. responsible parenting;
- c. involvement of parents in student learning;
- d. parental volunteering in the school;
- e. involvement of parents in school decisions that affect children and families;
- f. parental training based on parents’ informational needs;
- g. collaboration with community agencies and other organizations to provide resources to strengthen school programs, families, and student learning; and
- h. student health awareness among parents by addressing the need for health

programs and student health services, which are linked to student learning.

2. Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plan

Each school participating in the Title I program must develop, with parents and family members, a school-level written parent and family engagement plan that involves parents in the planning and improvement of Title I activities and describes the means for carrying out school-level policy, sharing responsibility for student academic achievement, building the capacity of school staff and parents for involvement, and increasing accessibility for participation of all parents and family members of children participating in Title I programs. See policy 1320/3560, Title I Parent and Family Engagement.

3. Parental Involvement Component of a School Plan for Managing Student Behavior

Each school's plan for managing student behavior should include parental involvement strategies that address when parents will be notified or involved in issues related to their child's behavior. See policy 4302, School Plan for Management of Student Behavior.

B. PARENT COMMUNICATION, PARTICIPATION, AND CONFERENCES

1. Communication with Parents

The board encourages school personnel to have regular contact with parents for informational purposes as well as for commendation of students and notification of concerns. School personnel shall communicate with parents about student behavior issues in accordance with requirements of policy 4341, Parental Involvement in Student Behavior Issues, and about student attendance as described in policy 4400, Attendance. In addition, parents will be notified promptly if school personnel suspect that a criminal offense has been committed against the parent's child, unless notification would impede an investigation by law enforcement or the child welfare agency.

The principal must effectively communicate to parents the manner in which textbooks are used to implement the school's curricular objectives. Any parent interested in learning more about their child's course of study or the source of any supplementary instructional materials should contact the principal for more information. If a parent would like to inspect and review particular instructional materials, the parent should make such a request in accordance with policy 3210, Parental Request to Review Instructional Materials.

The principal also shall ensure that information about the nature and purpose of all clubs and activities, curricular and extracurricular, offered at the school is available at the school's main office. Any parent who would like information about such clubs or activities should contact the school's main office.

The principal or designee shall strive, through oral or written communication or other means, to include the parents of students identified as at-risk in the implementation and review of academic and/or behavioral interventions for their children, in accordance with policy 3405, Students at Risk of Academic Failure.

The principal or designee shall provide the parent of each student in kindergarten, first, or second grade with written notification of the student's reading progress. The notice will be provided three times a year, following each benchmark assessment and will include: (1) assessment results, (2) whether the child may not reach reading proficiency by the end of third grade, and (3) instructional support activities for use at home.

2. Parent Participation at Schools

The board encourages parents to engage in activities in their children's schools. Parents are welcome to visit schools in accordance with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools, and, if interested, are urged to participate in school volunteer programs as described in policy 5015, School Volunteers. In addition, opportunities exist for parents to participate on school advisory councils, such as the school health advisory council (see policy 6140, Student Wellness), school improvement teams (see policy 3430, School Improvement Plan), school media and technology advisory committees (see policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials), and the business advisory council (see policy 1670, Business Advisory Council).

3. Conferences

Teachers are responsible for scheduling conferences or meetings with parents. The board encourages the superintendent to work with local business leaders, including the local chambers of commerce, to encourage employers to adopt, as part of their stated personnel policies, time for employees who are parents or guardians to attend conferences with their child's teachers.

C. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

1. Title I Notifications

Each principal or designee of a Title I school shall effectively notify parents of all parental rights and other required information regarding Title I schools and programs, in accordance with federal law. Parents of students in Title I schools shall receive a copy of the system-wide Title I parent and family engagement policy (policy 3560) and the school-wide parent involvement plan.

2. Parent Guide for Student Achievement

Each year, the superintendent or designee shall create a parent guide for student

achievement that meets the requirements of state law and the State Board of Education. All parents will receive a written copy of the guide, and information in the guide will be discussed at the beginning of each school year in meetings of students, parents, and teachers.

At a minimum the guide will include the following:

- a. information for parents regarding the following as it pertains to their child:
(1) requirements for promotion to the next grade, including the requirements of the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program as set forth in Part 1A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C; (2) the course of study, textbooks, and other supplementary instructional materials and policy 3210, Parental Request to Review Instructional Materials, which provides for the inspection and review of those materials; (3) the child's progress toward achieving State and unit expectations for academic proficiency, including policies for student assessment, and the child's assessment results, report cards, and progress reports; (4) qualifications of the child's teachers, including licensure status; and (5) school entry requirements, including required immunizations;
- b. parental actions that can do the following: (1) strengthen the child's academic progress, especially in the area of reading as provided in the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program; (2) strengthen the child's citizenship, especially social skills and respect for others; (3) strengthen the child's realization of high expectations and setting lifelong learning goals; and (4) place a strong emphasis on the communication between the school and the home;
- c. services available for parents and their children, such as family literacy services; mentoring, tutoring, and other academic reinforcement programs; after-school programs; and college planning, academic advisement, and student counseling services (see policy 3610, Counseling Program);
- d. opportunities for parental participation, such as parenting classes, adult education, school advisory councils, and school volunteer programs;
- e. opportunities for parents to learn about rigorous academic programs that may be available for their child, such as honors programs, Career and College Promise and other dual enrollment opportunities, advanced placement, Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses, International Baccalaureate, North Carolina Virtual High School courses, and accelerated access to postsecondary education;
- f. educational choices available to parents, including each type of public school unit available to residents of the county in which the child lives and nonpublic school options, educational choice options offered within the

school system, and programs for scholarship grants for nonpublic schools (Part 2A of Article 39 of Chapter 115C) and for personal education student accounts for students with disabilities (Article 41 of Chapter 115C);

- g. rights of students who have been identified as students with disabilities, as provided in Article 9 of Chapter 115C;
- h. contact information for school and unit offices;
- i. resources for information on the importance of student health and other available resources for parents, including the following information on available immunizations and vaccinations: (1) a recommended immunization schedule in accordance with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations; and (2) information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza, including the causes, symptoms, and vaccines, how the diseases are spread, and places where parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children as required by G.S. 115C-375.4; and
- j. this policy (policy 4002, Parental Involvement); policy 3560, Title I Parent and Family Engagement; policy 1670, Business Advisory Council; policy 3210, Parental Request to Review Instructional Materials; policy 3430, School Improvement Plan; policy 3540, Comprehensive Health Education Program; policy 4400, Attendance; policy 5015, School Volunteers; policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools; and policy 6140, Student Wellness.

3. Additional Annual Notifications

The principal or designee shall annually notify parents of the following information to the extent that it has not already been provided to parents as part of the parent guide for student achievement:

- a. parental rights related to student records (see policy 4700, Student Records);
- b. parental rights related to student surveys (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
- c. the approximate dates of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is: (a) required as a condition of attendance, (b) administered and scheduled in advance by the school administration, and (c) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students;
- d. the schedule of pesticide use on school property and their right to request notification of nonscheduled pesticide use (see policy 9205, Pest Management);

- e. student behavior policies, the Code of Student Conduct, and school standards and rules (see policies in the 4300 series);
- f. the permissible use of seclusion and restraint in the schools (see regulation 4302-R, Rules for Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools);
- g. policy 4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited;
- h. policy 4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure;
- i. the dates of the system-wide and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year, how the results from the tests will be used, and whether each test is required by the State Board of Education or by the local board;
- j. grading practices that will be followed at the school and, for parents of high school students, the method of computing the grade point averages that will be used for determining class rank (see policies 3400, Evaluation of Student Progress, and 3450, Class Rankings);
- k. available opportunities and the enrollment process for students to take advanced courses and information explaining the value of taking advanced courses;
- l. if applicable, that their child will be provided advanced learning opportunities in mathematics or will be placed in an advanced mathematics course;
- m. a clear and concise explanation of the North Carolina testing and accountability system that includes all information required by federal law;
- n. a report containing information about the school system and each school, including, but not limited to:
 - i. the following information both in the aggregate and disaggregated by category: student achievement, graduation rates, performance on other school quality and/or student success indicators, the progress of students toward meeting long-term goals established by the state, student performance on measures of school climate and safety, and, as available, the rate of enrollment in post-secondary education;
 - ii. the performance of the school system on academic assessments as compared to the state as a whole and the performance of each school on academic assessments as compared to the state and school system as a whole;

- iii. the percentage and number of students who are:
 - 1. assessed,
 - 2. assessed using alternate assessments,
 - 3. involved in preschool and accelerated coursework programs, and
 - 4. English learners achieving proficiency;
- iv. the per pupil expenditures of federal, state, and local funds; and
- v. teacher qualifications;
- o. the grade earned by the school on the most recent annual report card issued for it by the State Board of Education if the grade was a D or F;
- p. supportive services available to students, including health services;
- q. for parents of students in grades 5 through 12, information about cervical cancer, cervical dysplasia, and human papillomavirus, including the causes and symptoms of these diseases, how they are transmitted, how they may be prevented by vaccination, including the benefits and possible side effects of vaccination, and places parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children;
- r. how to reach school officials in emergency situations during non-school hours;
- s. information about and an application form for free and reduced price meals and/or free milk (see policy 6225, Free and Reduced Price Food Services);
- t. information about the school breakfast program;
- u. information about the availability and location of free summer food service program meals for students when school is not in session;
- v. for parents of children with disabilities, procedural safeguards (see also policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities);
- w. information on the availability of the asbestos management plan and planned or in-progress inspections, re-inspections, response actions, and post-response actions, including periodic re-inspection and surveillance activities;
- x. education rights of homeless students (see policy 4125, Homeless Students);

- y. the content and implementation of the local school wellness policy (see policy 6140, Student Wellness);
 - z. their right to take four hours of unpaid leave from their jobs every year in order to volunteer in their child's school as stated in G.S. 95-28.3 (see policy 5015, School Volunteers);
 - aa. that the school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age, and that the school system provides processes for resolving discrimination and harassment complaints (see policies 4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, and 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities);
 - bb. that the school system provides equal access to its facilities, programs, and activities to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups (see policy 1730/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law); and
 - cc. the availability of and the process for requesting a waiver or reduction of student fees (see policy 4600, Student Fees).
4. Opportunities to Withhold Consent/Opt Out Notifications

As a part of the annual notification described above, parents will be effectively notified that they may opt out of any of the following:

- a. release of student directory information about their child for school purposes or to outside organizations (see policy 4700, Student Records);
- b. release of their child's name, address, and telephone listing to military recruiters or institutions of higher education (see policy 4700, Student Records);
- c. their child's participation in curricula related to (a) prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; (b) avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy; or (c) reproductive health and safety education, as provided in policy 3540, Comprehensive Health Education Program. A copy of the materials that will be used in these curricula will be available in the school media center during the school year and at other times that the media center is available to the public. To meet any review periods required by law, materials also may be made available for review in the central office;
- d. their child's participation in academic or career guidance or personal or social counseling services of a generic nature offered to groups of students (e.g., peer relations strategies offered to all sixth graders). However,

parental notification and permission are not required for: (a) short-duration academic, career, personal, or social guidance and counseling and crisis intervention that is needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment; (b) student-initiated individual or group counseling targeted at a student's specific concerns or needs; and (c) counseling if child abuse or neglect is suspected (see policies 3610, Counseling Program, and 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety);

- e. their child's participation in any protected information survey given as part of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System or National Youth Tobacco Survey (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
- e.f. their child's participation in any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is: (a) required as a condition of attendance; (b) administered and scheduled in advance by the school administration; and (c) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students;
- f.g. the collection, disclosure, or use of their child's personal information for marketing purposes (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students); and
- g.h. release of their child's free and reduced-price meal information to State Medicaid or State children's health insurance program (SCHIP).

Any parent or legal guardian who wishes to opt out/withhold consent must do so in writing after receiving notice. Otherwise, consent to the programs or activities is presumed. After the annual notification, the school is not required to provide further notice to the parent or legal guardian as to the manner in which student directory information is used, the curriculum is provided, or guidance programs are made available.

D. PARENTAL PERMISSION REQUIRED

Written parental permission is required prior to the following activities:

1. the administration of medications to students by employees of the school system (see policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students);
2. the release of student records that are not considered directory information, unless the release is allowed or required by law (see policy 4700, Student Records);
3. off-campus trips;
4. students' participation in high-impact or high-risk sports or extracurricular activities, such as football or mountain climbing (see policy 4220, Student

Insurance Program);

5. all decisions or actions as required by the IDEA with regard to providing special education or related services to students with disabilities (see policy 3520, Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities);
6. certain health services, as required by law;
7. participation in a mental health assessment or mental health services under circumstances prescribed by federal law;
8. students' participation in programs or services that provide information about where to obtain contraceptives or abortion referral services;
9. students' participation in any protected information surveys that are conducted concerning protected topics other than those given as part of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System or National Youth Tobacco Survey (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
10. disclosure of students' free and reduced price lunch eligibility information or eligibility status; and
11. students' access to the Internet, as described in policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use.

E. PROCEDURES FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT HEALTH

1. Parent Notifications Regarding Student Physical and Mental Health

At the beginning of each school year, the principal or designee shall notify parents of (1) each health care service offered at their children's schools and the means for parents to provide consent for any specific services; (2) acknowledgement that consenting to a health care service does not waive the parents' right to access their children's educational records or health records or to be notified of changes in their children's services or monitoring; and (3) the procedures to exercise the parental remedies for concerns related to student health provided by G.S. 115C-76.60 and described below in subsection E.6.

Before any student well-being questionnaire or health screening form is administered to students in kindergarten through third grade, the principal or designee shall provide parents with a copy of the questionnaire or form and shall inform parents of the means for parents to consent to the use of the questionnaire or form for their children.

The principal or designee shall notify parents of changes in services or monitoring related to their children's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and

the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for their children prior to or contemporaneously with the changes being made. In addition, the principal or designee shall notify parents before any changes are made to the names or pronouns used for their children in school records or by school personnel.

No school system policy, procedure, or form will expressly or otherwise prohibit school employees from notifying parents about their children's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring, nor will any school system policy, procedure, or form intentionally encourage or be designed in a manner that is reasonably likely to have the effect of encouraging any children to withhold from their parents information about their mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring. School personnel shall not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in critical decisions affecting a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.

2. Discussions Related to Student Well-Being

In accordance with the rights of parents provided in Chapter 114A of the General Statutes, when issues of a student's well-being arise, school personnel shall encourage the student to discuss the issues with his or her parent. As appropriate, school personnel may facilitate discussions of such issues with parents.

3. Parent Access to Student Records

Parents will not be prohibited from accessing any of their children's education and health records created, maintained, or used by the school system, except as permitted by law. See policy 4700, Student Records.

4. Student Support Services Training

Student support services training developed or provided by the school system to school personnel will adhere to student services guidelines, standards, and frameworks established by the Department of Public Instruction.

5. Instruction on Gender Identity, Sexual Activity, and Sexuality

Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality will not be included in the curriculum provided in kindergarten through fourth grade, regardless of whether the information is provided by school personnel or third parties. For purposes of this subsection, curriculum includes the standard course of study and support materials, locally developed curriculum, supplemental instruction, and textbooks and other supplementary materials, but does not include responses to student-initiated questions.

6. Remedies for Parental Concerns Related to Student Health

If a parent has a concern about the school or school system's procedure or practice under Part 4 of Article 7B of Chapter 115C, as described here in Section E of this policy, the parent should submit the concern in writing to the principal. The principal shall schedule and hold a meeting with the parent within five days after the concern was submitted. The principal shall conduct any *necessary* investigation. If possible, the principal should resolve the concern within seven days after the concern was submitted. If the principal cannot resolve the concern within seven days, the principal shall immediately notify the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee shall assist, as needed, in resolving the concern.

If the concern has not been resolved within 15 days after the parent initially submitted the concern, the superintendent or designee shall schedule a board hearing to be conducted pursuant to policy 1600, Hearings Before the Board, to occur within the next 15 days. If the concern is not resolved 30 days after the parent initially submitted the concern, the board will provide a statement of the reasons for not resolving the concern.

If the concern is not resolved within 30 days of initial submission, the parent has the right to pursue additional remedies as provided in G.S. 115C-76.60(b).

F. PARENT REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

A parent may request in writing from the principal any of the information the parent has the right to access under Part 3 of Article 7B of Chapter 115C. The principal, within 10 business days, shall either provide the requested information to the parent or provide an extension notice to the parent that, due to the volume or complexity of the request, the information will be provided no later than 20 business days from the date of the parental request.

If the principal (1) denies or fails to respond to the request for information within 10 business days or (2) fails to provide information within 20 business days following an extension notice, the parent may then submit the written request for information to the superintendent, along with a statement specifying the time frame of the denial or failure to provide information by the principal.

If the superintendent denies or does not respond to the request for information within 10 business days, the parent may appeal the denial or lack of response to the board no later than 20 business days from the date of the request to the superintendent. The board will place the parent's appeal on the agenda for the next board meeting occurring more than three business days after submission of the appeal.

The information in this Section F will be posted on the school system's website along with the list of parents' legal rights for their child's education as described in G.S. 115C-76.25.

G. COMMUNITY SERVICES AVAILABLE

A variety of community services are available to provide parents and families of students in the school system with needed information, support, and resources. Parents are encouraged to utilize applicable community services such as the following:

~~[G.S. 115C-76.35(a)(1) requires that board policy provides links to parents for community services. Insert here a list of applicable links to community services available to parents of students in your school system.]~~

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NAxshMNPiqmoD4hnnknqHSujYOOk80dkDw8FWpOfbNuk/edit?usp=sharing>

H. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

By September 15 of each year, the superintendent or designee shall report to the State Board of Education parental involvement information as required by G.S. 115C-76.70.

Legal References: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, 15 U.S.C. 2641, *et seq.*; Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 7905, 34 C.F.R. 108.9; Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 6301 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 200; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, 34 C.F.R. pt. 99; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400, *et seq.*; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, *et seq.*; National School Lunch Program, 42 U.S.C. 1751 *et seq.*, 7 C.F.R. 210.12, 7 C.F.R. pt. 245; Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. 1232h, 34 C.F.R. pt. 98; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 100; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; 20 U.S.C. 7908; G.S. 90-21.1, -21.10B; 95-28.3; 114A-10; 115C-47(47), -47(51), -47(54), -47(58), -76.1, -76.20, -76.25, -76.30, -76.35, -76.40, -76.45, -76.50, -76.55, -76.60, -76.65, -76.70, -81.25, -81.30, -81.36, -105.41, -109.1, -174.26(d), -307(c), -375.4, -390.2, -391.1, -402.15, -407.16; 16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0307; State Board of Education Policies KNEC-002, PRNT-000, TEST-001

Cross References: Title I Parent and Family Engagement (policy 3560), Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 4020/7230), Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 1730/4022/7231), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 4010), Hearings Before the Board (policy 1600), Business Advisory Council (policy 1670), Selection of Instructional Materials (policy 3200), Parental Request to Review Instructional Materials (policy 3210), Technology Responsible Use (policy 3225/4312/7320), Evaluation of Student Progress (policy 3400), Students at Risk of Academic Failure (policy 3405), School Improvement Plan, (policy 3430), Class Rankings (policy 3450), Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities (policy 3520), Comprehensive Health Education Program (policy 3540), Counseling Program (policy 3610), Homeless Students (policy 4125), Student Insurance Program (policy 4220), Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety (policy 4240/7312), Student Behavior

Policies (4300 series), Rules for Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools (regulation 4302-R), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 4329/7311), Parental Involvement in Student Behavior Issues (policy 4341), Attendance (policy 4400), Student Fees (policy 4600), Student Records (policy 4700), Surveys of Students (policy 4720), School Volunteers (policy 5015), Visitors to the Schools (policy 5020), Registered Sex Offenders (policy 5022), Student Health Services (policy 6120), Administering Medicines to Students (policy 6125), Student Wellness (policy 6140), Free and Reduced Price Meal Services (policy 6225), Pest Management (policy 9205)

Adopted: July 14, 2014

Replaces: Policy 2.04.60, Parental Involvement (in part)

Revised: January 11, 2016; February 13, 2017; February 12, 2018, November 13, 2018; February 10, 2020; August 12, 2020, January 11, 2021, December 13, 2021(Legal references only); November 6, 2023; {DATE}

DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY OF NON-SCHOOL MATERIAL

Policy Code:

5210

Students and the educational program must be the focus of the school system. In order to maintain an educational environment conducive to learning and to minimize intrusions upon instructional time, distribution and display of non-school material will be limited in accordance with this policy and policy 5240, Advertising in the Schools. School officials shall screen and approve the distribution or display of non-school material on school property. (The term "non-school material" is as defined in Section F of this policy.) ~~on school property.~~

This policy applies to the distribution and display of non-school material by students and school-related groups (as defined in Section F of this policy) and by governmental agencies, educational institutions, and non-profit entities as permitted in Section C below. This policy does not apply to the distribution and display of materials by individuals or groups that are on school property in accordance with policy 5030, Community Use of Facilities. Except as provided in Section A below, this policy will not be construed as applying to or prohibiting the display of compliant political or farm signs permitted by G.S. 136-32.

A. DISPLAY OF COMPLIANT POLITICAL AND FARM SIGNS IN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY DURING DESIGNATED PERIODS

Any person may display compliant political or farm signs in the right-of-way of the state highway system ~~or in municipal street rights-of-way~~ in accordance with the standards established in G.S. 136-32, even if such right-of-way constitutes school grounds. Compliant political signs may also be placed in municipal street rights-of-way in accordance with the standards established in G.S. 136-32 and any applicable local ordinance.

Compliant political signs may be displayed in ~~such the~~ right-of-way from 30 days before the first day of "one-stop" early voting to 10 days after the primary or election day. Compliant farm signs may be displayed in the right-of-way until the end of the farm's season. School officials may remove and dispose of any political sign remaining in the right-of-way more than 40 days after the primary or election day and may remove and dispose of any farm sign remaining in the right-of-way more than 30 days after the end of the farm's season. School officials shall observe any different rules established by applicable local ordinance for ~~placement and removal~~ of political signs on municipal street rights-of-way.

School officials shall not remove any political or farm sign lawfully placed except as provided in this section but may request the Department of Transportation to remove a sign that is not in compliance with G.S. 136-32.

B. DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY BY STUDENTS

Students wishing to distribute or display on campus any publication, leaflet or other written

material that is not school-sponsored must submit the publication or material to the principal for review prior to distribution. The principal shall prohibit distribution or display when the publication or material contains speech that is prohibited as specified in Section D below but otherwise shall not discriminate on the basis of viewpoint in granting or denying a student permission to distribute or display non-school publications or materials. Materials approved by the principal for distribution by students may only be distributed during non-instructional time in common areas (outside of classrooms). If permission to distribute or display a publication or material is denied, the student may request review of the principal's decision as specified in Section E below.

C. DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY BY NON-STUDENTS

1. Distribution and display of "school-sponsored or curriculum-related publications and materials" as defined in Section F are permitted during the school day, on school grounds and at school activities.
2. Distribution and display of publications and materials from school-related groups that have received prior approval of the superintendent or designee pursuant to the standards in Section D below and the standards for review of the decision in Section E below are permitted at reasonable times and places as designated by the superintendent or designee. The term "school-related group" is defined in Section F. The school system shall not discriminate on the basis of viewpoint in granting or denying permitted school-related groups permission to distribute or display non-school material.
3. The following agencies and organizations are permitted to distribute or display educational information or information about programs and activities of interest to students:
 - a. local, state and federal government agencies and departments;
 - b. organizations that offer educational, recreational, cultural or character development activities or programs for school-aged children, including but not limited to scouts, YMCA or YWCA, organized youth sport leagues, etc.;
 - c. school/business partnerships or incentive programs that directly enhance or support the school's educational program; and
 - d. community colleges, universities, and other non-profit institutions of higher education.

All publications and materials that one of the permitted agencies or organizations would like to distribute or display must be submitted to the superintendent or designee for approval prior to distribution or display. Approval for distribution or

display will be granted pursuant to the standards in Section D below and the standards for review of decisions in Section E below. If approved, the publications and materials will be distributed or displayed at reasonable times and places as designated by the superintendent or designee.

4. The school system shall not discriminate on the basis of viewpoint in granting or denying permitted agencies and organizations permission to distribute or display non-school materials.
5. The superintendent is authorized to adopt regulations regarding approval forms, how many times a year groups may distribute or display publications or materials, delivery and bundling requirements, etc.
6. Nothing in this policy will be construed to create a public forum that would allow non-students unrestricted access to school property for the purpose of distributing or displaying publications or materials.

D. DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY STANDARDS FOR NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS

School officials shall apply the following standards to approve the distribution or display of all non-school material by individuals or groups authorized by this policy on school property:

1. While materials will not be screened for viewpoint, the reviewer shall prohibit the distribution or display of any publication or material that (a) is vulgar, indecent or obscene; (b) contains libelous statements, personal attacks or abusive language such as language defaming a person's character, race, religion, ethnic origin, sex, family status, or disability; (c) causes or clearly threatens to cause a material and substantial disruption of a school activity; (d) encourages the commission of unlawful acts or the violation of lawful school regulations; (e) is inappropriate considering the age of the students in the school; (f) contains information that is inaccurate, misleading or false; or (g) advertises any product or service not permitted to minors by law.

The superintendent's designee shall notify the superintendent before approving or prohibiting distribution or display of any publications or materials that raise a question as to whether a specific action by school officials might violate the Establishment of Religion Clause, the Free Exercise of Religion Clause, or the free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The superintendent may consult with the board attorney as necessary to determine the legally appropriate course of action.

2. The distribution of non-school material must not have any significant effect on instructional time.
3. Only the following non-school material may be distributed directly to students:

- a. Approved information about instructional opportunities (arts classes, youth athletics, summer camps, scouting, tutoring, etc.)
 - b. Approved information from local government agencies about public health and safety issues clearly relevant to WCS students; "Local government agencies" shall mean county and municipal organizations based in Watauga County.
4. Approved non-school materials other than those identified in item (3) above may be displayed in schools and/or made available for pick up in central location(s) approved by the principal.
5. The limitations of sections C-3 and C-4 shall not be construed to prohibit distribution of non-school materials by students as permitted by Section A. of this policy.
6. Display or distribution of materials concerning the same or substantially similar programs or events from the same organization shall be limited to twice per school year.
7. School system e-mail and websites shall not be used to announce, distribute, or display non-school materials and information except for a) professional development opportunities approved by the WCS Chief Academic Officer or designee, and b) information about services offered to WCS personnel from approved benefit providers.
8. Non-school materials distributed or displayed to students must be clearly identified as non-school materials.

In order to minimize disruption to the learning environment, political campaign materials may not be distributed to students or employees (including through employee mailboxes and e-mail) or made available on school grounds during school time or at school events. However, on election days, posters and printed materials are permitted for viewing and distribution to the public at school buildings used as polling places in accordance with state law and board of elections requirements.

This provision does not prohibit a teacher from using political literature or campaign material for instructional purposes. However, any teacher using these materials for instruction shall not use his or her position to promote a particular candidate, party or position on a specific issue. The teacher also shall attempt to use a variety of materials that represent balanced and diverse viewpoints on the political spectrum.

E. PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING DISTRIBUTION OR DISPLAY OF NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS

1. Any individual or organization wishing to distribute or display non-school-sponsored publications or materials must first submit for approval a copy of the publication or material to the superintendent or designee at least three school days in advance of the distribution or display time.
2. Within five school days, the superintendent or designee shall review the request and render a decision. In the event permission to distribute or display the material is denied or restricted, the individual submitting the request will be informed of the reasons for the denial or restriction.
3. Any request denied or restricted by the superintendent or designee may be appealed in writing to the board of education. The board will review the request at its next regularly scheduled meeting. As appropriate, the superintendent or the board will consult with the board attorney concerning a request to distribute or display non-school literature.
4. Permission or denial of permission to distribute or display material does not imply approval or disapproval of its contents by school system administrators, the school board or the individual reviewing the material submitted.

F. DEFINITIONS

The following terms used in this policy are defined as follows:

1. Obscene: Any speech or work that the average person, applying contemporary community standards (as opposed to "national standards"), would find, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest; or that depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law; and that, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.
2. Libelous Statement: Libelous statements are false and unprivileged statements about a specific person that injure that person's reputation in the community.
3. Non-School Material: Non-school material includes any publication or other written information that is not a school-sponsored or curriculum-related publication or material.
4. Material and Substantial Disruption: A material and substantial disruption is any conduct that for any reason, including inappropriateness of time, place or type of behavior, significantly interferes with school functions, classroom instruction, or the rights of other students or school employees. Examples of material and substantial disruption include, but are not limited to, demonstrations, destruction of property, injury to students or other persons, shouting or boisterous conduct, and anything that significantly distracts students from instruction or prevents school personnel from performing their educational responsibilities.

5. School-Sponsored or Curriculum-Related Publications and Materials: School-related materials or publications are: (a) materials published by the school system for distribution (i.e. school calendars, menus, school newsletters, etc.); (b) materials that are approved by school officials and related to activities or events that are officially sponsored by the school (i.e. announcements for sports teams, clubs, field trips, school plays and concerts); or (c) materials that are directly related to instruction.
6. School-Related Group: School-related groups are organizations formed to support the school in an area of recognized need, such as the PTA, the PTO, the Watauga Education Foundation, teachers' and principals' organizations, and booster clubs.

The superintendent shall adopt regulations as necessary to ensure that this policy is implemented throughout the school system.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; *Peck v. Upshur*, 155 F.3d 274 (1998); G.S. 115C-36, -47; 136-32; 163-129; -166.4

Cross References: Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030), Collections and Solicitations (policy 5220), Advertising in the Schools (policy 5240)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Replaces: Policy 2.04.70, Distribution of Non-School Sponsored Materials (as applicable)

Revised: February 10, 2020; June 28, 2021 (Legal references only); December 13, 2021; {DATE}

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

A. OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

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

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

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

B. MEAL CHARGES

Students who are required to pay for meals are expected to provide payment in a timely manner. The board recognizes, however, that students may occasionally forget or lose their meal money. No adults will be permitted to charge meals or other items in the school cafeteria. No student will be permitted to charge supplemental or a la carte items, including milk.

No student will be deprived a meal nor served an alternate meal due to forgotten or lost money. At no time will a student meal be retrieved once the student has received the tray. The student shall be allowed to eat the meal and the student's account will be charged

accordingly.

If a student meal account has a negative balance, money offered by the student for purchase of supplemental or a la carte items cannot be used to pay against the negative balance without the student's permission.

The school nutrition director and principal shall work jointly to prevent meal charges from accumulating. Every effort will be made to collect all funds due to the school nutrition program on a regular basis and before the end of the school year. This may include but is not limited to sending letters home with students, sending emails to parents, and sending automated calls to homes. If a parent regularly fails to provide meal money and does not qualify for free meal benefits, the school nutrition program shall inform the principal, who shall determine the next course of action. This may include notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect and/or taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges. The principal shall not impose any administrative penalties on a student for unpaid meal charges. Administrative penalties include withholding a student's records, prohibiting a student from participating in graduation, and denying a student a diploma.

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

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

Legal References: Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. 1771 *et seq.*; National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751 *et seq.*, 2 C.F.R. pt. 200; 7 C.F.R. pt. 210; 7 C.F.R. pt. 215; 7 C.F.R. pt. 220; United States Department of Agriculture Policy Memos SP 46-2016, 47-2016, and 23-2017, available at <https://childnutrition.nepublicschools.gov/regulations-policies/usda-policy-memos> https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources?f%5B0%5D=program%3A39&f%5B1%5D=resource_type%3A160&keywords=&page=1; G.S. 115C-47(7), -47(22), -263, -264, -264.1, -426, -450, -522; 147 art. 6E, art. 6G; 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0104

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), Goals of School Nutrition Services (policy 6200), School Meal and Competitive Foods Standards (policy 6230), Goals of the Purchasing Function (policy 6400), Ethics and the Purchasing Function (policy 6401/9100), Federal Grant Administration (policy 8305)

Adopted: March 9, 2015

Replaces: Policy 5.07.90, Charging of School Meals

Revised: May 9, 2016; June 12, 2017; August 14, 2017 and April 9, 2018 (Legal references only); June 11, 2018; April 8, 2019; January 13, 2020; July 26, 2021 (Legal references only); June 30, 2022; December 12, 2022; {DATE}

The Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") is committed to conducting the purchasing function in an ethical manner and in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. The board expects all employees who are directly or indirectly involved in any aspect of the purchasing function to be aware of and comply with all current state and federal laws and regulations as these standards apply to the school system's purchasing activities.

A. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Employees directly or indirectly involved in any aspect of the school system's procurement, purchasing, and/or contracting process for apparatus, materials, equipment, supplies, services, real property, or construction or repair projects, regardless of source of funds, must adhere to the following standards of conduct and those established in policies 7730, Employee Conflict of Interest, and 8305, Federal Grant Administration.

1. Employees are expected to make all purchasing-related decisions in a neutral and objective way based on what is in the best interest of the school system and not in consideration of actual or potential personal benefit.
2. Employees shall not participate, directly or indirectly, in making or administering any contract from which they will obtain a direct benefit, unless an exception is allowed pursuant to law.

An employee obtains a direct benefit when the employee or his or her spouse will receive income, commission, or property under the contract or the employee or spouse has more than a 10 percent interest in an entity that is a party to the contract. See G.S. 14-234 and policy 7730, Employee Conflict of Interest.

Participation in making or administering a contract includes, but is not limited to, participating in the development of specifications or contract terms; obtaining or reviewing bids; preparation or award of the contract; and having the authority to make decisions about, interpret, or oversee the contract.

3. Employees shall not participate, directly or indirectly, in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported in whole or part by a federal grant or award if the employee has a real or apparent conflict of interest. See 2 C.F.R. 200.318 and policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration.

A real or apparent conflict exists when the employee, his or her immediate family member or partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of those individuals, has a financial or other interest in or receives a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. For purposes of this subsection, a "financial interest" means a financial interest which comprises more

than five percent of the equity of the firm or business or more than five percent of the assets of the economic interest in indebtedness. It does not include an ownership interest held through a fiduciary, such as a mutual fund or blind trust, where the individual or individual's employer has no control over the selection of holdings.

4. Employees shall not influence or attempt to influence any person involved in making or administering a contract from which the employee will obtain a direct benefit as described in paragraph 2, above.
5. Employees shall not solicit or receive any gift, favor, reward, service, or promise of reward, including a promise of future employment, in exchange for recommending, influencing, or attempting to influence the award of a contract by the school system.
6. Employees shall notify the superintendent or designee in writing if they have an actual or potential conflict of interest under this policy or applicable state or federal law that would disqualify them from performing any aspect of their job responsibilities.
7. Employees shall not solicit or accept trips, meals, gratuities, gifts, favors, or anything of monetary value from current or recent (within the past year) contractors, subcontractors, or suppliers, or any persons or entities that foreseeably may bid on a contract in the future, unless the item is an unsolicited gift of nominal value (\$50 or less), and is one of the following: an advertising item or souvenir that is widely distributed; an honorarium for participating in a meeting; a meal provided at a banquet; or other item that is clearly permitted by state and federal law. Multiple permitted items from a single contractor may not exceed an aggregate value of \$100 in a twelve-month period.

Employees shall inform existing and potential contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers about these restrictions.

8. Employees shall not solicit or accept any gift from a current or potential provider of E-rate services or products in violation of applicable federal E-rate program gifting rules.
9. Employees shall not divulge confidential information to any unauthorized person. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to (1) the school system's cost estimate for any public contract, prior to bidding or completion of other competitive purchasing processes; and (2) the identity of contractors who have obtained proposals for bid purposes for a public contract, until the bids are opened in public and recorded in the board minutes.
10. An employee shall not misuse information in violation of G.S. 14-234.1. Specifically, an employee shall not, in contemplation of the employee's own

official action or that of the board or others acting on behalf of the school system, or in reliance on information known to the employee in his or her official capacity and not made public, to:

- a. acquire a financial interest in any property, transaction, or enterprise;
- b. gain a financial benefit that may be affected by the information or contemplated action; or
- c. intentionally aid another to acquire a financial interest or gain a financial benefit from the information or contemplated action.

B. TRAINING

The superintendent or designee shall ensure that all affected ~~personnel~~ employees are aware of board policy requirements and applicable laws. As described in policy 7730, Employee Conflict of Interest, employees who are involved in the making or administering of contracts shall receive conflicts of interest training that includes position-specific education on conflicts of interest and ethical standards of conduct.

C. VIOLATIONS

Any individual aware of any violation of this policy, policy 2121, Board Member Conflict of Interest, policy 7730, Employee Conflict of Interest, the conflict of interest provisions of policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration, or applicable conflict of interest laws shall report such violation in accordance with policy 1760/7280, Prohibition Against Retaliation. Employees who violate this policy, policy 2121, policy 7730, or the conflict of interest provisions of policy 8305, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Legal References: 2 C.F.R. 200.318(c); 47 C.F.R. 54.503; FCC Sixth Report and Order 10-175; G.S. 14-234, -234.1; 115C-335.15; 133-32, -33; Attorney General Opinion requested by L.W. Lamar regarding G.S. 133-32, the Applicability to Attorneys and Law Firms Providing Professional Services to Local Boards of Education, dated May 13, 1993

Cross References: Prohibition Against Retaliation (policy 1760/7280), Board Member Conflict of Interest (policy 1321), Bidders' List (policy 6441/9121), Employee Conflict of Interest (policy 7730), Federal Grant Administration (policy 8305)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Revised: March 11, 2019; {DATE}

PURCHASING REQUIREMENTS FOR EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS, AND SUPPLIES

Policy Code:

6430

All purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment will be made in accordance with all applicable state laws and regulations, including Article 8 of Chapter 143, and Articles 6E and 6G of Chapter 147 of the North Carolina General Statutes, Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") policy, and school system purchasing procedures. Purchasing contracts subject to the E-Verify requirement will contain a provision stating that the contractor and contractor's subcontractors must comply with the requirements of G.S. Chapter 64, Article 2. Purchases using federal funds must also be made in accordance with all applicable requirements of federal law and regulation, including the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ("Uniform Guidance") issued by the U.S. Office of Budget and Management. (See also policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration.) All employees involved in purchasing must be familiar with applicable requirements.

The purchasing officer shall ensure that written specifications for desired products are descriptive and clear and incorporate the quality requirements and service needs of the school system. There is no minimum number of bids, proposals, or quotes required for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment (whether formally or informally bid); however, at least two bids, proposals, or quotes should be obtained when feasible.

The appropriate school system employee shall review submissions of bids, proposals, or quotes to determine if they are responsive to the system's specifications and make recommendations to the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee may award the contract based upon such recommendations if it is within their authority to contract as provided in policy 6420, Contracts with the Board, or may make a recommendation to the board for award of the contract by the board.

Apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment must be purchased in accordance with the following requirements.

A. FORMAL BIDS (EQUAL TO OR MORE THAN \$90,000)

The purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment for expenditures equal to or more than \$90,000 must be secured through the competitive bid process governed by G.S. 143-129. The superintendent, in consultation with the purchasing officer, is authorized to determine the best method for formally bidding a product or, as appropriate, utilizing one of the exceptions to formal bidding as provided below in Section E. The purchasing officer shall oversee the use of any purchasing method and ensure that all state requirements are met, including advertisement, sealed bids, maintaining records, and public opening of bids. The board authorizes the use of newspaper advertisement, electronic advertisement, or both for formal bids; however, the superintendent has the authority to determine which method will be used for a specific purchase or categories of purchases.

Awards will be made to the lowest responsible bidder(s) whose bid or proposal meets the requirements and criteria set forth by the school system, taking into consideration quality,

performance, and the time specified in the proposal for the performance of the contract. To be eligible for an award of a contract subject to G.S. 143-129, the contractor and its subcontractors, if any, must demonstrate compliance with all applicable provisions of G.S. Chapter 64, Article 2, including the responsibility to use E-Verify. All contracts awarded must be in writing.

The board permits the use of the following processes for contracts that require formal bidding.

1. Competitive Sealed Bids

A competitive sealed bid (or invitation to bid) may be used to request the cost of particular goods by providing detailed specifications in advance.

2. Reverse Auction

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129.9(a)(1), the school system may use reverse auctions as an alternative to sealed bid procedures. For purposes of this policy, "reverse auction" means a real-time purchasing process in which bidders compete to provide goods at the lowest selling price in an open and interactive environment. The superintendent, in consultation with the purchasing officer, shall determine whether reverse auctions are appropriate for a specific purchase or category of purchases. To conduct a reverse auction, the purchase officer may use a third party, may use the state's electronic procurement system, or, if appropriate equipment is available, may conduct the auction using school system equipment.

3. Exceptions to Formal Bids

Any of the processes outlined below in Section E may be used in lieu of formal bidding, so long as all requirements of state law are met.

B. INFORMAL BIDS (\$30,000 TO \$90,000)

The purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment for expenditures of at least \$30,000 but less than \$90,000 must be secured through the informal bidding process governed by G.S. 143-131. The superintendent, in consultation with the purchasing officer, is authorized to determine the best method for securing informal bids on a product. The purchasing officer shall oversee the use of any purchasing method and ensure that all state requirements are met, including maintaining records of all bids submitted. Records of informal bids will not be available for public inspection until the contract has been awarded. Awards will be made to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder(s) whose bid or proposal meets the requirements and criteria set forth by the school system, taking into consideration quality, performance, and the time specified in the proposal for the performance of the contract.

1. Competitive Sealed Bids

Informal bid requirements may be met by the use of sealed bids. The purchasing officer may utilize the methods for formal competitive bids provided in Section A or may determine other appropriate methods for soliciting sealed bids. The bid specifications must include the time, date, and place for opening bids. No advertisement for bids is necessary (unless the formal bid process is used); however, the purchasing officer may advertise for bids as he or she deems appropriate.

2. Quotations

Informal bid requirements may be met by the solicitation of quotes from prospective vendors. Quotations may be solicited and submitted via telephone, fax, e-mail, or the North Carolina E-Procurement system. Telephone quotes must be placed in writing before a final contract will be awarded. Written quotations must be on the vendor's letterhead or an official quotation form.

3. Reverse Auction

A reverse auction may be used to solicit informal bids, consistent with the process provided in Section A.2.

4. Exceptions to Informal Bids

Any of the processes outlined below in Section E may be used in lieu of informal bidding, so long as all requirements of state law are met.

C. LOCAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PURCHASES FOR LESS THAN \$30,000

When competitive bidding is not statutorily required, purchases should be made under conditions that foster competition among potential vendors. Purchasing decisions should be made after considering price, quality, suitability for specified need, energy costs when applicable under policy 6445/6535 Energy Efficiency, and the timeliness of delivery and performance. The board may refuse to enter into a contract with a supplier or contractor whose performance on a previous contract was found to be unsatisfactory by the superintendent or the board.

If informal bidding is used, the informal bidding process described in Section B, above, will be followed.

D. ELECTRONIC BIDDING

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129.9(a)(2), the school system may receive bids electronically in addition to or instead of paper bids. If electronic bids are used for purchases that must be formally bid, procedures for receipt of electronic bids must be designed to ensure the security, authenticity, and confidentiality of the bids to at least the same extent as provided

with paper bids. The superintendent, in consultation with the purchasing officer, shall determine whether electronic bidding is appropriate for a specific purchase or category of purchases.

E. EXCEPTIONS TO THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

The school system may utilize the following purchasing options instead of pursuing competitive bidding. Formal or informal bidding is not required if any of these processes are used. The purchasing officer shall gather information to document the basis for the use of any exceptions to the competitive bidding requirements. The superintendent, in consultation with the purchasing officer, may determine that using one of the following exceptions is appropriate for a specific purchase or group of purchases.

1. Purchases from Other Governmental Agencies

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(1), the school system may contract for the purchase, lease, or other acquisition of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from any other federal, state, or local governmental agency.

2. Special Emergencies

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(2), competitive bidding is not required in cases of special emergencies involving the health and safety of people or their property. For an emergency to exist under the statute, the following factors must exist: (1) the emergency is present, immediate, and existing; (2) the harm cannot be averted through temporary measures; and (3) the emergency was not self-created by the school system.

3. Competitive Group Purchasing

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(3), the school system may make purchases or order repair work involving a combination of installation labor and equipment acquisition for heating and cooling systems through a competitive bidding group purchasing program, through which another entity uses a competitive process to establish contracts on behalf of multiple entities at discount prices.

4. State Term Contract

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(9), the school system may purchase products included in state term contracts with the state vendor for the price stipulated in the state contract, if the vendor is willing to extend to the school system the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as established in the state contract.

5. Sole Source Items

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(6), upon approval of the board of education, the school

system may purchase an item through a single or sole source contract under the following circumstances: (1) when performance or price competition is not available; (2) when a needed product is available from only one source of supply; or (3) when standardization or compatibility is the overriding consideration. When requesting a purchase under the sole source exception, the purchasing officer shall provide the board with documentation that justifies the use of the exception.

6. "Piggybacking" or Previously Bid Contracts

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(g), upon approval of the board of education, the school system may purchase from any supplier that, within the previous 12 months, has contracted to furnish the needed item to the federal government, to any state government, or to any agency or political subdivision of the federal government or any state government. Before recommending a purchase using the piggybacking exception, the purchasing officer shall ensure that the following requirements are met: (1) the price and other terms and conditions of the contract are at least as favorable as the prior contract; (2) the contract was entered into following a public, formal bidding process substantially similar to that required by North Carolina General Statutes; (3) the same vendor is used; and (4) notice of intent to award the contract without bidding is publicly advertised at least 10 days prior to the regularly-scheduled board meeting at which the contract will be approved. Before approving the contract, the board must determine that using the contract is in the best interest of the school system.

7. Purchases of Information Technology Goods and Services

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(7) and G.S. Chapter 143B, Article 15-143B-1324(b), the school system may purchase or lease information technology through contracts established by the Department of Information Technology. The purchasing officer shall work with the information technology department to ensure that any such purchases meet the needs of the school system.

In addition, the school system also may purchase information technology goods and services by using a request for proposal (RFP) pursuant to G.S. 143-129.8, provided that the following requirements are met: (1) notice of the request is provided consistent with the formal bidding notice requirements and (2) contracts are awarded to the person or entity that submits the best overall proposal as determined by the purchasing officer and superintendent. The RFP should describe the scope of work, general terms and conditions, specifications of the product needed by the school system, and the application process. The information technology supervisor shall assist the purchasing officer in reviewing the responsiveness of any RFP submitted pursuant to this subsection. RFPs will be evaluated using the "best value" method as defined in G.S. 143-135.9(a)(1) so that the system may select the most appropriate technological solution to meet the school system's objectives. However, if the purchasing officer considers the

purchase to be highly complex or is unable to clearly determine what the optimal solution for the school system is, the “solution-based solicitation” or “government-vendor partnership” method may be used. The purchasing officer may negotiate with the proposer to obtain a final contract that meets the best needs of the school system, so long as the alterations based on such negotiations do not deprive proposers or potential proposers of the opportunity to compete for the contract and do not result in the award of the contract to a different person or entity than would have received it if the alterations had been included in the RFP.

8. Gasoline, Fuel, and Oil Purchases

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(5), the school system may purchase gasoline, fuel, and oil products without using formal competitive bidding. However, such purchases are subject to the informal bidding requirements provided above.

9. Used Products

Pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(10), the school system may purchase previously used apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment without using formal competitive bidding. Before purchasing used products, the purchasing officer shall ensure that the products are in good, usable condition and will be sufficient to meet the school system’s needs for a reasonable period of time.

10. Published Materials

Pursuant to G.S. 115C-522(a), compliance with Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes is not mandatory for the purchase of published books, manuscripts, maps, pamphlets, and periodicals. Such purchase shall be made in accordance with Section C of this policy .6430.

F. LEASE PURCHASE CONTRACTS AND OTHER CONTRACTS FINANCED OVER TIME

Lease purchase contracts, contracts that include options to purchase, and leases for the life of equipment all must be bid consistent with the requirements of G.S. 143-129 and 143-131. The purchasing officer shall ensure that such contracts meet the legal requirements and the provisions of policy 6420, Contracts with the Board.

G. USE OF SCHOOL SYSTEM TERM CONTRACTS

The school system may create and use term contracts for items that are routinely purchased by the school system. If the estimated expenditure for a routine item under the term contract is equal to or exceeds \$90,000, the contract must be formally bid. If the estimated expenditure is at least \$30,000 but less than \$90,000, the contract must be informally bid. The purchasing officer may incorporate the use of a term contract in the bidding specifications. If term contracts are used, the board attorney, in consultation with the

purchasing officer, shall review the contracts.

H. HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES

The board affirms the state's commitment to encouraging the participation of historically underutilized businesses in purchasing functions. The board will comply with all legal requirements and the standards in policy 6402, Participation by Historically Underutilized Businesses.

Legal References: 2 C.F.R. 200.317-326; G.S. 64 art. 2; 115C-36, -522; 143 art. 8; 143B art. 1415; 147 art. 6E, art. 6G; Sess. Law 2013-128

Cross References: Participation by Historically Underutilized Businesses (policy 6402), Organization of the Purchasing Function (policy 6410), Contracts with the Board (policy 6420), Energy Efficiency (policy 6445/6535), Federal Grant Administration (policy 8305)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Revised: February 12, 2018; July 25, 2023; {DATE}

The Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") affirms the State's commitment to encouraging the participation of minority businesses in the school system's building construction contracts. A minority business is defined in accordance with G.S. 143-128.2 and is either (1) one in which (1) at least 51 percent of the business is owned by minority persons or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals; and (2) the management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more of the minority persons or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it, or (2) an employee stock ownership plan company in which at least 51 percent of the stock is owned by one or more minority persons or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. Minority persons include African-Americans, those of Hispanic descent, Asian Americans, American Indians, and females.

A. GOALS

After notice and public hearing, the board hereby adopts an aspirational verifiable percentage goal of 10 percent for participation by minority businesses in the total value of work for each building project costing \$300,000 or more paid entirely from local or other non-state funds. In addition, the board adopts the state's aspirational verifiable goal of 10 percent participation by minority businesses in the total value of work for each building project costing \$100,000 or more funded in whole or in part with state funds.

Only businesses holding current certification as a historically underutilized business will be considered eligible for inclusion in meeting the board's participation percentage goals. Lack of certification, however, will not be considered in making a contract award decision.

B. SCHOOL SYSTEM GOOD FAITH EFFORTS

The board establishes the following guidelines for contracts subject to Section A to ensure that the school system will make good faith efforts to reach diverse contractors and to encourage participation in the school system's construction contracts by such contractors. Before awarding a contract, the superintendent or designee shall:

1. make information about the school system's formal and informal bidding process readily available;
2. develop and implement a minority business participation outreach plan to identify minority businesses that can perform building projects and to implement outreach efforts to encourage minority business participation in such projects;
3. advertise for bids in media that reach minority businesses;
4. designate a school official to attend the scheduled pre-bid conference to explain the school system's minority goals and objectives;

5. at least 10 days prior to the scheduled day of bid opening, notify minority businesses of the following:
 - a. a description of the work for which the bid is being solicited;
 - b. the date, time, and location where bids are to be submitted;
 - c. the name of the individual within the public entity who will be available to answer questions about the project;
 - d. where bid documents may be reviewed; and
 - e. any special requirements that may exist.

For purposes of this provision, the minority businesses to be notified are those (1) that have requested notices from the school system for construction or repair work, and (2) those that otherwise indicated to the Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses an interest in the type of work being bid or the potential contracting opportunities listed in the proposal;

6. ensure that everyone who requests it has access to ~~bid~~building documents needed for making bids on projects;
7. maintain documentation of any contacts, correspondence, or conversation with minority business firms made in an attempt to meet the goals;
8. review, jointly with the designer, the lowest responsible bidder's bid for compliance with all requirements of G.S. 143-128.2(c) and -128.2(f) prior to recommendation of the contract award;
9. encourage businesses experiencing difficulty in meeting the bonding, licensing, and bid deposits required by state law in larger construction projects to utilize resources and assistance offered by local, state, and federal agencies; and
10. provide information to bidders about the statewide uniform certification program for historically underutilized businesses.

C. GOOD FAITH EFFORTS REQUIRED BY CONTRACTORS

All bidders on school construction and renovation projects subject to Section A of this policy who intend to subcontract any part of the project must (1) identify the minority businesses to be used on the project and (2) provide affidavits indicating that a good faith effort has been made in preparing the bid to meet the board's verifiable goal for participation by minority businesses. Upon being named the apparent lowest responsible,

responsive bidder, a bidder shall provide additional evidence of its good faith efforts as required by law.

The level of minority participation in bidders' bids will not affect the contract award decision; however, the failure to provide documentation of a good faith effort to meet the board's goal may result in the bid being rejected as non-responsive.

Before recommending the award of a contract, the superintendent shall direct designated school officials to evaluate bidders' documents in accordance with applicable law and regulations to determine whether bidder good faith requirements are satisfied.

D. MONITORING

The superintendent or designee shall monitor payments made to minority businesses on each project subject to Section A to verify that the minority businesses actually working on the project and their level of participation is consistent with the representations made in the contractor's bid.

E. OTHER MINORITY BUSINESS RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

For building contracts that (1) are not subject to Section A and (2) cost at least \$30,000 but less than \$300,000, the board will solicit participation by minority business enterprises and maintain a record of contractors solicited and efforts to recruit minority participation.

F. REPORTING

The superintendent shall ensure that all required reports and other documentation are filed with the Department of Administration in accordance with legal requirements.

G. NONDISCRIMINATION

The board will award public building contracts without regard to race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Nothing in this policy should be construed to require the board or contractors to award contracts or subcontracts to minority business contractors or minority business subcontractors who do not submit the lowest responsible, responsive bid or bids.

Legal References: *City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.*, 488 U.S. 469 (1989); G.S. 143-128, -128.2, -128.3, -131(b); 01 N.C.A.C. 30I .0101-0310

Adopted: February 8, 2016; September 10, 2018

Revised: {DATE}

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

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

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

A. ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL CONTACT PROHIBITED

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

B. RESTRICTIONS ON ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

maturity level;

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

C. REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

1. Reporting by Employees

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

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

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

2. Reporting by Students

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

3. Report of Criminal Misconduct

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

4. Report to State Board of Education ~~Superintendent of Public Instruction~~

Any administrator, including the superintendent, a deputy/associate/assistant superintendent, a personnel administrator, or a principal, who knows, ~~or~~ has reason to believe, or has actual notice of a complaint that a licensed employee has engaged in misconduct resulting in dismissal, disciplinary action, or resignation shall report the misconduct to the State Board of Education within five days of dismissal, determination of disciplinary action, or acceptance of resignation. If the employee resigns within 30 days of a complaint for misconduct or during an ongoing investigation of a complaint, the misconduct is presumed to have resulted in the resignation. For purposes of this subsection, “misconduct” is conduct that would justify automatic revocation of the employee’s license pursuant to G.S. 115C-270.35(b) or the infliction of physical injury against a child other than by accident or in self-defense. ~~involves physical or sexual abuse of a child shall report that information to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction within five working days of any disciplinary action, dismissal, or resignation based on the conduct.~~ For purposes of this subsection, ~~physical abuse is the infliction of physical injury other than by accidental means or in self-defense, and sexual abuse is the commission of any sexual act upon a student or causing a student to commit a sexual act, regardless of consent and the age of the student.~~ Failure to report such misconduct is a felony and may result in the suspension or revocation of an administrator’s license by the State Board of Education.

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

Legal References: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 7926; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; G.S. 14-27.32, -202.4; 115C-47(18), -270.35(b), -326.20; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0372, .0373, .0601, .0602; State Board of Education Policy EVAL-014

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

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: April 12, 2021; July 26, 2021; {DATE}

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Policy Code: 7100

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

It is the policy of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) to provide all applicants for employment with equal employment opportunities and to provide current employees with training, compensation, promotion, and other benefits of employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, military affiliation, genetic information, sex, age, or disability, except when sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity), age (40 or older), or disability, except when sex, age, or physical requirements are essential occupational qualifications. All candidates will be evaluated on their merits and qualifications for positions. All employment decisions will be consistent with the board’s objective of providing students with the opportunity to receive a sound basic education, as required by state law.

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

B. RECRUITMENT

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

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

C. CRIMINAL HISTORY

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

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

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

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

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

D. CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

For purposes of this section, a "childcare provider" is:

1. any person who works or is a final candidate seeking to work in a classroom or program licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE); and
2. any person, including a volunteer, who has unsupervised contact with children enrolled in such classrooms or programs.

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

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

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

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

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

E. SELECTION

1. Qualifications

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

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

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

2. Nepotism

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

employee occupies a position in which he or she has influence over the employment status, including hiring, salary, and promotion, of another employee who is a member of the first employee's immediate family.

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

3. Employment Procedures

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

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

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

Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 *et seq.*; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*; Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1703; Equal Pay Act of 1963, 29 U.S.C. 206; Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*; Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, 42 U.S.C. 2000ff *et seq.*; Military Selective Service Act, 50 U.S.C. Appx. 453; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794; Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e *et seq.*; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. 4301 *et seq.*; 8 U.S.C. 1101 *et seq.*; 42 U.S.C. 9858f; 45 C.F.R. 98.43; *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 590 U.S. ___, 140 S. Ct. 1731 (2020); *Green v. Missouri Pacific Railroad*, 523 F.2d 1290 (8th Cir. 1975); *Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (April 25, 2012) available at http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm; G.S. 14-208.18; 15A-153; 110-90.2; 115C-12.2, -36, -47, -276(j), -332; 126-7.1(i), -16; 127A-202.1 *et seq.*; 127B-10, -12, -14; 143B-421.1, ~~-1209.11-934~~; *Leandro v. State*, 346 N.C. 336 (1997); 10A N.C.A.C. 09 .0102, -.2701, -.2702, -.2703; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0313; State Board of Education Policy BENF-009

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

Adopted: February 9, 2015

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

Revised: January 28, 2016; August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); November 13, 2018;
September 9, 2019; May 11, 2020; July 26, 2021 (Legal references only); November 8, 2021;
{DATE}

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

A. LICENSURE AND OTHER QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

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

B. EXCEPTIONS TO LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

1. Adjunct CTE Instructors

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

2. Adjunct Instructors in Core Academic Subjects, Fine and Performing Arts, and Foreign Languages

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

In addition, an individual with a related bachelor's or graduate degree may be employed as a temporary adjunct instructor to teach high-school level courses in core academic subjects, fine and performing arts, and foreign language in the individual's area of specialized knowledge or work experience provided the individual first completes preservice training required under G.S. 115C-298.5(a1).

3. Interim Principals

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

4. Cherokee Language and Culture Instructors

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

5. Driver Education Instructors

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

6. Service Members and their Spouses Relocating to North Carolina

A service member or the spouse of a service member who is under military orders to relocate to North Carolina, is in possession of a current educator's license from another jurisdiction, and meets any other conditions established by 50 U.S.C. 4025a or State Board of Education Policy LICN-001 will be considered to hold a valid North Carolina educator's license until the military orders expire or June 30th of the year in which the military orders expire, whichever is later.

C. BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM

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

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

D. LICENSE CONVERSION

Teachers must meet all requirements of the State Board of Education in order to move from an initial professional license or residency license to a continuing professional license or to move from a continuing professional license to a lifetime license.

E. LICENSE RENEWAL

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

The school system may offer courses, workshops, and independent study activities to help school personnel meet license renewal requirements. Any renewal activity offered must be consistent with State Board of Education policy. In addition, the superintendent or designee shall develop a procedure to determine the appropriateness of any credit offered in advance of renewal activities.

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

Although lifetime license holders do not have to complete continuing education credits to maintain licensure, the superintendent may require them to participate in professional development opportunities as a condition of employment. (See policy 1610/7800, Professional and Staff Development.)

F. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

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

The school system will give notice within 10 school days to the parents of children who have been assigned or, after four consecutive weeks, have been taught by a teacher who

does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

G. EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS

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

Legal References: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 6301 *et seq.*; 50 U.S.C. 4025a; 34 C.F.R. 200.55-57, 200.61; G.S. 115C art. 17E; 115C-157.1, -270.15, -270.20, -270.21, -284, -295, -298.5, -325(e)(1)(m) (applicable to career status teachers), -325.4(a)(12) (applicable to non-career status teachers), -333, -333.1; State Board of Education Policies CTED-004, DRIV-003, DRIV-004, EVAL-004, EVAL-023, EVAL-034, LICN-001, LICN-005, LICN-021, LICN-022, TCED-016; *Beginning Teacher Support Program Handbook* (NCDPI), available at <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/nceref/bt-support-program-resources>

Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 7800)

Adopted: February 9, 2015

Revised: September 11, 2017; May 21, 2018; March 11, 2019; September 9, 2019; May 11, 2020; February 8, 2021 and July 26, 2021 (Legal references only); December 13, 2021; May 8, 2023; {DATE}

Replaces: Policy 3.02.40, Qualifications of Certified Personnel

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) believes that it is important for employees to have leave available to attend to personal, civic, and professional matters as well as to meet family commitments. This need for leave is to be balanced with the need to provide an effective instructional program for students. No employee may be discharged, demoted, or otherwise subjected to adverse employment action for taking leave in accordance with board policies and administrative procedures.

All requests for leave, with or without pay, must be addressed in accordance with state and federal law, as well as policies promulgated by the State Board of Education, including those specified in the most current edition of the *North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual*, available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-human-capital/employee-policy>.

In addition to applicable laws and regulations, this board policy applies to leave requests. The information in this policy is intended to supplement, not replace, the requirements of law and the State Board of Education. In the event that changes to State or federal law or regulation conflict with current State Board or local board policies, the board intends that its leave practices be modified to the extent necessary to comply with current law until such time as conforming changes to State Board and/or local board policy are made.

The superintendent shall develop any necessary administrative procedures and make them available to employees upon request.

A. MINIMUM LEAVE TIME

An employee may take any type of leave in increments of hours unless otherwise specified in this policy.

B. CONTINUOUS LEAVE OF MORE THAN 10 DAYS

An employee must comply with the notice and verification requirements provided in policy 7520, Family and Medical Leave, for any continuous leave of more than 10 days if: (1) the leave also is eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), defined in policy 7520, and (2) the leave is designated as FMLA-eligible at the time it is taken or as soon as is feasible thereafter. See policy 7520, Family and Medical Leave.

C. SICK LEAVE

The superintendent or designee may require a statement from a medical doctor or other acceptable proof that the employee was unable to work due to illness or injury. Employees who anticipate using sick leave should inform their immediate supervisor in advance so that arrangements may be made to reassign the employee’s duties during the period of absence.

D. PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

An employee shall provide his or her supervisor and the assistant superintendent of human resources with 10 weeks' advance written notice of the intent to take paid parental leave when it is reasonably possible to do so. If 10 weeks' advanced written notice is not reasonably possible, the employee must provide as much notice as is reasonable under the circumstances.

D.E. PERSONAL LEAVE

Teachers earn personal leave at a rate of .20 days for each full month of employment, not to exceed two days per year. Unused personal leave may be carried forward from one year to another and may be accumulated without limitation until June 30 of each year. On June 30, personal leave in excess of five days shall be converted to sick leave so that a maximum of five days of personal leave is carried forward to July 1. At the time of his or her retirement, a teacher may also convert accumulated personal leave to sick leave for creditable service towards retirement.

Personal leave must be used in half or whole day units. Personal leave may be requested by application in accordance with the policies of the State Board of Education and may be used only upon the authorization of the teacher's immediate supervisor and in accordance with legal requirements and procedures established by the superintendent. A teacher shall not take personal leave on the first day he or she is required to report for the school year, on a required teacher workday, on days scheduled for state testing, or on the day before or the day after a holiday or scheduled vacation day, unless the request is approved by the principal. On all other days, if the request is made at least five days in advance, the request will be automatically granted subject to the availability of a substitute teacher. The teacher cannot be required to provide a reason for the request.

E.F. VACATION LEAVE

Vacation may be taken only upon the authorization of the employee's immediate supervisor and in accordance with legal requirements and procedures established by the superintendent.

To promote the efficient operation of the schools, the superintendent may designate certain periods during the nonacademic year as preferred vacation periods for 12-month employees.

For 10-month employees the first 10 days of annual vacation leave must be scheduled in the school calendar and must be taken as scheduled.

Annual vacation leave may be accumulated without any applicable maximum until June 30 of each calendar year. On June 30, accumulated annual vacation leave in excess of 30 days will be converted to sick leave so that only 30 workdays of annual vacation leave are

carried forward.

An employee who has unused vacation time from another school system in North Carolina may have the vacation time transferred to this school system.

Instructional personnel who must be replaced by a substitute may not take earned vacation on days when school is in session for students unless the employee's absence is due to the employee's own catastrophic illness and the employee has exhausted all of his or her sick leave or unless the employee qualifies as a new parent. In such instances, the employee will not be required to pay the substitute.

The superintendent shall establish procedures for reviewing requests for the use of vacation leave for catastrophic illness by instructional personnel.

F.G. PARENT INVOLVEMENT LEAVE

All employees may take up to four hours of paid leave per year to attend or otherwise be involved in the school of a child for whom the employee is a parent, guardian, or person standing in loco parentis. The scheduling of parent involvement leave is subject to the approval of the principal or other supervisor as appropriate.

G.H. COMPENSATORY LEAVE

Because professional employees are expected to fulfill all job duties, compensatory leave should apply only in extraordinary circumstances.

Employees who are not exempt from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act may accrue compensatory time (comp time) as described in policy 7500, Workday and Overtime. Supervisors shall arrange for employees to take comp time within one pay period following the time it is earned, if possible; however, the superintendent or designee may exempt certain employees or categories of employees from this requirement when deemed necessary for the proper administration of the school system.

An employee must obtain approval from his or her immediate supervisor before taking compensatory leave.

H.I. LEAVE TO TEACH AT A CHARTER, REGIONAL, OR LAB SCHOOL

Leave of absence to teach for one year at a charter, regional, or lab school will be granted to a teacher upon timely written request to the board. The request must be provided at least 45 days before the teacher would otherwise have to report for duty if it is the initial year of the charter/regional/lab school's operation and at least 90 days if it is after the charter/regional/lab school's initial year of operation. The teacher may return to work in the school system in accordance with the provisions of applicable state law.

I.J. DISCRETIONARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

An employee, who wishes to take leave that is not eligible for any other specific type of leave, may be granted a leave of absence without pay for a period of up to one calendar year at the discretion of the superintendent with approval from the board.

The employee is expected first to consult with his or her immediate supervisor and then to provide advance written notice (60 days if possible) stating the beginning and ending dates of the desired leave of absence. The superintendent may request documentation from the employee in support of his or her request. In determining the length of the leave of absence without pay that will be approved, due and proper consideration must be given to the welfare of the students as well as the employee. The superintendent may require the employee to give notice of his or her intent to return to work at reasonable time intervals during the leave.

Once a leave of absence without pay has been requested by an employee and approved by the board, the dates are binding unless both parties agree to a change.

J.K. OTHER LEAVE

Other types of leave, such as leave for observance of a bona fide religious holiday, professional leave, community responsibility leave, leave for jury duty or court attendance, elected officials leave, parental involvement in schools leave, parental leave without pay, and military leave (see policy 7530, Military Leave), will be granted in accordance with the requirements of law and State Board of Education policy.

Legal References: G.S. 95-28.3; 115C-12, -36, -47, -84.2, -218.90(a)(3), -238.68(3), -285, -302.1, -316, -336, -336.1; 116-239.10(4); 126-5(c19), -8.6; 143B-1033; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0405, .0408; State Board of Education Policy BENF-001, *North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual* (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction, current version), available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-human-capital/employee-policy>

Cross References: Workday and Overtime (policy 7500), Compliance with State Board of Education Employment Policies (policy 7505), Family and Medical Leave (policy 7520), Military Leave (policy 7530), Voluntary Shared Leave (policy 7540), Absences Due to Inclement Weather (policy 7550)

Adopted: December 14, 2015

Replaces: Policy 2.04.50, School Volunteers (in part re parent involvement leave), policy 3.04.10, Annual Vacation Leave, policy 3.04.20, Leave Of Absence , policy 3.04.30, Personal Leave, policy 3.04.40, Sick Leave, policy 3.04.60, Employee Leaves and Absences, policy 3.04.70, Parent Involvement Leave, and policy 3.01.20, Employment Definitions

Revised: August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); May 21, 2018; September 14, 2020 (Legal

| references only); {DATE}

All eligible employees will be provided leave as required by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), as amended, and applicable state laws and State Board of Education policies. The FMLA allows eligible employees to take job-protected, unpaid leave, or to substitute appropriate paid leave if the employee has earned or accrued it, for up to a total of 12 workweeks (or 26 workweeks in certain cases) in any 12-month period for certain qualifying conditions or events. The employee may continue to participate in the school system's group insurance plan while on FMLA leave.

This policy is intended for guidance only and is not intended to alter or expand the school system's responsibilities beyond the requirements of law. If any provision of this policy is inconsistent with federal law or regulation, the federal rule must take precedence. The superintendent is authorized to develop additional regulations for FMLA leave consistent with the requirements of the law and this policy. Employees can find more information about FMLA leave in the North Carolina Public Schools *Benefits and Employment Policy Manual*.

The Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") strictly prohibits interfering with, restraining, or denying the ability of any employee to exercise any right provided by the FMLA. The board also strictly prohibits any type of discrimination against or discharge of an employee who has filed a complaint in regard to the FMLA. A copy of this policy will be provided to each employee upon hiring.

A. DEFINITIONS

1. Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

2. Continuing Treatment

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement in the above definition of "serious health condition" may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment or incapacity due to pregnancy or a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

3. Other Terms

Unless otherwise noted, all terms in this policy must be defined in accordance with 29 C.F.R. pt. 825.

B. ELIGIBILITY

Generally, employees are eligible for unpaid FMLA leave if they have:

1. been employed by the school system for at least 12 months (not necessarily consecutively); and
2. worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months.

Further information about these requirements can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 29 C.F.R. 825.110.

C. QUALIFYING CONDITIONS

Except in cases of leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious illness or injury, an eligible employee is entitled to a total of 12 workweeks of FMLA leave during any 12-month period for any one or more of the following reasons:

1. the birth and first-year care of the employee's child;
2. adoption or foster placement of a child with the employee;
3. a serious health condition of the employee or the employee's spouse, child, or parent;
4. a qualifying exigency (see Section F) arising out of the fact that the spouse or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee has been deployed, or is on notice of an impending deployment to a foreign country as a member of the regular Armed Forces on active duty or as a member of the Reserve components of the Armed Forces under a federal call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation; or
5. to care for a covered servicemember with a serious illness or injury ("covered servicemember" and "serious injury or illness" are defined in federal regulation 29 C.F.R. 825.127). An employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the servicemember may take leave for a period of up to 26 workweeks under this provision.

D. DETERMINING THE 12-MONTH LEAVE PERIOD

The 12-month period during which an employee is eligible for FMLA leave will be from July 1 to June 30, except that the period for leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness begins on the first day the employee takes leave for this reason and ends 12 months later.

E. ENTITLEMENT TO LEAVE

Eligible employees may take leave as follows:

1. **Medical leave for serious health conditions:** A combined total of 12 workweeks during a 12-month period. The leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule as is medically necessary.
2. **Family leave for pregnancy, birth of a child, or placement of a child for foster care or adoption:** A combined total of 12 consecutive workweeks during a 12-month period. Eligibility for FMLA leave expires 12 months from the birth, foster care placement, or adoption of the child. Leave must be used in a single block of time unless the board agrees to another arrangement.
3. **Military service exigency:** A combined total of 12 workweeks during a 12-month period. The leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule.
4. **Leave to care for injured servicemember:** A combined total of no more than 26 workweeks during a single 12-month period. The leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule. If combined with other types of FMLA leave, the total leave taken in a single 12-month period still may not exceed 26 weeks.
5. **Spouses employed by the school system:** Spouses who are both employed by the school system and eligible for FMLA leave are limited in the amount of family leave they may take for the birth and care of a newborn child, for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent who has a serious health condition to a combined total of 12 weeks (or 26 weeks if leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness is also used).

F. QUALIFIED MILITARY SERVICE EXIGENCIES

A military service exigency that qualifies for FMLA leave must be defined in accordance with federal regulations. Qualified exigencies may include:

1. short-notice deployment;
2. military events and related activities;
3. school and childcare activities;
4. financial and legal arrangements;
5. counseling;

6. rest and recuperation leave;
7. post-deployment activities;
8. parental care; and
9. additional activities agreed upon by the board and employee.

G. INTERMITTENT OR REDUCED WORK SCHEDULE

1. An employee may take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule as required for the health of the employee or family member, due to a qualifying exigency, or as otherwise approved by the superintendent. The employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the school. Whenever possible, the employee should discuss scheduling with his or her immediate supervisor prior to scheduling any medical treatment in order to accommodate the work schedule.
2. An employee who requests intermittent or reduced leave time for medical treatment of a serious health condition may be required to give the reasons for the intermittent or reduced leave schedule and the schedule for treatment.
3. To better accommodate an employee's need for intermittent or reduced leave for a serious health condition, the school system may require an employee to take an alternative position during the period of leave. The alternative position must have equal pay and benefits, but it does not have to have equivalent duties.
4. Employees may take intermittent leave in increments of one hour.
5. Instructional personnel are subject to special rules for taking intermittent or reduced leave. (See Section H.)

H. INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

The following special rules apply to instructional personnel only. For the purposes of this policy, instructional personnel are teachers, athletic coaches, driving instructors, special education assistants, teacher assistants, and any other employees whose principal function is to teach and instruct students.

1. Use of Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave
 - a. Instructional employees may use intermittent or reduced schedule leave only when the employee and the school system have reached an agreement on how the leave will be used.

- b. If an instructional employee requests intermittent or reduced schedule leave for more than 20 percent of the workdays of the duration of a leave due to medical treatment, the school system may require the employee to take continuous leave for up to the entire duration of the scheduled leave or to transfer to an alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits for the period of leave.
 - c. Instructional employees who take intermittent or reduced schedule leave that constitutes 20 percent or less of the workdays during the leave period are not subject to transfer to an alternative position.
2. Extension of FMLA Leave at School System Discretion

The school system may require instructional personnel to continue leave through the end of the school semester if any of the following conditions exist:

- a. the leave will begin more than five weeks before the end of the term; the leave will last at least three weeks; and the employee would return to work in the last three weeks of the academic term;
- b. the leave is for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition or for a military exigency; the leave will begin in the last five weeks of the term; the leave will last more than two weeks; and the employee would return to work during the last two weeks of the academic term; or
- c. the leave is for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition or for a military exigency; the leave will begin in the last three weeks of the term; and the leave will last at least five days.

If the school system requires an instructional employee to take leave until the end of the academic term, only the period of leave until the employee is ready and able to return to work will be charged against the employee's FMLA entitlement.

I. EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITY WHEN REQUESTING LEAVE

To ensure that employees receive proper notification of their rights and responsibilities and that leave is properly designated, all employees requesting any type of leave must make the request to the assistant superintendent of human resources or designee.

- 1. Employee's Responsibilities When Leave is Foreseeable
 - a. The employee must provide 30 days' advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. If this amount of notice is not possible, then notice must be given as soon as practicable, taking into account all of the facts and circumstances.

- b. The employee must provide sufficient information for the school system reasonably to determine (1) whether the FMLA may apply to the leave request and (2) the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. This information would include, for example, notice that the employee is unable to perform job functions, notice that the family member is unable to perform daily activities, notice of the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or notice of circumstances supporting the need for military family leave.
 - c. If the employee does not provide 30 days' notice and there is no reasonable justification for the delay, the school system may delay the FMLA leave until at least 30 days after the employee provides notice of the need for FMLA leave.
 - d. If an instructional employee fails to give the required notice of foreseeable leave for an intermittent or reduced leave schedule, the school system may require the employee to take continuous leave for the duration of his or her treatment or may temporarily transfer the employee to an alternative position for which the employee is qualified and that has the same benefits. (See Section H.)
2. Employee's Responsibilities When Leave is Not Foreseeable
- a. When leave is not foreseeable, the employee must comply with the usual school system procedures for notifying his or her supervisor of the absence and requesting leave, including any applicable requirements established by policy 7510, Leave. If the employee fails to do so, the leave may be delayed or denied.
 - b. When giving notice of an absence, the employee must inform the supervisor if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.
 - c. The employee also must notify the assistant superintendent of human resources or designee of the need for FMLA leave as soon as practicable.
 - d. All employee responsibilities in the FMLA for notice, medical certification, fitness for duty certification, and notice of intent to return to work apply as specified in this policy and policy 7510.

J. SCHOOL SYSTEM'S DESIGNATION AND NOTICE TO EMPLOYEE

- 1. Whether or not the employee specifically requests FMLA leave, the assistant superintendent of human resources or designee is responsible for asking any questions of the employee necessary to make a determination of whether the leave

is FMLA-eligible, unless the employee has already requested and received FMLA leave or certification for the same condition or event. The assistant superintendent may require the employee to provide notice of the need and the reason for leave.

2. The human resources director or designee shall provide all legally-required notices to the employee within five days of receiving this information or otherwise learning that an employee's leave may be for an FMLA-qualifying reason, unless there is a justifiable delay, such as a delay for documentation.

The required notices must indicate whether the employee is eligible under the FMLA. If the employee is eligible, the notice must specify any additional information required from the employee and must explain the employee's rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the notice must provide a reason for the ineligibility. The required notices also must state whether the leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and, if so, the amount of leave that will be counted against the employee's leave entitlement.

3. Leave may be designated as both FMLA-eligible and as leave under the school system's paid leave policy if paid leave has been substituted. Such leave would be counted toward the employee's 12-week FMLA entitlement. In addition, the assistant superintendent of human resources may designate an absence (taken as paid or unpaid leave) that meets the criteria for an FMLA-qualifying absence as part of the employee's total FMLA entitlement, whether or not the employee has requested FMLA leave. (See Section M.)
4. Leave that has been taken for an FMLA-qualifying reason may be retroactively designated as FMLA leave with appropriate notice to the employee, provided that such designation does not cause harm or injury to the employee.

K. CERTIFICATION

The school system reserves the right to require employees to provide certification of any FMLA-qualifying event or condition of the employee or the employee's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin, including certification for military exigency leave. The school system will not request more medical certification information than that allowed by the FMLA and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The assistant superintendent may request a second or third opinion at the school system's expense if reason to doubt the validity of a medical certification exists. The school system may require periodic recertification to support the leave, as permitted by law.

L. RETURN TO WORK

The school system may require an employee to periodically report on his or her status and intent to return to work. Any employee who is taking leave through the end of an academic semester must report on his or her intent to return to work no later than four

weeks before the end of the academic semester. In addition, the school system may require the employee to report on his or her intent to return to work on a regular basis while on FMLA leave.

Before an employee returns to work from FMLA leave taken for the employee's own serious health condition, the employee must present a "fitness-for-duty" certification that states that the employee is able to return to work. This requirement does not apply to an employee taking intermittent leave unless the employee's condition presents a reasonable safety concern.

M. SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE

1. The school system will substitute appropriate paid leave, including sick leave, parental leave, personal leave, and vacation time for unpaid, FMLA leave to the extent allowed by law and policy, giving proper notice to the employee that the leave is designated as FMLA. If an employee has exhausted his or her accrued paid leave but an FMLA-qualifying reason for absence continues, the school system will designate resulting absences as protected FMLA leave until the employee has used all allowable FMLA leave. Such absences will be unpaid.
2. When an employee has an absence (taken as paid or unpaid leave) that meets the criteria for an FMLA-qualified absence, the school system may, with proper notice to the employee, designate the absence as part of the employee's total annual FMLA entitlement. If the absence continues for more than 10 days, all employee responsibilities in the FMLA to provide notice for foreseeable and unforeseeable leave, medical certification, fitness for duty certification, and notice of intent to return to work apply as specified in this policy and policy 7510.
3. An employee must not be permitted to exhaust paid leave before beginning FMLA leave if it has been determined that the employee's reason for using paid leave meets the FMLA eligibility requirements.

N. RESTORATION TO EQUIVALENT POSITION

1. Generally

Employees, except "key" employees, will be restored to the same or an equivalent position upon return from FMLA leave.

The equivalent position will have virtually identical pay, benefits and working conditions, including privileges, perquisites, and status, as the position the employee held prior to the leave. The position also must involve substantially similar duties and responsibilities, which must entail substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority. All positions within the same job classification are considered "equivalent positions" for the purposes of this policy, so long as these conditions are met. For licensed employees, all positions with the

same salary and licensure requirements also will be considered equivalent positions, so long as these conditions are met.

2. Key Employees

Key employees do not have the right to be restored to the same or an equivalent position upon their return from FMLA leave. Key employees are salaried FMLA-eligible employees who are among the highest paid 10 percent of all employees. If restoring a key employee would result in substantial and grievous economic injury to the school system, then the school system has no obligation to restore the employee to the same or an equivalent position.

An employee will be informed at the time leave is taken if he or she is considered a key employee and will be informed once a determination is made that the employee will not be restored to the same or an equivalent position upon return from FMLA leave. A key employee who has been informed that he or she will not be restored still has the right to health benefits for the full period in which he or she is eligible for FMLA leave.

O. CONTINUATION OF HEALTH BENEFITS

Health care coverage and benefits will be continued for the duration of an employee's FMLA leave on the same conditions as would have been provided if the employee had continued working. Employees do not have the right to the accrual of earned benefits during FMLA leave. If an employee takes intermittent or reduced leave, he or she has the right to maintain the same health care benefits, but earned benefits may be reduced in proportion to hours worked when such a reduction is normally based upon hours worked.

The school system may recover from the employee the cost of health insurance premiums paid on behalf of the employee while the employee was on unpaid FMLA leave if the employee does not return to work after the leave, so long as the reason for not returning does not relate to a serious health condition or to circumstances beyond his or her control.

P. POSTING REQUIREMENT

The superintendent or designee shall ensure that notices of FMLA provisions and information on procedures for filing complaints are posted in places that are readily accessible to employees and applicants.

Q. RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENT

The human resources office shall maintain records of the following information for at least three years: basic payroll and identifying employee data, the dates (or hours) of FMLA leave taken by each employee, and premium payments of employee benefits. Medical information, such as that relating to medical certifications, also will be maintained in the human resources office in confidential medical records.

The assistant superintendent will maintain for at least three years copies of employee notices, including general and specific notices, any other documents describing employee benefits or policies, and records of disputes between the school system and any employee regarding designation of FMLA leave.

R. ENFORCEMENT

An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or bring a private lawsuit against the school system for violations of the FMLA.

FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

S. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS

The school system may deny FMLA benefits to an employee who engages in self-employment or employment for any employer while on continuous leave if the employee fraudulently obtained FMLA leave. Falsification of records and failure to correct records known to be false are violations of this policy and will result in discipline, which may include termination from employment.

Legal References: Americans With Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*; Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 2601 *et seq.*; 29 C.F.R. pt. 825; National Defense Authorization Act for 2008, Pub. L. 110-181 sec. 585; *North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual*, N.C. Department of Public Instruction (current version)

Cross References: Leave (policy 7510)

Adopted: January 11, 2016

Revised: November 8, 2021; {DATE}

Employees are expected to avoid engaging in any conduct that creates or gives the appearance to the public of creating a conflict of interest with their job responsibilities. Employees shall not engage in or have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts with duties and responsibilities in the school system. Although conflicts of interest are not limited to those described in this policy, at a minimum employee must comply with the Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") directives established below. In addition, employees engaged directly or indirectly in the school system's procurement, purchasing, and/or contracting process must comply with policy 6401/9100, Ethics and the Purchasing Function.

A. CONTRACTS WITH THE BOARD

An employee shall not do any of the following:

1. obtain a direct benefit from a contract that he or she is involved in making or administering on behalf of the board, unless an exception is allowed pursuant to G.S. 14-234 or other law;
2. participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported in whole or in part by federal funds if the employee has a real or apparent conflict of interest as described in policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration;
3. influence or attempt to influence anyone who is involved in making or administering a contract on behalf of the board when the employee will obtain a direct benefit from the contract; or
4. solicit or receive any gift, favor, reward, service, or promise of reward, including a promise of future employment, in exchange for recommending, influencing or attempting to influence the award of a contract by the board.

An employee is involved in administering a contract if he or she oversees the performance of the contract or has authority to interpret or make decisions regarding the contract. An employee is involved in making a contract if he or she participates in the development of specifications or terms of the contract or participates in the preparation or award of the contract.

An employee derives a direct benefit from a contract if the employee or his or her spouse does any of the following: (1) has more than a 10 percent ownership or other interest in an entity that is a party to the contract; (2) derives any income or commission directly from the contract; or (3) acquires property under the contract. An exception is allowed for employment contracts between the board and the spouse of the superintendent if approved by the board in an open session meeting in accordance with the requirements of state law and subsection D.2 of policy 7100, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel.

B. MISUSE OF INFORMATION

An employee shall not do any of the following:

1. use information, which was learned in the employee's role as an employee and which has not been made public, to acquire a financial interest or gain a financial benefit, or to intentionally help another do so; or
2. acquire or gain, or intentionally help another person to acquire or gain, a financial interest or benefit in contemplation of official action by the employee or the school system.

C. NON-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT

The board recognizes that some employees may pursue additional compensation on their own time. Any such employee shall not engage in the following:

1. non-school employment that adversely affects the employee's availability or effectiveness in fulfilling job responsibilities;
2. work of any type in which the sources of information concerning customer, client or employer originate from any information obtained through the school system;
3. work of any type that materially and negatively affects the educational program of the school system;
4. any type of private business using system facilities, equipment or materials, unless prior approval is provided by the superintendent;
5. any type of private business during school time or on school property, unless prior approval is provided by the superintendent;
6. having any financial or material interest in supplying books, maps, furniture, and/or apparatus to the school system or to any school in the system;
7. acting as an agent for any author, publisher, or dealer in recommending or procuring the use of any book, map, apparatus, furniture, school supply, construction material, or service of any kind;
8. disclosing information concerning a school system business transaction to an individual, organization, or company seeking to conduct business with the Watauga County Schools;
9. accepting a gift or soliciting a gift from any individual, company, or organization or accept any other types of favors, services, or accommodations from any

individual, company, or organization with whom the school district has an actual or potential contractual relationship;

An employee may accept a meal or token promotional gift (value less than \$25) that is given routinely by an individual, company, or organization, such as pens, notepads, and marketing materials.

10. using confidential information for financial or personal benefit or share such information with an individual not affiliated with the school district for that individual's financial or material benefit; or
11. accepting money or gifts from outside individuals, companies, or organizations for the purpose of influencing a student's decision to attend a particular college or university.

The superintendent may grant prior approval for work performed under subsections C.4 and C.5 above if such work enhances the employee's professional ability or professional growth for school-related work. The superintendent may establish reporting procedures that require employees to notify the school system of any non-school employment.

Except as otherwise provided in the superintendent's contract, the superintendent is subject to the provisions of this section on non-school employment and shall seek prior approval from the board before engaging in consulting or other employment activities outside the school system. The board expects the superintendent to comply with all sections of this policy and all state and federal laws regarding conflicts of interest in his or her position as superintendent.

D. RECEIPT OF GIFTS

No employee may solicit or accept any gifts from any potential or current provider of E-rate services or products in violation of federal E-rate program gifting rules.

No employee may solicit or accept trips, meals, favors, or other gifts or items of monetary value from any other person or group desiring to do or doing business with the school system, unless such gifts are of nominal value (\$50 or less) and (1) are instructional products or advertising items of nominal value that are widely distributed; (2) are honorariums for participating in a meeting; (3) are meals served at a banquet; or (4) are approved for receipt by the superintendent or designee. These exceptions for gifts of nominal value do not apply to employees involved in purchasing and procurement activities except as provided in policies 6401/9100, Ethics and the Purchasing Function, and 8305, Federal Grant Administration, and applicable state and federal law.

E. TRAINING VIOLATIONS

The superintendent or designee shall ensure that all personnel are aware of the

requirements of this policy and applicable conflict of interest laws.

As required by G.S. 115C-335.15, employees who are involved in the making or administering of contracts shall receive conflict of interest training that includes position-specific education on conflicts of interest and ethical standards of conduct. The training must be provided by qualified sources approved by the board.

F. VIOLATIONS

Any individual aware of any violation of this policy, policy 2121, Board Member Conflict of Interest, policy 6401/9100, Ethics and the Purchasing Function, the conflict of interest provisions of policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration, or applicable conflict of interest laws shall report such violation in accordance with policy 1760/7280, Prohibition Against Retaliation. Employees who violate this policy, policy 6401/9100, or the conflict of interest provisions of policy 8305, will be subject to disciplinary action.

F.G. DISCLOSURES

The Superintendent, Principals, Assistant Principals, and Central Level Administrators shall complete disclosure forms annually indicating that they have been free of any conflict of interest during the preceding year and will maintain that position during the next year.

G.H. ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Superintendent shall appoint an Ethics Review Committee to investigate and review any complaints of a conflict of interest, including recommendations for appropriate sanctions.

Legal References: 2 C.F.R. 200.318(c)(1); 47 C.F.R. 54.503; FCC Sixth Report and Order 10-175; G.S. 14-234, -234.1; 133-32, -33; 115C-47(17a), -47(18), -335.15; 133-32; Attorney General Opinion requested by L.W. Lamar regarding G.S. 133-32, the Applicability to Attorneys and Law Firms Providing Professional Services to Local Boards of Education, dated May 13, 1993

Cross References: Prohibition Against Retaliation (policy 1760/7280), Board Member Conflict of Interest (policy 2121), Ethics and the Purchasing Function (policy 6401/9100), Recruitment and Selection of Personnel (policy 7100), Federal Grant Administration (policy 8305)

Adopted: December 14, 2015

Replaces: Policy 3.08.90, Conflict of Interest (in part related to employees)

Revised: March 11, 2019; {DATE}

School trips designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry may be appropriate classroom extensions and may enhance learning in the classroom. School trips may help meet educational goals and objectives by connecting learning with experiences outside of the classroom environment.

All eligible students will be given an opportunity to participate in school sponsored trips. No student will be denied participation because of economic hardship or because the student has a disability.

A. AUTHORIZATION OF SCHOOL SPONSORED TRIPS

A school sponsored trip occurs when a student or group of students leaves a school campus under the sponsorship of the school and under the supervision of school employees to extend the educational experiences of that student or group. This includes such trips taken by extracurricular groups but does not include trips by athletic teams to participate in athletic events or competitions that are part of the team's regular season or playoffs. The principal must approve all school trips in advance and will ensure that all trips are consistent with the educational goals and objectives of the Watauga County Schools. School sponsored trips that involve travel out of state and ~~or are~~ are an overnight stays must also receive prior approval from the superintendent or designee. School sponsored trips that require travel outside of the continental United States are prohibited. Non-school sponsored trips involving international travel may take place only in compliance with section G of this policy. The superintendent shall develop procedures for the request and approval of school trips.

School personnel planning day field trips and overnight in-state trips ~~that do not involve overnight stays~~ shall submit requests to the principal for approval a minimum of 15 days in advance. These requests shall be kept on file at the school, and are not forwarded to the superintendent.

Requests for field trips that involve an overnight stay and out of -stay shall state shall first be submitted to the principal. Following approval by the principal, the principal shall forward the request to the superintendent by the 1st day of each month for the trip request to come before the Board of Education on the 2nd Monday of each month. The superintendent shall submit the approved requests to the Watauga County Board of Education ("board") for final approval.

B. PARENTAL NOTICE AND CONSENT

All students who participate in a school trip must provide signed parental consent forms to participate, unless a student is officially emancipated, in which case the student can consent on his or her own behalf. A student who fails to provide a signed consent form

may be denied participation in the trip. No student's grade may be lowered or raised based on parental consent to participate in the school trip. The superintendent shall develop procedures to ensure parents are given proper notice of trip details and that parents provide signed authorization and consent regarding their child's participation and care during the trip.

C. COSTS

Students may be charged a fee for any school trip. Pursuant to policy 4600, Student Fees, and any corresponding fee waiver or reduction procedures, any fees imposed for school trips will be waived or reduced for students who demonstrate real economic hardship.

D. STUDENT SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE

Policy 4200/7270, School Safety, applies to all students, school employees, and volunteers while they are taking part in school trips. Students are also subject to the student behavior policies in the 4300 series, the Code of Student Conduct, and all school rules while participating in a school trip. The superintendent shall develop any additional regulations necessary to ensure student safety, provide adequate supervision, and clarify student behavior standards.

E. TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Policy 6320, Use of Student Transportation Services, applies to the use of vehicles for all school trips. Policy 6315, Drivers, applies to all drivers of school buses and activity buses but does not apply to drivers of charter buses who are not subject to school board authority, aside from any agreed upon provisions in the contract with the charter company.

Any contracts with outside companies to provide transportation, lodging, or other accommodations related to a school trip must be approved in accordance with policy 6340, Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts, and policy 6420, Contracts with the Board.

The superintendent shall develop any necessary additional regulations governing transportation on school trips. Groups planning to use a charter motor coach must follow the Watauga County Schools' guidelines. These guidelines and a list of approved commercial carriers are available on the Transportation Department page of the Watauga County Schools website.

F. CHAPERONES AND VOLUNTEERS

All chaperones and volunteers accompanying students on school trips must meet the standards established by policy 5015, School Volunteers. The superintendent shall develop any necessary additional regulations governing chaperones and volunteers on

school trips. At least one chaperone for each 15 students must be maintained on a field trip that does not include an overnight stay for Kindergarten through 8th grade students. At least one chaperone for each 20 students must be maintained on a field trip that does not include an overnight stay for high school students. At least one chaperone for each 15 students must be maintained on a field trip that includes an overnight stay regardless of grade level. At least one professional staff member must accompany students on any field trip, regardless of the number of non-certified staff and/or non-staff adult chaperones going on the trip.

G. NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED TRIPS

A non-school sponsored trip is a trip or tour organized and sponsored by (1) an individual teacher or group of teachers acting as private citizens and not as school employees, (2) a travel agency, or (3) any other individual or association not employed by, sponsored by, or under contract with the board. The board and the school system assume no responsibility or liability for non-school sponsored trips.

Non-school sponsored trips may be promoted or advertised in the schools only in accordance with policy 5240, Advertising in the Schools. Promotional materials may be displayed or distributed in the schools only in accordance with policy 5210, Distribution and Display of Non-School Material. All promotional materials for non-school sponsored trips must prominently state that the trip is not sponsored or endorsed by the school or school system. Moreover, any employee who sponsors or recruits students for a non-school sponsored trip shall notify the students and their parents or guardians that the trip is not sponsored or endorsed by the school or school system and shall obtain a signed acknowledgement from each parent that the trip is not school-sponsored. The trip sponsor must provide the principal with the planned itinerary of the trip before the trip can be promoted or advertised in school, and must provide the final itinerary, including sponsor and lodging contact information, at least one week before departure.

School employees shall not engage in any planning or administrative tasks associated with a non-school sponsored trip during the employee workday. School employees who want to use school facilities to hold a meeting concerning a non-school sponsored trip must follow the process set forth in policy 5030, Community Use of Facilities, and any corresponding regulations. School employees must use eligible leave for any time missed from work during a non-school sponsored trip.

School employees are prohibited from participating in non-school sponsored trips that conflict with instructional school days or are scheduled fewer than 10 school days prior to final exams or other state-mandated assessments.

Students will not be required to participate in any non-school sponsored trip. Students are discouraged from participating in non-school sponsored trips that conflict with instructional school days or are scheduled fewer than 10 school days prior to final exams or other state-mandated assessments. Absences for non-school sponsored trips will be

designated as excused or unexcused in accordance with policy 4400, Attendance.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -288, -307, State Board of Education Policy TRAN-009

Cross References: School Safety (policy 4200/7270), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Attendance (policy 4400), Student Fees (policy 4600), School Volunteers (policy 5015), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030), Distribution and Display of Non-School Material (policy 5210), Advertising in the Schools (policy 5240), Drivers (policy 6315), Use of Student Transportation Services (policy 6320), Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts (policy 6340), Contracts with the Board (policy 6420)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Revised: August 14, 2017; _____

Replaces: Board Policy 4.01.20, Instructional Program (in part)

I. TRIP APPROVAL

All school trips ~~not involving an overnight stay~~ must be approved in advance by the principal. Trips involving an overnight and out of state stay must be approved in advance by the principal, the superintendent, and the Board of Education.

A. Approval Criteria

School trips must meet at least the following criteria to be approved:

1. have a trip sponsor who is currently a teacher in the school system;
2. be age appropriate, relevant to the course of study, and provide an effective method for accomplishing curriculum objectives;
3. keep to a minimum any disruptions of other educational programs and/or loss of instructional time;
4. be reasonable in terms of time, distance, and cost;
5. be planned with careful consideration of safety and security for students and all participants in all elements of the trip; and
6. ensure that all eligible students will be given an opportunity to participate and that no student will be denied participation because of the expense of the trip or because the student has a disability.

B. School Trip Requests

The trip sponsor must obtain prior approval for a school trip by filing the appropriate WCS Field Trip Request Form with the principal at least 15 days prior to the trip.

In addition to the information required by the trip request form, overnight trip requests must also include the following:

1. detailed itinerary with dates, times, locations, etc.;
2. a detailed description of how any requirements for transporting students with special needs or disabilities will be met;
3. detailed routing of the entire trip including all scheduled stops;
4. the name(s), address(es), and contact information for all lodging;

5. lodging details, including the number of students in each room, whether there will be a chaperone on each floor, room locations (e.g., block of adjacent rooms, separate floors for males and females, etc.), description of showering/restroom facilities, and other relevant information;
6. if all students and chaperones will not be lodged in a single building (e.g., different hotels, separate cabins, etc.), a detailed description of where the students will be in proximity to the rest of the group and to the chaperones.

The principal may grant preliminary approval if it will be impractical or impossible to complete all of the specific details of the request until permission to proceed has been granted. Final approval will be subject to receipt of all additional information required by the principal. In extenuating circumstances, the principal may extend the deadline for filing a trip request in advance.

C. Review Process

1. The principal shall review the school trip request subject to the criteria above and any other school-specific criteria. Incomplete requests shall be returned to the trip sponsor for correction.
2. The principal is encouraged to consult with the school system Finance Department and/or Transportation Department for trips that involve significant costs or complex travel arrangements.
3. The principal shall decide whether to approve the trip request and inform the trip sponsor of the decision within seven days of receiving the request.
4. The principal shall retain a copy of the request and return a copy to the trip sponsor.
5. For approved out of state ~~or~~ and overnight trips, the principal shall forward the school trip request to the superintendent by the first day of the month for review by the Board of Education on the second Monday of that month.

II. PREPARATION FOR AN APPROVED TRIP

A. Contracts

Any contracts related to the trip must be signed and approved by authorized school officials in accordance with policy 6420, Contracts with the Board, and policy 6421, Pre-Audit Certification. The trip sponsor does not have authority to enter contracts on behalf of the school system.

B. Sponsor Responsibilities

1. Prior to the trip, the trip sponsor shall carefully review all applicable board policies and regulations on school trips.
2. After a trip is approved, the trip sponsor may finalize all reservations and other arrangements for the trip. No expenditures related to the trip may be made nor any fees or payments collected until after the trip has received final approval as specified in this regulation.
3. The trip sponsor shall request all required substitute teachers per school procedure.
4. The trip sponsor shall make arrangements for students who have elected not to participate in the school trip to receive alternate educational services throughout the duration of the trip.
5. The trip sponsor shall develop a plan for the event that a student needs to be removed from the trip for disciplinary reasons.
6. Preferably ten but no less than two school days before the trip, the trip sponsor shall submit the following to the principal:
 - a. a final schedule/itinerary with contact information (addresses, phone numbers, maps, etc.) for all destinations and lodging. The information must be detailed enough that the principal can contact the trip sponsor and/or students at any time during the trip.
 - b. a final roster of all students, school personnel, and chaperones participating in the school trip; and
 - c. signed and completed parental consent forms as described below for all student participants.

The principal is authorized to cancel the trip if information is missing or incomplete (see also Section V, below).

C. Student Attendance

Students suspended from school or assigned to in-school suspension on the day of a school trip are prohibited from participating in the trip.

D. Parental Consent

1. All students must provide signed parental consent forms to participate in a

school trip unless a student is officially emancipated, in which case the student can sign on his or her own behalf. A student who fails to provide a signed consent form may be denied participation in the trip.

2. The standard parental consent form approved by the superintendent or designee shall be used for all school sponsored field trips.
3. No student's grade may be lowered if the student's parent or guardian refuses consent to participate in the school trip.

III. SAFETY AND SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

The principal and trip sponsor shall ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times, including at least the ratio of chaperones required by policy 3320, School Trips.

A. Chaperone Requirements

1. Chaperones must be current school system employees or volunteers, including parents, all of whom meet the standards established by Board policy, including background checks.
2. Chaperones must abide by all other applicable board policies, regulations, and school rules. At all times during a school trip, chaperones are strictly forbidden from engaging in any behavior that would violate board policy if an employee engaged in the behavior on school property. This includes, but is not limited to consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or tobacco products, or possessing a weapon. Principals shall ensure that chaperones receive written information explaining their responsibilities.
3. If applicable, a special needs student will be accompanied by a designated aide or nurse in accordance with the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. The aide or nurse will not be considered a chaperone for purposes of meeting the required student-chaperone ratio.

B. Additional Chaperone Requirements for Overnight Trips

1. Separate accommodations for male and female students and chaperones must be maintained. In all cases, single showering and/or restroom facilities shall be used by males and females at different times.
2. Chaperones must be assigned to accommodations on every floor that is occupied by students.
3. Chaperones shall not stay in the same room or private accommodation as a student unless necessary to meet student needs identified in the student's

IEP or Section 504 plan or the chaperone is the student's parent or guardian. If the form of accommodation is a group dormitory, this prohibition shall not apply.

C. Threat Assessment

The principal and superintendent or designee shall check and heed any travel advisories or restrictions that have been issued by the State Department or other governmental agencies.

D. Higher Risk Activities

The principal and trip sponsor shall develop a detailed safety plan for trips that involve a higher risk of injury due to the nature of the activity (e.g., water activities) or location (e.g., theme parks, fairs/carnivals). Notice of higher risk activities must be included on all parental consent forms.

Swimming and other water sports or activities (e.g., diving, boating, rafting, canoeing, waterslides, etc.) are not permissible without explicit approval from the superintendent and without a certified lifeguard on duty during the activity. The exception to this stipulation is wading and tubing in water knee deep or less. A detailed written plan for ensuring continuous supervision of all water-related activities must be approved by the principal prior to any school trips involving such activities.

E. Medical Treatment

School employees may administer medication to a student during a school trip only upon prior written request of the student's parent or guardian and prior authorization by the principal or designee in accordance with policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students. A separate request and authorization is required for the administration of medication to students (or a request to self-administer medicine) during the trip when the scheduled dose falls outside of regular school hours.

In the event of a medical emergency, the trip sponsor or any other staff member may arrange for the emergency medical treatment of a student. The school system will not be responsible for the cost of any such treatment.

As soon as possible during or after a medical emergency, the trip sponsor shall notify the principal and fill out a written incident/injury report.

IV. TRANSPORTATION

The most appropriate and cost-effective mode of transportation will be used for all school trips. The principal shall work with the transportation department

ensure that the arranged transportation will accommodate any students with disabilities who require accommodations.

The following modes of transportation are available for school trips.

- Regular school buses for trips during regular school hours, so long as this use will not interfere with the regular transportation program.
- Activity buses for trips during or outside of regular school hours.
- Commercial transportation (e.g., charter bus, commercial flight) with a pre-approved company for field trips involving longer distances and/or multiple days of travel.

Private vehicles (i.e., not school-owned and not commercial), are prohibited for school trips without:

- the advance written approval of the principal and of the parent/guardian of any child to be transported in a private vehicle
- a signed statement (from the person operating the private vehicle) acknowledging that the board's insurance coverage will not apply, that the board is not liable for any accident or injury, and that only the driver's private personal auto insurance coverage will be in effect

In compliance with State Board of Education Policy TCS-H-006, the bus driver or another school system employee will review the School Activity Trip Safety Statement with school bus passengers before every school-related field trip.

V. TRIP MODIFICATIONS AND/OR CANCELLATION

If any significant aspect of the trip changes after the initial approval has been granted, the trip sponsor must restart the process established in subsection I.B and submit a new school trip request to the principal. The trip sponsor shall notify all students and parents of any significant modifications to the trip arrangements or itinerary prior to the trip date. The principal or superintendent may cancel or postpone school trips when necessary if conditions change such that student travel is unsafe or otherwise impracticable under the circumstances. The trip sponsor shall notify all students and parents of such cancellation or postponement as soon as reasonably possible.

The principal and trip sponsor shall endeavor to refund any trip fees or deposits to the fullest extent possible but such reimbursements are not guaranteed.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A TRIP

A. Sponsor's Responsibilities

1. The trip sponsor and all chaperones shall be accessible by cellular phone at all times during the trip. The principal shall have the sponsor's contact information readily available.
2. For the duration of the trip, the trip sponsor shall keep a notebook or other record with the emergency contact information and parental consent forms for all participants.
3. The trip sponsor or designee shall store medication in a safe and secure location during the trip and shall administer medication to students in accordance with policy 6125, Administering Medicine to Students, except to a student who has been pre-authorized to secure and self-administer his or her own medication.
4. The trip sponsor is responsible for all activities during the trip and shall ensure that all activities conform to the approved itinerary.
5. The trip sponsor is responsible for enforcing applicable board policies, regulations, school rules, and the Code of Student Conduct. The trip sponsor shall impose disciplinary consequences for violations accordingly. The trip sponsor is encouraged to contact the principal prior to sending any student home from the trip early.
6. If any emergency occurs, the trip sponsor shall contact the principal as soon as possible. If the principal is unreachable, the trip sponsor shall contact the student services director or superintendent.

B. Student Responsibilities

1. Students must abide by all applicable board policies, regulations, the Code of Student Conduct, and school rules at all times during school trips.
2. Students must also abide by any additional rules established by the principal to govern the conduct of students during participation in school trips. Students will be notified of such rules in advance of the trip.
3. If a student is found to have violated any of these rules and regulations and the trip sponsor deems it necessary to remove the student from a trip or from an activity during the trip, the student must be supervised by a teacher or chaperone at all times. If a student is sent home early, he or she must be accompanied by a teacher or chaperone until he or she is released to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian.

Cross Reference: Policy 3320, School Trips

Issued: February 8, 2016

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

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

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

Sponsoring teacher: (Print) _____ School: _____

Cell phone number: _____ Grade(s): _____ Number of students: _____

Departure date: _____ Return date: _____

Departure time: _____ Return time: _____

Educational purpose:

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

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: _____

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: _____

Names of all non-school chaperones: _____

All chaperones have a background check completed: ☐

Sponsoring teacher initials: _____

Are all site(s) accessible to students with disabilities? yes no How will students with disabilities be accommodated for site access and transportation? _____

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

Transportation plan:

Mode of transportation: _____ Yellow bus with wheelchair lift _____ Yellow bus without wheelchair lift
_____ Activity bus with wheelchair lift _____ Activity bus without wheelchair lift _____ Rental car/mini-van
_____ Charter bus Other (Please explain) _____

Name of charter bus company (if checked above) _____

(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

Driver/s: _____ Round trip mileage: _____ # of buses needed: _____

Total cost per student \$ _____ Source of funds: _____

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

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Principal approval: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Superintendent approval: _____ Date: ____/____/____

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

Revised: October 30, 2023; _____