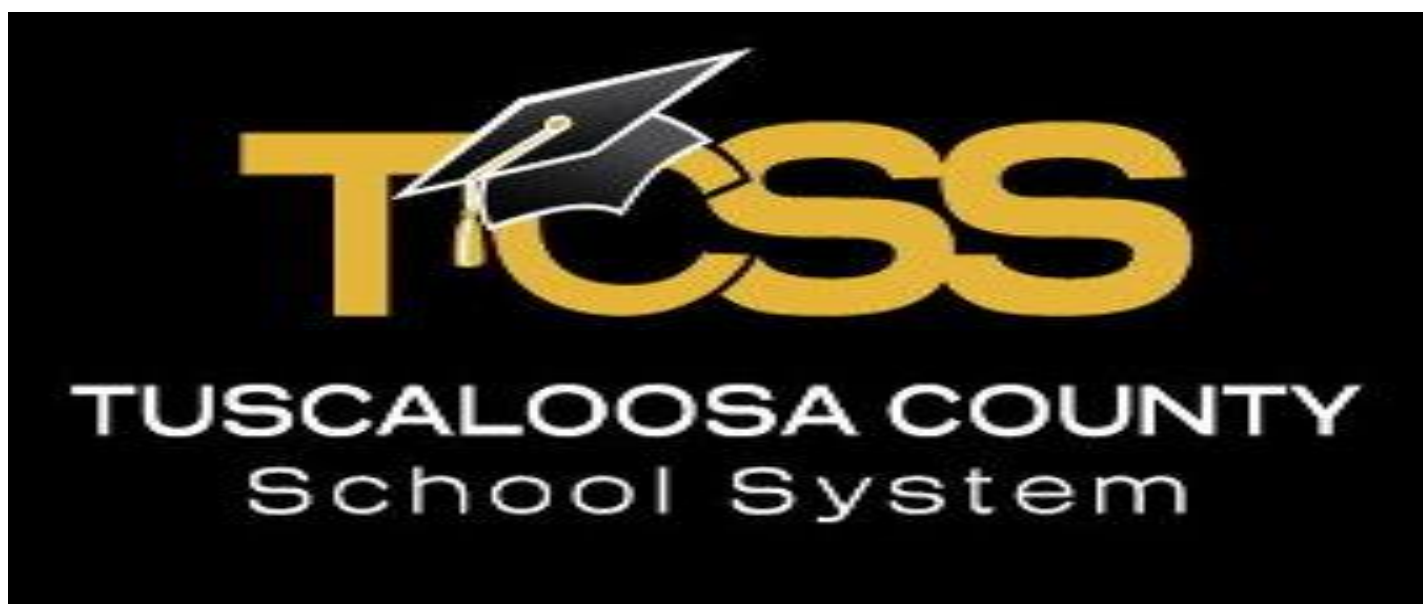


# STUDENT-PARENT INFORMATION GUIDE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR



## WELCOME TO THE TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM WHERE STUDENTS LEARN, GROW, AND ACHIEVE

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which our system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way our system stays faithful to our vision. Our system bears the great responsibility of educating young minds. Our goal is to prepare young people for their first big step into an adult world, a world that demands self-discipline and social skills as well as academic and work skills. Every effort within all of our programs, initiatives, professional development sessions, parental involvement programs, and community outreach is geared toward the idea that we keep students first. Program reviews and the work we do on a daily basis is predicated on the belief that every student has great potential, is worthy of every effort, and that our role as educators is to prepare them to be successful high school graduates. That success is to be measured by the fact that they will be well prepared for college or to enter the work force as a productive citizen and leader of tomorrow.

This *Student-Parent Information Guide* is designed to assist parents and students to better understand the daily operations and policies of the Tuscaloosa County School System so that they may effectively use all the resources our schools offer. The Tuscaloosa County School System's Policy Manual is available on the system website at [www.tcass.net](http://www.tcass.net).

### MISSION

Our mission is to educate and empower all students to be college and career ready graduates – prepared to make positive contributions to our global society.

### BELIEFS

- High expectations are necessary to achieve goals and expand opportunities for all.
- Education is a shared responsibility that positively impacts the quality of life.
- Equity, fairness, accountability, and fiscal responsibility are foundations of our decision-making.
- Safe, well-equipped, student-centered schools support student success.
- Diversity and individual learning needs are respected, included, and valued.

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# GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

## TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM 2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

TCSS INSTITUTE AND SYSTEM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY .....AUGUST 1, 2024  
 SYSTEM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY .....AUGUST 2, 2024  
 LOCAL SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY .....AUGUST 5, 2024  
 TEACHER WORK DAYS ..... AUGUST 6-7, 2024  
 SCHOOLS OPEN-FIRST DAY STUDENTS .....AUGUST 8, 2024  
 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY ..... SEPTEMBER 2, 2024  
 FALL BREAK FOR STUDENTS ..... OCTOBER 14-15, 2024  
 TEACHER WORK DAY ..... OCTOBER 15, 2024  
 VETERANS' DAY HOLIDAY ..... NOVEMBER 11, 2024  
 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS ..... NOVEMBER 25-29, 2024  
 EARLY RELEASE FOR STUDENTS ..... DECEMBER 20, 2024  
*WINTER HOLIDAYS – DECEMBER 23, 2024 – JANUARY 8, 2025*  
 TEACHERS RETURN – TEACHER WORK DAY ..... JANUARY 6, 2025  
 SYSTEM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY ..... JANUARY 7, 2025  
 STUDENTS RETURN ..... JANUARY 8, 2025  
 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY ..... JANUARY 20, 2025  
 PRESIDENT'S DAY ..... FEBRUARY 17, 2025  
 SPRING BREAK .....MARCH 10-14, 2025  
 TEACHER WORK DAY (\*WEATHER DAY) ..... APRIL 18, 2025  
 LOCAL SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY ..... APRIL 21, 2025  
 EARLY RELEASE FOR STUDENTS/LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS ..... MAY 22, 2025  
 TEACHER WORK DAY/LAST DAY FOR TEACHERS ..... MAY 23, 2025  
 MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY ..... MAY 26, 2025  
 JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY ..... JUNE 19, 2025  
 INDEPENDENCE DAY .....JULY 4, 2025

Grade Reporting Periods		
Nine Week Periods	Progress Report	Report Card
August 8 – October 11	September 6	October 18
October 16 – December 20	November 8	January 10
January 8 – March 7	February 7	March 21
March 17 – May 22	April 17	May 22

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## THE TUSCALOOSA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

### BOARD MEMBERS

District 1 Representative.....	Mrs. Portia Jones
District 2 Representative and Board Vice-President.....	Mr. Joey Hocutt
District 3 Representative.....	Mr. Joe Calvin
District 4 Representative.....	Mr. Don Presley
District 5 Representative.....	Mr. Neal Guy
District 6 Representative.....	Mr. Randy Smalley
District 7 Representative and Board President.....	Mr. Bill Squires

### SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent.....	Dr. Keri Johnson
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### DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

Deputy Superintendent.....	Mr. David Patrick
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### CHIEF SCHOOL FINANCIAL OFFICER

Chief School Financial Officer.....	Mr. Danny Higdon
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## CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION DIRECTORY

### DIRECTORS

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.....	Dr. Allison Mays – (205) 342-2720
Director of Accountability.....	Mrs. Jackie Hudgins – (205) 342-2739
Director of Assessment.....	Mrs. Cheryl Wallace – (205) 342-2743
Director of Career and Technical Education.....	Mr. Dennis Duncan – (205) 342-2744
Director of Child Nutrition Programs.....	Mrs. Kristy O’Leary – (205) 342-2752
Director of Curriculum and Instruction - Elementary.....	Dr. David Scott – (205) 342-2655
Director of Curriculum and Instruction - Secondary.....	Dr. Daniel Bray – (205) 342-2731
Director of Federal Programs.....	Mr. Mark Franks – (205) 342-2784
Director of Nursing.....	Ms. Cindy O’Quinn– (205) 342-2798
Director of Operations and Maintenance.....	Mr. Jason Grady – (205) 342-2890
Director of Public Relations.....	Mrs. Terri Brewer – (205) 342-2886
Director of Special Education.....	Mrs. Pam Stanley – (205) 342-2758
Director of Student Services.....	Mr. Tyrone Blocker – (205) 342-2754
Director of Technology.....	Mr. Brad Jessen – (205) 342-2885
Director of Transportation.....	Mrs. Donna Christian – (205) 342-2707

### COORDINATORS

Coordinator of Athletics.....	Mr. Stacy Lawler – (205) 342-2832
Coordinator of Development.....	Ms. Leslie Abernathy – (205) 342-2834
Coordinator of Elementary Education.....	Dr. Lillie Lewis – (205) 342-2894
Coordinator of Elementary Special Education.....	Mrs. Alesia Cameron – (205) 342-2789
Coordinator of Human Resources.....	Mrs. Michael Anne Jackson – (205) 342-2881
Coordinator of Mental Health Services.....	Mrs. Angela Kelly – (205) 342-2805
Coordinator of Prevention and Support Services.....	Ms. Cassidy Edwards – (205) 342-2749
Coordinator of Secondary Education.....	Mr. Michael Keeton – (205) 342-2960
Coordinator of Secondary Special Education.....	Mrs. Nina Graham – (205) 342-2735
Coordinator of Student Services.....	Mr. Steven Sims – (205) 342-2726
Coordinator of Transportation.....	Mr. Craig Henson – (205) 342-2707

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**SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION DIRECTORY**

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>PRINCIPAL</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>
Big Sandy Elementary School	Mr. Nick Rose	(205) 342-2840
Brookwood Elementary School	Mrs. Ashley Leath	(205) 342-2668
Brookwood High School	Mrs. Kellie Hubbard	(205) 342-2777
Brookwood Middle School	Mr. John Howard	(205) 342-2748
Buhl Elementary School	Mrs. Vanessa Clay	(205) 342-2640
Collins-Riverside Middle School	Dr. Lenoise Richey	(205) 342-2680
Cottondale Elementary School	Mrs. Candace Cherry	(205) 342-2642
Crestmont Elementary School	Mrs. Fayette Little	(205) 342-2695
Davis-Emerson Middle School	Dr. Lucretia Prince	(205) 342-2750
Duncanville Middle School	Mrs. Traci Primm	(205) 342-2830
Echols Middle School	Mr. Jason Stapp	(205) 342-2884
Englewood Elementary School	Dr. Tameka Rice	(205) 342-2644
Faucett-Vestavia Elementary School	Mrs. Genea Monroe	(205) 342-2646
Flatwoods Elementary School	Ms. Mary Jean Sutton	(205) 342-2648
Hillcrest High School	Mr. Jeff Hinton	(205) 342-2800
Hillcrest Middle School	Dr. Karen Davis	(205) 342-2820
Holt Elementary School	Mrs. Debbie Crawford	(205) 342-2650
Holt High School	Dr. Daniel Dickens	(205) 342-2768
Huntington Place Elementary School	Mrs. Andrea Hamner	(205) 342-2652
Lake View Elementary School	Dr. Dorotheann Martin	(205) 342-2951
Matthews Elementary School	Dr. Kimberly Lavender	(205) 342-2654
Maxwell Elementary School	Mrs. Frances Ann Baggett	(205) 342-2656
Myrtlewood Elementary School	Mrs. LaQuita Coleman	(205) 342-2658
Non-Traditional Programs	Dr. Sharon Jennings	(205) 342-2773
Northport Elementary School	Mrs. Jamie Pate	(205) 342-2862
Northport Intermediate School	Mr. Michael Tilford	(205) 342-2690
Northside High School	Mr. Jeremy Madden	(205) 342-2755
Northside Middle School	Mrs. Autumn Franks	(205) 342-2740
Sipsey Valley High School	Mr. Danny Jordan	(205) 342-2850
Sipsey Valley Middle School	Mr. Frank Kelly	(205) 342-2870
Sprayberry Education Center	Mr. Ross Perdue	(205) 342-2660
Taylorville Primary School	Mrs. Laurie Presley	(205) 342-2939
Tuscaloosa County High School	Mr. Darrell Williams	(205) 342-2670
Vance Elementary School	Mrs. Carolyn Wilson	(205) 342-2697
Walker Elementary School	Mrs. Amanda Wolfe	(205) 342-2664
Westwood Elementary School	Mrs. Marsha Johnson	(205) 342-2666

**EQUAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

In compliance with applicable outside agency guidelines, statutory and judicial requirements, and Board policy, the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education shall place an equal emphasis upon the non-discriminatory provision of educational opportunities for students. The Tuscaloosa County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, homeless status, marital status, non-English speaking ability, or migrant status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

For more information:

- District 504 Coordinator – Mr. Steven Sims – (205) 342-2754
- Homeless Liaison – Mr. Tyrone Blocker – (205) 342-2726
- Sexual Harassment & ADA Coordinator – Dr. Allison Mays – (205) 342-2720
- Special Education Director – Mrs. Pam Stanley – (205) 342-2758
- Title IX/Gender Equity – Mr. David Patrick – (205) 342-2730

<p>Title IX/Sexual Harassment</p> <p>School Contact: School Counselor</p> <p>System Contact: Mr. Steven Sims, Coordinator of Student Services                  1118 Greensboro Avenue, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401                  (205) 342-2754     <a href="mailto:ssims@tcss.net">ssims@tcss.net</a></p>
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**SCHOOL OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES**

The times established for the opening and closing of the schools of the school system are 15 minutes prior to the time students are to report to first class and 15 minutes after the last class period each day. Between these times and throughout the school day, school personnel will be on duty and available to supervise and care for students. However, school system personnel should not be and are not expected to assume responsibility for students whose parents permit them to arrive at school before the time noted above and/or to remain at school after the time noted above.

By presentation of this policy, the Board hereby notifies parents/guardians that school personnel are not available to assume responsibility for students who arrive on a school campus before and remain after the times noted above, except that school personnel shall be on duty to assume responsibility for students transported via school system-owned buses.

Parents/guardians are expected to take responsibility for assuring that their child arrives before the opening of school and is picked up after the closing of school within the time frames noted above. If, for any reason, parents are not able to comply with the times noted, a conference should be scheduled with the Principal to discuss the matter (Policies: 3.24/3.24.1).

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## EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

The Extended Day Program is an extension of the regular school day designed to offer enrichment programs for students, on a fee-basis, in elementary schools and to meet after-school childcare needs of working parents. All Extended Day Programs operate from the time students are dismissed from school until 5:45 p.m. for 5 days a week throughout the school year on those days when school is in session. In order for an extended day program to be offered, there must be enough student participation for the program to be cost-effective. If there is a need in your school zone, your school may elect to offer a morning program before the regular school day begins. Contact your local school to register and for specific information regarding cost.

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## SCHOOL VISITORS

All school visitors are required to report to the Principal's office upon arrival at a school campus. The safety of our children at each one of our schools is a paramount concern; therefore, all visitors will be required to sign in and secure a visitor's pass through the Raptor security system. The Raptor security system is used to track and monitor all visitors. Front office staff members use a camera system to view visitors before granting access to the front office. Once the visitor arrives in the office, the visitor provides a government issued photo ID card, which is then run through multiple databases to ensure the visitor is allowed on school property. Once cleared by all databases, the Raptor security system prints out a personalized name tag displaying the visitor's photo and areas of the school they are authorized to visit.

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## STUDENT VISITORS

Students enrolled in the school system are not permitted to bring student visitors to school during regular school hours without prior approval by the Principal.

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## CHECKING STUDENTS OUT OF SCHOOL

All parents/guardians or other authorized persons coming to school to check a student out of school must do so through the Principal's office via the school's approved checkout plan. Such persons are not to go directly to classrooms for this purpose (Policy: 5.34).

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## PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

The Board recognizes that involving parents at all levels in the school is essential to improved student achievement. The extent of parent involvement in a child's education is more important to student success than family income or education. *Parent* refers to any caregiver who assumes responsibility for nurturing and caring for children, including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, foster or stepparents. The Board supports the development and implementation of a comprehensive parent involvement program, which will involve parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles, in every school. Local school plans will include, but not be limited to, the following components of successful comprehensive parent involvement programs:

- Regular, two-way, meaningful communication between home and school;
- Promotion and support of responsible parenting;
- Recognition that parents play an integral role in assisting student learning;
- Recognition that parents can be provided techniques and strategies for assisting their children with learning activities at home;
- A welcoming atmosphere for parents in the school and active solicitation of parents' support and assistance for school programs;
- Inclusion of parents as full partners in the decisions that affect children and families;
- Recognition that different types of parent/family involvement produce different gains; and
- Availability of community resources to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

The Board supports and encourages professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators to enhance understanding of effective parent involvement strategies. The Board also recognizes the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parent participation. Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, supportive, long-lasting, and well-planned. Schools, in collaboration with parents, teachers, students, and administrators, must establish and develop efforts that enhance parent involvement and reflect the needs of students and families in the communities they serve (Policy: 5.73).

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## BOARD MEETINGS

The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education meets regularly on the second Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. at the Central Office, which is located at 1118 Greensboro Avenue, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401. **Website:** [www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net)

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# ENROLLING IN A TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL

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## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- The Alabama compulsory attendance law requires all children between the ages of six and seventeen to attend school.
- Enrollment in PRE-KINDERGARTEN is open to all children four (4) years of age on or before September 2<sup>nd</sup>\* who are residents of the school zone in which they abide.
- Enrollment in KINDERGARTEN is open to all children five (5) years of age on or before September 2<sup>nd</sup>\* who are residents of the school zone in which they reside.
- Enrollment in FIRST GRADE is open to all children six (6) years of age on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> who are residents of the school zone in which they reside.

\*While the Code of Alabama states that the enrollment birthdate is September 1<sup>st</sup>, an Attorney General's opinion states in effect that under the common law one's age is computed by including the day of birth so that a given age is attained the day before the birthday anniversary. [Ala. Code 16-28-4 (1975)] Interpretation based on Attorney General of Alabama October - December 1963, Volume 113, page 20.

## ALL STUDENTS WHO SEEK TO ENROLL IN A SCHOOL OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR THE FIRST TIME MUST PRESENT TO THE PRINCIPAL THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS (Policy 5.10):

- An official birth certificate or other document for age verification purposes in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. (Examples: U.S. or foreign birth certificate; religious, hospital, or physician's statement; baptismal certificate; adoption record; previously verified school records; or other record acceptable to the school principal). Failure of the parent or legal guardian to provide a birth certificate will not deny, nor delay, a student's enrollment.
- Proof of residence (copy of power bill, telephone bill, rent receipt, etc.) of the parent(s), legal custodian(s), and/or legal guardian(s) to show residency in the school zone. Falsification of residency is prohibited by Alabama Law [Section 13A-10-109].
- Recent report card or release from last school attended. The school principal shall determine grade placement of students from a private or non-public school or from home education based on state regulations and Tuscaloosa County Board of Education rules regarding transfer of credit as well as other factors including test data, age, and previous school records.
- Copy of current immunization form (Immunization certificates, required by Alabama law, must be presented to the Principal before a child can enroll in public school unless the child is determined to be McKinney-Vento or qualifies for ESL. Certificates are available from local physicians or local health departments. Only students presenting a Certificate of Medical Exemption or a Certificate of Religious Exemption are excused from this requirement.)
- Valid social security number – Providing a social security number for school enrollment purposes is completely voluntary and failure to do so will not deny, nor delay, a student's enrollment. The use of a social security number is solely for the purpose of identification of a student in our student management system. A unique identification number can be assigned by the local school system for any student whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) do not wish to provide that information.
- Proof of legal guardianship or custody when warranted (see section regarding establishing residency)
- Verification from Principal of transferring school that the student is not currently suspended or expelled. Regardless of age, when a student facing some type of disciplinary action is withdrawn from school prior to receiving the punishment, said student (and his/her parent/legal guardian) should be informed that prior to admission/readmission to any Tuscaloosa County school, the disciplinary action would have to be completed. This includes any suspension, work assignment, or referral to the Superintendent or Board of Education for a hearing and applies to students re-enrolling in the Tuscaloosa County School System or who are enrolling from another school system.
- Completed enrollment/transfer form
- Exceptions may be granted as provided in Alabama statutes and federal law.

## STUDENTS OVER SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE

- Students up to age 19 who are on track to graduate can no longer be denied enrollment in county school systems solely based on their age. School personnel will complete a transcript audit with the student to determine the student's standing with credits and needs to meet graduation requirements.
- Based on the IEP team's decision, students with disabilities may return to the school district up to the age of 21 to address transition services (only applies to students working towards essential and alternate achievement pathways).

## CHILDREN OF BOARD EMPLOYEES

- Children of regular or full-time employees of the Board, retired Board employees, Board members, or Board employees who became deceased during their employment may enroll in the school zoned for their residence or any school of the School System. Enrollment of children in any school outside their residence school zone must be approved by the Superintendent or designee based upon a written request. The approval of such requests will be based upon space available considerations with the understanding that the Board will not be responsible for transportation.

## EQUAL ACCESS

- Children who are homeless, migrant, non-English speaking, in foster care, or disabled shall have equal access to the same free appropriate public education, including public preschool education, provided to other children and youth. Such children will be provided the opportunity to participate in the same state educational programs and to meet the same state student performance standards as all other children without being isolated or stigmatized.
- Students who live in the attendance areas of Tuscaloosa County School System and who are homeless, migratory, immigrant, limited English proficient, or in foster care shall not be prohibited from school attendance due to any of the following:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residency requirements</li> <li>▪ Lack of social security number</li> <li>▪ Lack of birth certificate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of school records or transcripts</li> <li>▪ Lack of immunizations</li> <li>▪ Legal custody requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transportation</li> <li>▪ Language barriers</li> <li>▪ Disabilities</li> </ul>
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## PRE-KINDERGARTEN (PRE-K)

- In Alabama, students are not required to attend Pre-K and funding is not provided as it is on a comprehensive basis for kindergarten through twelfth grade. The Tuscaloosa County School System places a high value on Pre-K programs and will continually strive to provide and expand Pre-K services as possible. As such, opportunity for enrollment into Pre-K classes in the Tuscaloosa County School System is on a limited basis.
- A child whose fourth birthday is on or before September 2<sup>nd</sup>\* shall be eligible to apply for admission to the Pre-K Program.
- Completion of a Pre-K application does not guarantee that a child will be enrolled, but instead places the child on a list for the school's random selection drawing, per Office of School Readiness (OSR) guidelines.
- Priority will be given to students who live within the school's attendance zone. Should there not be sufficient interest to fill open Pre-K class(es) within the school's attendance zone, students within the entire Tuscaloosa County School System may be considered.
- Eligible special education students (ages 3-5) will be served according to their Individual Education Program (IEP).



**PRE-K PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE:** Regular attendance ensures Pre-K children benefit from participating in a quality early education. Regular attendance, in addition to being a good measure of parent engagement, is a school readiness skill. After a student has acquired a total of ten (10) absences, tardies, or checkouts, the parent is required to meet with the Pre-K director to discuss attendance. Any further absences may result in removal from the Pre-K program.

## ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR NEW AND RETURNING STUDENTS – INFOSNAP

The Tuscaloosa County School System utilizes an online enrollment program called INFOSNAP, which is a registration program designed to improve efficiency. Implementing this customized online solution will streamline new and annual student registration through seamless integration between INFOSNAP and the Tuscaloosa County School System's student information system, (PowerSchool). A direct link to INFOSNAP may be found at [www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net).

## RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

A student must attend the school(s) within the school zone in which his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) has established legal residence, except when school assignment has been approved as a part of the system-wide instructional program, under the employee transfer provision, or when a senior whose parent(s) or guardian(s) establishes residence outside the area served by the School System or outside the school zone. At the discretion of the parent(s) or guardian(s), the student may complete his/her senior year at the school he/she currently attends. The School System shall not be responsible for the student's transportation. Exceptions may be granted as provided in Alabama statutes and federal law.

### DEFINITION OF LEGAL GUARDIAN

A guardian is defined as a person who has legal custody of a child.

### DEFINITION OF RESIDENCE

For school attendance purposes, definition of residence is that the legal guardian and student physically reside full time, weekdays/nights, and weekends, at a place of abode located within the limits of the school district or zone. All students will register at the school they are assigned to attend. The parent or legal guardian will provide evidence of residence and the school district administration will verify bona fide occupancy.

A parent/legal guardian enrolling a student or entering the school district will be required to verify his/her residence address as a part of the registration process. Students are not legally enrolled until the verification of residence has been completed. When the actual residence of a student comes into question, the Director of Student Services or his/her designee may investigate and in his/her discretion, require additional proof of full-time, actual residency within the attendance zone or county, as the case may be.

### ESTABLISHING RESIDENCY

#### A. Students Living with Parents or Legal Guardians

The parent or legal guardian of a student seeking to enroll in a school will provide the school district with a mortgage document, property deed, or an apartment or home lease AND any one of the items numbered (1) through (4) below as verification of their address.

1. Utility bills (water, gas, electricity);
2. Personal visit by a designated school district official;
3. Filed Homestead Exemption Application form; and/or
4. Any other documentation that will objectively and unequivocally establish that the parent or legal guardian resides within the school district. Any document with a post office box as an address will not be accepted. Neither an affidavit nor a notarized statement will be accepted as proof of residency. If the student has a legal guardian, a copy of the custody order appointing the guardian must be provided to the district. If a petition for guardianship has been filed and the decree is pending, the student or guardian must provide a certified copy of the filed petition for guardianship. Any legal guardianship formed for the purpose of establishing residency for school attendance purposes shall not be recognized.

#### B. Homeless Children/Unaccompanied Youth

When a child is determined to be homeless as defined by the Stewart B. McKinney, Act 42 USC Sections 11431 (1), 11432 (e)(4), and 11302 (a), the school district will consider and take the enrollment action that is in the best interest of the child pursuant to 42 USC 11432 (e)(3).

#### C. Students Living with Adults other than Parents or Legal Guardians

The non-parent(s) claiming district residency must meet the same criteria as that of parents or legal guardians as stated in Part A.

The adult must provide the school with legal guardianship or custodial papers and provide documentation fully explaining the reason(s) (other than school attendance zone or district preference) for this arrangement. The Superintendent or his/her designee will make the necessary factual determinations. Examples of situations where guardianship authority of an adult will be recognized to establish residency of the minor include but are not limited to the following:

1. Death or serious illness of the child's parent(s) or guardian
2. Abandonment of the child
3. Child abuse or neglect
4. Seriously unstable family relationships or undesirable conditions in the home of the child's parents or guardians having documented detrimental effect on the child
5. Students enrolled in recognized exchange programs residing with host families and /or
6. Incarceration of a parent.

Any person who has assumed responsibility for the care and custody of the child shall be expected to begin the process of seeking legal guardianship before enrollment of the child and an approximate completion date must be given. Any legal guardianship formed for the purpose of establishing residency for school attendance purposes shall not be recognized.

#### D. An adult student (at least 19 years of age) may establish a legal residence based on applicable state laws.

### DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS AND NON-COMPLIANCE

The requirements as stated above are minimal and the Tuscaloosa County School System reserves the right to require additional documentation and verification at any time. The Principal of a school is responsible for ensuring that only students eligible to attend that school are in fact enrolled and attending.

Any suspicion of violation of residence requirements will be investigated. Any case that cannot be resolved by the Principal will be referred to the Director of Student Services or designee for additional investigation and further action. Students enrolled in a school without proper residence verification and without an approved transfer will be withdrawn from the school in which they are illegally enrolled.

## LOCATING SCHOOL ZONES, BUS ROUTES, AND BUS STOPS – INFOFINDER I

INFOFINDER I is the Tuscaloosa County School System's bus transportation routing software that will provide parents with the ability to locate school zones, bus routes and stops based on their home address via the Internet and a web browser. A direct link to INFOFINDER I may be found at [www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net).

## PLACEMENT AND ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

### STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM A DIFFERENT ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The high schools in the Tuscaloosa County School System operate on a schedule that allows students to complete eight credits each year. Transfer students who enroll from a different academic calendar will be placed in the most closely matched courses to allow the student to earn the maximum credit possible. **Due to state mandates that require a student to pass specific content in the core courses and state guidelines that will not allow a student to receive credit for a course for which he/she has already received credit, it will at times be impossible to receive eight credits in a transfer year.**

The students must be aware that the later in the semester one enters, the more difficult the task of making up work and/or mastering content necessary for successful completion of all courses. The responsibility for mastering content already presented prior to the student's enrollment rests with the student. Teachers will make information and materials available to students and will assist newly enrolled students in any ways which are practical; however, re-teaching of previous content, administering additional tests, or reviewing the course is not practical.

### **THE FOLLOWING PLACEMENT PROCEDURES SHALL APPLY TO ALL STUDENTS TRANSFERRING INTO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM:**

#### **TRANSFERS FROM ACCREDITED SCHOOLS**

1. A student transferring from a public or non-public school accredited by AdvancED Accreditation Commission (NCA Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the SACS Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement) will have credits accepted without validation upon receipt of official transcripts. (AAC 290-3-1-.02 (7)(d)).
2. The decision about grade placement (K-12) will be based solely on the grade classification of the student at the school previously attended.

#### **GPA DETERMINATION FOR TRANSFERS FROM ACCREDITED SCHOOLS**

1. Transfer student coming in with AP/IB courses:  
Students receive the weight indicated on the transcript for AP/IB courses. The transcript is not changed.  
**However, weight is not to exceed 1.0 for AP/IB and 0.5 for Honors**
2. If former school did not give weight for Honors courses, we do not give weight. The transcript is not changed. If additional weight was not added for honors courses at former school, no weight will be added.  
EXCEPTION – Weighted credit of 1.0 may be given for AP/IB courses even if former school did not give weight.
3. Students transferring into Tuscaloosa County School System for the senior year are not eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian.
4. Accept grades submitted along with grading scale (Cannot change a grade, i.e. if grade submitted is 74-D, cannot change this to a C based on Tuscaloosa County School System's grading scale)
5. If former school awarded weight for elective courses, no weight will be awarded by the Tuscaloosa County School System.  
EXCEPTION – Weighted credit of 1.0 may be given for AP/IB elective courses if former school awarded weight.

#### **TRANSFERS FROM NON-ACCREDITED SCHOOL SETTINGS**

**Grades K-5** – Using all available records and nationally standardized tests, if available, from the sending school, the Principal or his/her designee shall determine placement. The process for making decisions about grade placement may take into consideration a variety of factors including age, maturity, motor coordination, capacity for learning, and academic progress. If there is a question about a transfer student's placement, he/she may be assigned to a lower grade level for a three (3) to six (6) weeks evaluation period. Based on the student's performance during this evaluation period, placement may then be changed to the appropriate grade level for a probationary period. Final grade placement will be determined after this probationary period.

**Grades 6-8** – Using all available records and nationally standardized tests, if available, from the sending school, the Principal or his/her designee shall determine placement.

**Grades 9-12** – To allow transfer of credits and/or determine the appropriate class/grade placement of a student transferring to this system from a non-accredited or home school, the following shall be implemented:

1. Credit for all elective courses shall be accepted without validation.
2. Uncontested credit for core courses (English, mathematics, science and social studies) shall be transferred as follows:
  - Using all available records and nationally standardized tests, if available, the principal or his/her designee shall determine the appropriate placement and then notify the student and the parent/guardian.
  - For any initial core course the student completes successfully in this system, he/she shall be permitted to transfer in that subject area all previous credits earned at a non-accredited or home school. (Example: Successful completion of eleventh grade English in this system would allow the student to transfer ninth and tenth grade English if completed successfully at the non-accredited or home school).
3. Contested credit for core courses (English, mathematics, science and social studies) shall be transferred as follows:
  - The principal or designee shall supervise the administration of the school systems' content-based course specific validation test. For each validation test passed, the student shall be placed in the next level core course and credit for the prerequisite course(s) shall be transferred. Once a grade-level course has been validated, all preceding courses in that content area are recorded as validated.
4. In the event of the existence of controversial records/transcripts and/or the absence of any official or notarized records/transcripts, the principal or designee shall supervise the administration of the school systems' content-based course specific validation test. For each validation test passed, the student shall be placed in the next level core course and credit for the prerequisite course(s) shall be transferred. Once a grade-level course has been validated, all preceding courses in that content area are recorded as validated. (Policy 4.80)

#### **SENIOR TRANSFER STUDENTS**

Except in the case of a bona fide change in residence or other circumstances equally valid for making an exception, a student is not to be graduated from high school unless he has been in continuous attendance therein during the entire high school year immediately preceding the date of graduation.

#### **STUDENTS ENTERING WHO HAVE NOT ATTENDED ANY SCHOOL PREVIOUSLY THIS YEAR.**

Students who are not seventeen and enter after day five.

If it can be documented that a student is transferring from a system which had just started school (no more than five days into the semester) then the student may register. His/her semester average will be calculated by the average of the grades received after registration. The responsibility for mastering content already presented prior to the student's enrollment rests with the student. Teachers will make information and materials available to students and will assist newly enrolled students in any ways which are practical. However, re-teaching of previous content, administering additional tests, or reviewing the course is not practical.

If a student has been truant from this or other school systems, the student will receive a zero for each grade that the student has missed. These zeros will be averaged in with the grades he/she earns from that point.

Students who are over seventeen and enter after day five.

Students up to age 19 who are on track to graduate can no longer be denied enrollment in county school systems solely based on their age. School personnel will complete a transcript audit with the student to determine the student's standing with credits and needs to meet graduation requirements.

Based on the IEP team's decision, students with disabilities may return to the school district up to the age of 21 to address transition services (only applies to students working towards essential and alternate achievement pathways).

**ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSFERS ACCORDING TO THE ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

A student that enrolls in one school and later transfers to, or enrolls in, another school shall not be eligible immediately to represent the latter school in any athletic contest. See the section pertaining to Eligibility for Participation in Extracurricular Activities for a detailed explanation. The rules and regulations for athletic eligibility for transfers according to the Alabama High School Athletic Association may be found at [www.AHSAA.com](http://www.AHSAA.com).

**HOMELESS, MIGRANT, NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING, OR DISABLED**

Children who are zoned to attend the Tuscaloosa County School System and who are homeless, migrant, non-English speaking, immigrant, or disabled will have access to a free, appropriate education. McKinney-Vento homeless students and/or their parents/guardians should contact the Tuscaloosa County School System's homeless liaison at (205) 342-2754. Migrant or non-English speaking students and/or their parents/guardians should contact the Tuscaloosa County School System's Director of Federal Programs at (205) 342-2784. Disabled students and/or their parents/guardians should contact the Tuscaloosa County School System's Director of Special Education at (205) 342-2756.

**DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES FOR MCKINNEY- VENTO STUDENTS**

Parents/guardians/unaccompanied youth who disagree with the decision of the principal/his or her designee have a right to initiate a dispute resolution process on a matter related to McKinney-Vento eligibility and related procedures, procedural safeguards, and/or receipt of McKinney-Vento services. Requests by parents/guardians/unaccompanied youth for a review must be submitted in writing within five working days of the notice of action appealed to the Tuscaloosa County School System's McKinney-Vento Liaison. He may be reached at (205) 342-2754.

The information needed in the dispute is listed below:

- it must be stated in writing and signed
- it must identify the alleged violation or violations
- it must describe the facts upon which the dispute is based
- it must include a recommendation for resolving the grievance

The McKinney-Vento Liaison shall review relevant facts and render a written decision on the issue presented to the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth within ten working days of the receipt of the dispute. If the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision of the McKinney-Vento Liaison, the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth have a right to request an impartial due process hearing with the Tuscaloosa County School System's Deputy Superintendent within five working days of the notice of action appeal. Requests by parents/guardians/unaccompanied youth for a review must be submitted in writing to the Deputy Superintendent. He/she may be reached at (205) 342-2783. As the due process hearing officer, the Deputy Superintendent will notify the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth in writing of the date, time, and place for the hearing. (The parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth will have the right to participate in the hearing and to be represented by counsel if they choose.) As the impartial hearing officer, the Deputy Superintendent will preside at the due process hearing and will conduct the proceedings in an impartial manner to the end that all parties involved have the opportunity to present evidence and produce outside expert testimony. The hearing officer shall review relevant facts and render a written decision on the issue presented for review within five working days of the conclusion of the hearing. If the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision of the impartial hearing officer, the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth has the right to request a review of the decision with the Alabama State Department of Education. The contact information is listed below.

State Homeless Liaison  
Alabama Department of Education  
5348 Gordon Persons Building  
50 North Ripley St.  
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101  
Phone: (334) 242-8199  
Fax: (334) 242-0496

**IMMUNIZATIONS**

Immunization certificates, required by Alabama law, must be presented to the Principal before a child can enroll in public school. Certificates are available from local physicians or local health departments. Only students presenting a Certificate of Medical Exemption or a Certificate of Religious Exemption are excused from this requirement.

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# THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR STUDENTS

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## THE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

Breakfast and lunch will be served to students beginning on the first of day of school. Free and reduced-price meals will be available for qualifying students in accordance with the policy adopted by the Board of Education and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Apply for free/reduced meals at [www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net) under the Child Nutrition Department heading.

Limited à la carte items also are available during the lunch period. Cashiers will utilize computers to maintain lunch accounts. This will enable them to accept payment by the day, week, month, or term/semester.

Student Breakfast Elementary	\$1.55	Student Lunch Elementary	\$3.00
Student Breakfast Intermediate	\$1.55	Student Lunch Intermediate	\$3.30
Student Breakfast Middle and High School	\$1.55	Student Lunch Middle and High School	\$3.30
Student Breakfast REDUCED PRICE	\$0.30	Student Lunch REDUCED PRICE	\$0.40
Faculty/Staff Breakfast	\$2.85	Faculty/Staff Lunch	\$4.65
Visiting Adult Breakfast	\$2.85	Visiting Adult Lunch	\$5.00

MySchoolBucks is an online payment service that provides a quick and easy way to add money to your child's account using a credit/debit card or electronic check.

MySchoolBucks provides:

- Convenience - Available 24/7 on the web or through our mobile app for your smartphone
- Efficiency - Make payments for all your students, even if they attend different schools within the district. Eliminate the need for your students to take money to school.
- Control - Set low balance alerts, view account activity, recurring/automatic payments & more!
- Flexibility - Make payments using credit/debit cards and electronic checks.
- Security – MySchoolBucks adheres to the highest security standards.

Enrollment is easy!

1. Go to [www.MySchoolBucks.com](http://www.MySchoolBucks.com) or download the mobile app and register for a free account.
2. Add your students using their school name and student ID.
3. Make a payment to your students' accounts with your credit/debit card or electronic check. A program fee may apply. You will have the opportunity to review any fees and cancel if you choose, before you are charged.

If you have any questions, contact MySchoolBucks directly:

- [support@myschoolbucks.com](mailto:support@myschoolbucks.com) (855) 832-5226 Visit [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) and click on Help

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## SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES AND SCHOOL HEALTH INFORMATION

Health promotion and academic achievement go hand in hand in allowing students to reap the most from their educational experiences. School nurses support the educational process by assisting students to attend school in optimal health. The Tuscaloosa County School System employs both Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses.

All students must have a completed *Health Assessment Record* form on file in INFOSNAP. This form must be updated each school year, or sooner, if the student's health information/condition changes. Any student who suffers from chronic or severe health problems (diabetes, asthma, seizures, heart problems, etc.) requiring specific accommodations, should further discuss needs with the School Nurse. The health form in INFOSNAP should be updated each school year and should be accompanied with information from the student's doctor that defines the condition, notes any limitations placed on the student and provides an emergency care plan. When appropriate, a signed *Medical Release of Information* form and/or authorization for the school nurse to speak with the student's physician may be requested.

In addition, any student with noted health conditions on the health portion of the INFOSNAP/Health assessment forms will require verification/documentation from their physician, prior to the development or continuation of a health-care plan. This documentation should be provided to your child's school nurse as soon as possible, preferably prior to the students' first day of school.

- A Physician's note will be required in order to confirm students' medical diagnosis.
- This note will NOT be required on an annual basis; however, any *medical updates* on a student's condition should be provided to the school nurse annually.
- Any student whom we do not receive a medical diagnosis confirmation on from the Physician, will be placed in a 'disabled mode' in PowerSchool.
- All students prescribed daily and/ or 'as needed' medication, are already required to submit updated Physician orders each school year; therefore, these students will NOT require *additional* medical documentation.

In an emergency situation involving a student, a school faculty member may call 911. If a 911 call is made, a faculty member or family member will be present to transfer the student in need to the nearest medical facility.

**BACKPACK SAFETY:** Is your child carrying 20-30% of their body weight in his/her backpack? According to change.org (2017), it is medically proven that children carrying more than 10% of their body weight is damaging to their spine. Just because you can't see the internal damage does not mean it isn't happening! (Sams, 2017). Become aware of the importance of ensuring that children are carrying no more than 10% of their weight in their backpack. Visit [www.bacsupport.com](http://www.bacsupport.com) for more information.

**SUNSCREEN:** Any student in a public school under the jurisdiction of a local board of education or in a nonpublic school may possess and apply federal Food and Drug Administration regulated over-the-counter sunscreen at school and at school—based on events notwithstanding any other provision of law, including any rule of the State Board of Education or the State Board of Nursing.

Any student, parent, or guardian requesting a school board employee to apply sunscreen to a student shall present to the nurse a Parent Prescriber Authorization Form signed by the parent/ guardian. A Physician signature is not required.

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## MEDICATION

School personnel shall not administer medication (including over-the-counter medications) to a student except in accordance with policy. Parents/guardians are encouraged to administer medications to their children at home to the greatest extent possible. In such cases as it is medically necessary to administer medication during school hours, a completed *School Medication Prescriber/Parent Authorization* form is required. The form must be completed by the prescriber and signed by both the prescriber and the parent for ALL prescription and over-the-counter medications. All prescription and non-prescription medications must be delivered to the school nurse or designated school personnel by the student's parent/guardian or the parent-designated responsible adult, in the original container. All prescription medication must be in a correct labeled container (which includes student's name, licensed prescriber's name, name of medication, strength of medication, dosage, time interval, route, and the date of drug's discontinuation when applicable). All medication must be approved by the school's nurse (RN) prior to being given at school. Students are not allowed to possess or self-administer medications without prior approval and documentation by the school's RN. The school's RN may permit a student with a chronic illness to possess and self-administer approved medication provided that there is proper authorization by the licensed prescriber and parent/guardian on the *School Medication Prescriber/Parent Authorization* form. Students are not to have in their possession any prescription medication or non-prescription medication on school grounds including school buses and school sponsored events. Failure to follow the Medication Administration Policy will be considered direct violation of the Student Drug and Alcohol Policy (Policy: 5.62). Parents will be notified to pick up any unused portion of medication when a course of medication is complete, out of date, and/or at the end of the school year. Medication not picked up by the parent will be destroyed in accordance with policy.

## SCHOOL HEALTH SCREENINGS

In order to ensure that all students are able to benefit optimally from their educational experiences, school nurses may perform health screenings (vision, hearing, spinal, etc.) routinely or by referral from parents and/or teachers. At times, nursing students from approved nursing programs may observe and/or assist school nurses with screenings. If a parent does NOT authorize the school to screen his or her child, the parent must notify the child's school nurse in writing.

## STUDENT ILLNESS GUIDELINES

The Tuscaloosa County School System has a priority of keeping all of our students healthy and in school. One way we can all work together to do this is to prevent the spread of illness. Please use the following guidelines to determine whether or not students should be in school. Students presenting any of the symptoms noted below should obtain clearance from a physician prior to returning to school with a doctor's note. It is strongly encouraged to check children for a fever before sending them to school. Students should not be sent to school until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without taking a fever reducing medication.

Symptom/Illness	Child should not be at school or in contact with other children:
Runny Nose	Cloudy or yellow/green discharge with congestion and fever
Cough	Frequent or uncontrollable and accompanied by fever
Fever	If temperature is above 100
Diarrhea or Vomiting	Must be free of diarrhea/vomiting for at least 24 hours
Strep Throat or Scarlet Fever	Sore throat, headache, nausea, fever. The only way to rule out Strep is with a throat culture performed by a physician.
"Pink Eye" Conjunctivitis	Eye is red with complaint of burning or itching. Crusty, white or yellow drainage is occurring.
Rash/skin infection	Any child with rash or signs of skin infection not having been evaluated by doctor. Even after cleared by a physician, rashes should be covered during school hours as much as reasonably possible, especially if drainage is noted.
Chicken Pox	Itching with pink/red spots with blister-type center, fever
Flu	Fever of 100 and above with accompanying sore throat, cough, runny nose, congestion, body aches, extreme tiredness, vomiting or diarrhea

## HOMEBOUND SERVICES

The Tuscaloosa County School System provides homebound instructional services for eligible students. For students with a disability, or who are suspected of having a disability, the eligibility requirements for homebound services, and the services to be provided during the homebound placement, will be made exclusively by the IEP team or Section 504 team and will be based upon the individual needs of each student. Eligibility for students with a disability, or who are suspected of having a disability, will not be subject to the District's restrictions for homebound services that may apply to students who are not disabled or not suspected of having a disability. For any non-disabled student, eligibility will be considered upon the written documentation provided by a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist. For non-disabled students, the written documentation provided must justify an expected absence from school of at least four weeks.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. An Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting will be conducted with appropriate team membership to determine if homebound instructional services are appropriate based on the student's needs.
2. Homebound services will be considered by the IEP team for students receiving special education services. School staff will convene an IEP meeting to discuss and revise the IEP, as appropriate.
3. Provide a copy of the amended IEP to the Special Education Department.
4. Schedule an IEP Team meeting to review the LRE within the appropriate timeframe.
5. Assure that the homebound teacher is notified of any changes to homebound services after any subsequent IEP Team meeting.

### SECTION 504

1. A 504 team meeting will be conducted with appropriate team membership to determine if homebound instructional services are appropriate based on the student's needs.
2. If homebound services are needed, the 504 team will develop a plan for the appropriate services to be provided.
3. Provide a copy of the amended 504 plan to the Director of Student Services.
4. Schedule a 504 Team meeting to review the LRE within 30-45 days.
5. Assure that the homebound teacher is notified of any changes to homebound services after any subsequent 504 Team meeting.

### NON-DISABLED

Eligibility for homebound instructional services for students without a disability (students who do not qualify for special education or Section 504) will be considered based upon the written documentation provided by a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist. For non-disabled students, the written documentation provided must justify an expected absence from school of at least four weeks.

1. The parent or guardian must submit a Homebound Instructional Services Referral Form to the school.
2. The parent or guardian must provide the school with an update from the attending physician every four weeks.
3. The principal and /or principal's designee, in consultation with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will evaluate the request for services and determine eligibility.

4. The Homebound Instructional Services Student Referral form is to be completed and submitted to the central office in a timely manner.
5. A student will be counted absent from school prior to the date services have been approved. After approval for services, a student must be counted present when calculating attendance.
6. The services to be provided will be developed through a collaborative effort of the school principal, classroom teacher(s), parents, and may include any others who have knowledge of the student's individual needs.
7. The student's classroom teachers will work collaboratively with the homebound teacher to provide course content standards, class assignments, and other projects as dictated by the homebound instructional plan.
8. At the conclusion of the student's homebound placement, a transition plan for the student to return to school will include a referral to the local school's 504 team to assure all needs are met.
9. Maintaining good communication throughout the homebound placement is essential, and is a responsibility shared by the parent, school, and homebound teacher.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND PARASITES

A student with a communicable or contagious disease or a parasite shall be ineligible to attend schools in the School System until such time as appropriate treatment has been administered and/or the student is declared safe to return to school by the school Principal or his/her designee.

### REMOVAL FROM SCHOOL

When a student is determined to have head lice or viable nits, the student should be removed from class and the parent called to take the student home for treatment as approved by the Principal or other health official. Care should be taken by school personnel not to embarrass the student.

### RETURN TO SCHOOL

The student may return to school when accompanied by the parent/guardian. The student may return to class when it has been determined by the Principal and/or his/her designee that (1) appropriate treatment has been administered, and (2) no viable nits are present (Policy: 3.80).

## MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE AND VACCINE

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness caused by bacteria. It is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children 2-18 years old in the United States. The bacteria that cause meningococcal disease are very common. The disease is most common in children and people with certain medical conditions that affect their immune system. The disease is spread through exchange of respiratory droplets or saliva with an infected person including kissing, coughing, sneezing, and sharing drinking glasses and eating utensils. In a few people, the bacteria overcome the body's immune system and pass through the lining of the nose and throat into the blood stream and cause meningitis. Meningitis is a term that describes inflammation of the tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Symptoms of the disease include fever, headache, stiff neck, red rash, drowsiness, nausea and vomiting. The meningococcal vaccine MCV4 is recommended for all children 11-12 years of age and for unvaccinated adolescents at high school entry (15 years of age). High school seniors should also consider obtaining the vaccine prior to entering college, especially if they are planning on living in a dormitory. Parents should consult the family physician or the local health department for more information. Information on MCV4 and other vaccine recommendations may also be obtained at [www.adph.org/immunization](http://www.adph.org/immunization).

## INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINE (INACTIVATED OR RECOMBINANT): WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Influenza ("flu") is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year, usually between October and May. Flu is caused by influenza viruses, and is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing, and close contact. Anyone can get flu. Flu strikes suddenly and can last several days.

Symptoms vary by age, but can include:

- fever/chills
- sore throat
- muscle aches
- fatigue
- cough
- headache
- runny or stuffy nose

Flu can also lead to pneumonia and blood infections, and cause diarrhea and seizures in children. If you have a medical condition, such as heart or lung disease, flu can make it worse. Flu is more dangerous for some people. Infants and young children, people 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions or a weakened immune system are at greatest risk. Each year thousands of people in the United States die from flu, and many more are hospitalized.

Flu vaccine can:

- keep you from getting flu
- make flu less severe if you do get it, and
- keep you from spreading flu to your family and other people.

A dose of flu vaccine is recommended every flu season. Children 6 months through 8 years of age may need two doses during the same flu season. Everyone else needs only one dose each flu season. Consult your child's Healthcare Provider/ Pediatrician for additional information and to discuss your child's need for the Flu Vaccine.

## CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

In light of the current pandemic, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by a severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), our local school district continues to collaborate regularly with the Alabama and Local Department of Public Health, as well as the State Department of Education, in which guidelines, regulations, and recommendations will be utilized in planning for the 2022-2023 school year. For more information pertaining to COVID-19, please visit the [CDC.gov](http://CDC.gov) website.

Please refer to the Too Sick for School Symptom chart, while taking the following preventative measures:

- Avoiding close contact with sick individuals;
- Frequently washing hands with soap and water;
- Not touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- Practicing good respiratory hygiene, and
- Staying home/keeping children home when sick.

## IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENT FOR STUDENTS ENTERING SIXTH GRADE

According to the Alabama Department of Health Immunization Division, all students (11 or 12 years of age) entering the sixth grade are required to receive a booster dose of tetanus-diphtheria toxoid and acellular pertussis vaccine prior to enrollment. This replaces the tetanus-diphtheria toxoid vaccine requirement for entry into the eleventh grade. Parents should contact the family physician or the local health department for more information. The Director of Nursing for the Tuscaloosa County School System may be contacted at (205) 342-2798.

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## **STUDENT PREGNANCIES**

A female student who is or becomes pregnant while enrolled in the schools of Tuscaloosa County School System shall notify either the counselor, the school nurse, the assistant Principal, or the Principal as soon as the pregnancy has been confirmed. In order to remain in school, a pregnant student will provide the Principal with a written statement from the attending licensed physician, including his/her recommendation concerning the advisability of school attendance of the pregnant student. If a student has difficulty in scheduling an initial appointment, a student may remain in school until the time of the appointment (not longer than six weeks) with a note from her parent or guardian who would assume liability for her attendance. The student shall provide an additional statement from her physician each four weeks verifying that she is physically able to continue her attendance in school. In no case will a pregnant student be removed from school or intentionally discriminated against solely because of pregnancy.

### **REGULATIONS APPLICABLE DURING SEMESTER OF DELIVERY**

A pregnant student who chooses to remain in school during the semester in which she expects to deliver the child shall be governed by the same attendance policies, appeals, procedures, minimum course requirements, and code of conduct as are applicable to all other students. Some courses, such as physical education, may need accommodations.

### **ATTENDANCE**

In order to continue a responsible relationship with the school and to maintain grades and academic standing during the time the student is out of school to deliver the child, the student should meet the following responsibilities:

1. Remain in school as long as the attending physician determines that it is medically advisable.
2. The student must complete all work assignments as may be assigned by school personnel or homebound teacher as applicable on a timely basis.
3. After the birth of the child, the student must return to school as soon as the attending physician determines that the student is able. A written statement from the student's physician must be presented to school officials certifying that the student is able to resume normal school activities. Following delivery, a student will qualify for homebound instruction for a period of up to six weeks. If delivery complications require homebound instruction for longer than six weeks, a student is eligible to apply for homebound instruction (Policy: 4.89).

### **ABSENCES-ANTICIPATED TIME OF LESS THAN FOUR (4) WEEKS**

If the anticipated absence from school will not extend beyond a four-week period, the student must schedule a meeting with her teacher to plan a program of schoolwork assignments prepared by her teachers. It shall be the responsibility of the student to insure a member of her family comes to the school weekly to pick up such work.

### **ABSENCES-ANTICIPATED TIME OF MORE THAN FOUR (4) WEEKS**

If the anticipated absence from school will extend beyond a four-week period, the student must meet with school officials to complete application forms and materials to qualify for Homebound Instruction. When a student is classified as "Homebound", she must anticipate an absence from school for more than four weeks and have a statement on file from her physician verifying the illness/condition. Once a student has been approved from homebound instruction, that student is not counted absent in calculating attendance statistics. A student will be counted absent prior to the date that homebound study has been approved.

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## **STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE PROGRAM**

The Board of Education provides an opportunity to purchase low-cost student accident insurance for all students enrolled in the schools of the Tuscaloosa County School System. The insurance program is a service to the students and may be participated in by all students on a voluntary basis. Nothing herein shall be construed about the adequacy of this coverage for any and all accidental injuries that a student may suffer including injuries sustained while participating in athletics. Neither the Board nor its Superintendent, Principals, teachers, coaches, or other school personnel are affiliated with the insurance provider. The Board may require a student in certain curricular or extracurricular areas to participate in the school accident insurance program or to file with the school Principal a notarized statement from the student's parent/guardian that said student is protected adequately against accidents that may occur while participating in said activities. Insurance is also made available for all students participating in athletics sponsored by the school. The student athlete shall pay his/her own insurance. No student athlete shall be allowed to participate in practice or games prior to providing written evidence of the school-sponsored insurance plan or the notarized parental statement form as noted above (Policy: 5.81).

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## **ABSTINENCE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

A comprehensive HIV prevention and age-appropriate abstinence education curriculum has been implemented for students in grades 5-12. The selected lessons, which contain medically accurate information, encourage students to make healthy choices and to avoid risky behavior. Key components of the program include risks of teen sexual behavior; rewards of abstinence; dangers of alcohol; relationship education; refusal skills and peer pressure; character development; and building self-esteem. Parent involvement is encouraged through parent interview exercises. Parents may contact the Director of Nursing for the Tuscaloosa County School System at (205) 342-2798 for more information about the abstinence education program.

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## STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH/WELLNESS, SAFETY SERVICES AND INFORMATION

TCSS works diligently to ensure the mental health/wellness and safety of students, staff, and families by providing intervention and prevention services, outside agency referrals, mental health awareness and training for all TCSS faculty and staff members.

### Tuscaloosa County School System Opt-In Policy for Mental Health Services by Parent or Legal Guardian

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No student under the age of fourteen may participate in ongoing school-based mental health services unless (1) the student's parent or legal guardian has submitted a written opt-in granting permission for the student to participate or (2) there is an imminent threat to the health of the student or others.

For purposes of this policy, "school-based mental health services" includes mental health services provided by outside mental health professional in the school setting, mental health screeners, or assessments related to mental health; however, it does not include instructional activities designed to educate students regarding topics related to mental health (1) contained in the school system's approved curriculum or (2) otherwise required to be taught by law (e.g., Erin's Law; Jamari Terrell Williams Act, Jason Flatt Act).

This policy is not applicable to any school counseling services or "mental health services" contained in a student's RTI, IEP, or §504 plan. Consent for those services will be obtained in accordance the specific procedures required by federal and/or state law, and information regarding any mental health services will be provided in the pertinent plan.

A. **Written Notification** – At least annually, the school system shall provide parents and/or legal guardians a written notification regarding school provided or sponsored mental health services. The notification will include the purpose and general description of each of the mental health services available; information regarding ways parents may review materials to be used in such services; and information regarding ways parents may allow, limit, or prevent their student's participation in the programs. The written notification may be provided electronically, including through the school system's online enrollment portal or by such other means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes.

B. **Opt-In To Participate in Mental Health Services** –

1. *General Requirement* – For a student under the age of fourteen to participate in school based mental health services, written permission by the student's parent or legal guardian is required annually. The written permission must be specific as to any treatment and not broad in nature. Parents and legal guardians may be provided the opportunity to opt-in electronically during online enrollment or by such other means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes.
2. *Rescinding Permission* – A parent or guardian may rescind permission for a student to participate in mental health services at any time by providing written notice to school administration
3. *Requests for Opt-In and Referrals Authorized* – If a parent or legal guardian does not initially opt-in to mental health services, school officials may contact the parent or legal guardian to (1) attempt obtain permission for the student to participate in mental health services if the school official believes that the student would benefit from services or if circumstances arise for which services could be beneficial; and/or (2) provide a parent or legal guardian with a referral or information regarding mental health services that may be available to a student through other agencies or providers.
4. *Exception for Imminent Threat* – If a parent or legal guardian has not opted-in to mental health services, a student may be referred for mental health services/assessment if there is an imminent threat to the health and safety of the student and/or others. School employees may determine in their discretion whether such an imminent threat exists and provide any referrals for mental health services/assessment they deem necessary under the circumstances.

C. **Information for Parents/Legal Guardians** – If a student's parent or legal guardian elects to opt-in to mental health services, the mental health professional providing services shall keep the parent fully informed regarding any recommendations for additional counseling or treatments beyond the services for which the parent or legal guardian has already opted in. The parent shall have the authority to make final decisions regarding any such recommended counseling and treatments.

D. **Recordkeeping** – Written records maintained by the school system and directly related to a student's mental health services will be treated in the same manner as health care records and are subject to the confidentiality protections applicable to education record generally. Such records will be available for examination and review by authorized persons in the manner prescribed and to the extent required by federal and/or state law.

Records pertaining to a student's mental health services will be kept separately from academic records unless including such record(s) in the student's academic record is necessary to implement a state and/or federal law (e.g., special education referral process).

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## SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

School Social Workers provide a focused reach to support all students specifically in areas of social, mental, emotional health and wellness. School social workers are uniquely trained to integrate the school, community, and family context into interventions and resource referrals. School social work interventions reduce barriers to learning by enabling students to be physically, mentally and emotionally present and ready to learn in their classrooms.

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## MANDATORY REPORTING IN ALABAMA – ALABAMA CODE 26-14-3

According to Alabama Law, any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected or who observes any child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse shall be required to report orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to DHR, law enforcement, or the District Attorney.

Mandatory reporters are:

- Employees of hospitals/clinics/sanitariums
  - Doctors/physicians/surgeons
  - Medical examiners/coroners
  - Dentists
  - Osteopaths
  - Optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, physical therapists, nurses
  - Public and private K-12 employees
  - School teachers and officials
  - Peace officers/law enforcement officials, pharmacists
  - Social Workers and mental health professionals
  - Child care workers or employees
  - Employees of public and private institutions of postsecondary and higher education
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## ERIN'S LAW

Governor Robert Bentley signed Erin's Law (Act 2015-456) on June 11, 2015, which requires all K-12 public schools to establish a child sexual abuse prevention instructional program for students in Pre-K through twelfth grade.

Erin's Law is an important piece of legislation because

- Every six minutes a child is sexually assaulted in the United States.
- One in four girls and one in six boys are sexually assaulted before age eighteen.
- Ninety-three percent of children know their abuser.
- Only one in ten sexually abused children tell someone.
- There are forty-two million sexual abuse survivors in America; three million are children.

Erin's Law is named after childhood sexual assault survivor, author, speaker and activist Erin Merryn, who is the founder and President of Erin's Law, which is registered with the State of Illinois and the IRS as a 501 (c)(4) non-profit social welfare organization. During her senior year in high school, Erin began her crusade to end the silence and shame around sexual abuse.

The intent around Erin's Law is to shatter the silence and stigma around child sexual abuse, and to educate children and empower them to recognize and report abuse.

Erin's Law requires that all public schools in each state implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches:

1. Students in pre-K through twelfth grade, age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and tell a trusted adult.
2. School personnel all about child sexual abuse.
3. Parents and guardians the warning signs of child sexual abuse. In addition, they learn about the assistance, referral and/or resource information available to support sexually abused children and their families.

Education in our schools is an effective method for empowering our children in order to prevent them from falling prey to sexual abuse or from staying silent if it does occur.

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## STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION (THE JASON FLATT ACT)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States. For youth between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death and the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause in Alabama. The Jason Flatt Act works within a state's requirements for in-service or Certification Training by adding youth suicide awareness and prevention as part of that state's training for educators. The Jason Flatt Act was passed in order to equip education institutions and their personnel to recognize and act on signs of suicide risk in order to provide prevention, intervention and postvention with students at risk, their families and the communities who may be affected.

The Jason Flatt Act, which amends Section 16-28B-8 of the Code of Alabama 1975, provides that "To the extent that the legislature shall appropriate funds, or to the extent that any local board may provide funds from other sources, each school system shall implement the following standards and policies for programs in an effort to prevent student suicide":

### PREVENTION OF SUICIDE

The Jason Flatt Act was passed in order to equip Alabama school districts and their personnel to recognize and act on signs of suicide risk in order to provide prevention, intervention, and postvention with students at risk, their families and the communities who may be affected. This act includes prevention of harassment and violence. School systems will:

- Develop individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention.
- Make referral, crisis intervention, and other related information available for students, parents, and school personnel.
- Provide training for school personnel who are responsible for counseling and supervising students.
- Increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide.
- Educate students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide.
- Inform students of available community suicide prevention services.

- Support cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.
- Promote school - based or community - based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.
- Develop strategies to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing.
- Engage in any other program or activity which the local board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide.
- Provide training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the local board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence.
- Educate and empower students on how to prevent suicide, harassment, intimidation, violence and threats of violence.
- Provide annual training for all certified employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may be provided within the framework of existing in-service training programs or as a part of required professional development offered by the local school system.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOR EXPECTED OF STUDENTS**

Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required to

- comply with the requirements of the law, policies, regulation(s), and rules prohibiting harassment, violence, or intimidation and
- to comply with the system's prevention strategies related to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention support.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY OF REPORTING**

Any person involved in a cause of action or omission resulting from the implementation of this suicide prevention policy or resulting from any training, or lack thereof, required by this section, shall be subject to state immunity law.

#### **PROMULGATION OF POLICY AND RELATED PROCEDURES, RULES AND FORMS**

This policy and any procedures and rules developed and approved to implement the policy will be published, disseminated, and made available to students, parents and legal guardians, and employees by such means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes, including publication on the school system's website. (Policy 5.83)

### **ANNALYN'S LAW**

Pursuant to Annalyn's Law, the Superintendent shall be notified by local law enforcement when a low risk juvenile sex offender is enrolled or attending school within the board's jurisdiction for the purpose of appropriate supervision during the school day and school activities [Ala. Act No. 2018-528, Ala. Code § 16-1-51.1 (1975)].

- The superintendent and school principal must receive notification in writing from local law enforcement when a low-risk sex offender enrolls in the district.
- If the student changes schools within the district, the principal should notify local law enforcement of the student's change of school placement.
- The current principal should notify the receiving principal orally or in writing and make them aware of the student's current safety plan.
- A meeting should be held with the student, family, and staff to review and make changes to the plan, if needed, at the new school location.
- Upon notification, the principal, as appropriate, shall follow the procedures and intervention actions detailed in the safety plan created pursuant to the act.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are extensions of classroom instruction and provide worthwhile learning opportunities for students to participate in unique and enriching educational experiences. School administrators and teachers shall develop systematic procedures for ensuring that all trips away from the school provide optimal learning opportunities for students.

The following minimal procedures shall be adhered to when conducting field trips and excursions away from school:

- Students shall be expected to exhibit good behavior and shall be subject to the same Student Code of Conduct applicable to regular classroom activities.
- Students must have a *Field Trip Parental Permission* form signed by their parents/guardians on file with school officials prior to departing on each school-sponsored field trip, except that a "blanket" permission form will be applicable for such trips that are scheduled in advance and on specific dates (i.e., athletic events, etc.). Students not submitting a signed permission form SHALL NOT be permitted to participate in such activity (Policy: 4.43).
- Students are expected to travel to and from field trip destinations with the school unless the parent/guardian has made prior arrangements with the principal. If prior arrangements have been made, a student may be released to his/her parents/guardians OR those persons listed on the student's written emergency contact list, maintained by the school. Check out procedures for the local school will be followed.

### **COMPREHENSIVE SAFE SCHOOL/CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

All schools in the Tuscaloosa County School System, with the assistance of the Alabama State Department of Education, the Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Department, the Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agency, and other community agencies, have provided contingency plans to enable their staff members to manage a crisis situation and minimize the negative effects. We are dedicated to providing schools that have a strong academic focus in which safety and order are expected. All staff, students, parents, and members of the community must be a part of creating a safe school environment.

### **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills are conducted in all schools throughout the school year. Fire exit plans are posted in each school in all rooms.

### **LOCKDOWN DRILLS**

Lockdown drills are conducted in all schools throughout the school year. Procedures for lockdown drills are developed and conducted in accordance with local and state guidelines.

### **TORNADO DRILLS**

Tornado drills are conducted in all schools throughout the school year. Procedures for tornado drills are developed and conducted in accordance with local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) guidelines.

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## **THUNDERSTORM/TORNADO WATCH**

In the event a thunderstorm watch or a tornado watch is issued for areas in which a school of the school system is located, the Principal or his/her designees of that school shall take all actions as specified in the approved EMA Plan. When a thunderstorm watch or a tornado watch is in effect at the conclusion of the normal school day, students will be released via regular dismissal and transportation plans.

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## **THUNDERSTORM WARNING**

In the event a thunderstorm warning is issued for areas in which a school of the school system is located, the Principal or his/her designees of that school shall take all actions as specified in the approved EMA Plan. Under a thunderstorm warning, students shall NOT be released via regular transportation plans (i.e., car pools, private vehicles, etc.) provided the warning is in effect at the time set for concluding normal school day activities, except that a student may be released during a thunderstorm warning ONLY to his/her parents/guardians OR those persons listed on the student's written emergency contact list, maintained by the school, provided said authorized persons come to the school and assume custody of the child.

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## **TORNADO WARNING**

In the event a tornado warning is issued for areas in which a school of the school system is located, the principal or his/her designees of that school shall take all actions as specified in the approved EMA Plan. Under a tornado warning, the front office will be closed while staff and students seek shelter. Students shall NOT be released via regular transportation plans (i.e. carpools, private vehicles, etc.) provided the warning is in effect at the time set for concluding normal school day activities. Once the tornado warning is lifted, students will be released via regular transportation plans.

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## **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In compliance with Title II, Section 206, of the *Toxic Substance Control Act of the United States*, each school is required to have on file an Asbestos Management Plan. This plan is located in the school office and is available for review upon request.

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# CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Board subscribes to the premise that the central purpose of public education is to provide each student the opportunity to develop to his/her maximum potential. To this end, the Board will encourage the development and implementation of educational programs that will educate the total student: mentally, physically, socially, emotionally, culturally, and morally. Thus, the guiding philosophical tenet of the Board in instructionally related matters will be to operate educational programs in which each student will have the opportunity to learn and to grow based on his/her abilities, interests, and motivation. The Board understands that, though all students will not learn all things equally well, all should have an equal opportunity in the pursuit of education; thus, the Board will make every attempt to balance the school system's educational programs to provide for the varied interests and needs of all students and to provide the appropriate courses required by law and by the State Board of Education policies and resolutions.

The Board maintains that curriculum development should be a continuous process that reflects the assessed needs of students in the Tuscaloosa County School System and should be based on current educational practices validated by research. The Superintendent or designee(s) shall be responsible for coordinating and maintaining the instructional program in accordance with the provisions of the State Constitution, State statutes, resolutions of the State Board of Education, and policies of the Board.

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## ACCREDITATION

The Tuscaloosa County School System is accredited by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission (NCA Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the SACS Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement).

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## KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten is available to ALL children who meet the legal age requirement. Kindergarten students are expected to follow the attendance policies of the school system.

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## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

English Language Arts Mathematics	Social Studies Reading	Physical Education Science	School Counseling Services Computer Awareness	Music Health
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## MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

English Language Arts Mathematics Science Service Electives	Social Studies Physical Education Health	Academic Electives Exploratory Electives Arts Education	School Counseling Services Career & Technical Education Four-Year Plan Development (8 <sup>th</sup> grade) *Extracurricular Activities of Athletics and Clubs
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## HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

All high school class schedules are based on a four-by-four block.

English Language Arts Mathematics Science Social Studies	Career Preparation Beginning Kinesiology Health Career & Technical Education	Arts Education Foreign Languages Physical Education Electives Academic Electives	Exploratory Electives School Counseling Services Service Electives Four-Year Plan Updated and Implemented
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## CAREER CLUSTERS, PATHWAYS, AND COURSEWORK

Career clusters in Alabama's curriculum include courses that identify academic and technical knowledge and skills needed for students to pursue a wide range of career opportunities. Courses provide rigor and relevance for students by linking school-based learning with career-related experiences. Career clusters provide the framework for what students need to know and be able to do. The sixteen clusters are agriculture, food, and natural resources; architecture and construction; arts, audio-visual technology, and communications; business management and administration; education and training; finance; government and public administration; health science; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology; law, public safety, corrections, and security; manufacturing; marketing; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and transportation, distribution, and logistics.

In Tuscaloosa County, career exploration begins in kindergarten and continues through students' senior year in high school. Bus transportation may be available for students taking career technical education courses taught at Brookwood Career Technical Education Center, Brookwood High School, Holt High School, Northport Career Tech Annex, Tuscaloosa County High School, and Tuscaloosa Career and Technology Academy (TCTA). Students may be allowed to drive personal vehicles to Brookwood Career Technical Education Center, Brookwood High School, Holt High School, Northport Career Tech Annex, Tuscaloosa County High School, and Tuscaloosa Career and Technology Academy (TCTA) pending written parental consent. For some career technical courses, such as Work-Based Learning/CO-OP and/or courses that involve leaving the school campus to participate/enroll in a learning environment with business/industry, students must provide their own transportation.

*All students who are employed through the Work-Based Learning/CO-OP Programs and/or leave the school campus to participate/enroll in a learning environment with business/industry must be prepared to adhere to industry required/OSHA standards or drug testing.*

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# PROMOTION, EARNING CREDITS, AND GRADING

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## PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY (GRADES K-5)

The process for making decisions about promotion and retention of elementary students should take into consideration a variety of factors including age, maturity, motor coordination, capacity for learning, and academic progress. The decision-making process should involve the Principal and teacher(s) with THE AUTHORITY FOR DETERMINING PROMOTION AND RETENTION RESTING ENTIRELY WITH THE TEACHER(S) AND PRINCIPAL, except that a kindergarten student may be retained only upon approval/agreement of the student's parents/guardians. If a student needs to be retained based on the teacher's opinion of the student's academic performance and/or other factors, the parents/guardians of that student should be informed as early in the school year as possible. In all cases, the decision of whether a student should be promoted or retained shall be made on the basis of which grade placement provides the student a better chance of progressing in his/her educational development.

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## PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY (GRADES 6-8)

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 must pass all four courses/subjects (English, mathematics, science, and social studies) and one additional subject. Students who do not pass the required courses/subjects each year will be retained at their current grade level with the following exceptions:

1. Students who do not meet the established criteria for promotion may be retained one time in grades 6- 8 if the student has been previously retained in grades K-5;
2. Students who do not meet the established criteria for promotion may be retained twice in grades 6-8 if the student has not been previously retained in grades K-5;
3. A student should not be retained in middle school if the student will reach his/her sixteenth birthday during the following academic year.

Students will be provided an opportunity to recover up to two courses/subjects during a summer program. Students who do not pass the required core courses/subjects for promotion are strongly encouraged to attend the summer program to pass the required course(s) for promotion. Students may be promoted only at the end of the school year or after attending the summer program. No students will be promoted at midyear.

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## PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY (GRADES 9-12)

Students must earn the minimum number of Carnegie units (credits) necessary for grade placement **above grade 9** as indicated below:

10<sup>th</sup> Grade – 5

11<sup>th</sup> Grade – 12

12<sup>th</sup> Grade – 19

Graduation (Total) – 24 (Policy: 5.26)

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## PROMOTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Promotion of any student in a special education program with the exception of gifted students must be based on the student's accomplishments of goals stated in the Individualized Education Program in conjunction with all other regular program requirements. However, a special education student (except gifted) may not be placed at any grade level unless the student has attended school for a commensurate number of years equal to the proposed grade placement; that is, for a special education student to be placed at the sixth-grade level, he/she must have been enrolled in school for at least 5 years (Policy: 5.26).

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## HIGH SCHOOL EARLY EXIT/EARLY GRADUATION

Only at the end of the first term of the senior year, but no earlier than the student's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday\*, may a student choose to graduate from high school early if the following criteria are met:

1. The High School Early Exit/Early Graduation application form must be completed and on file at the school. The student must complete Section I of the form by the end of the junior year and return it to his/her counselor. Application forms are available from the high school counselor(s).
2. The student must meet all graduation requirements, including having met a CCR Indicator.
3. The student must have completed all coursework through one or a combination of the following three methods:
  - Dual enrollment with Auburn University, Beville State Community College, Shelton State Community College, Snead State Community College, Stillman College, the University of Alabama, the University of North Alabama, and/or the University of West Alabama
  - Credit acceleration
  - Courses on the high school campus during the regular school day
4. The student must provide to the counselor one of the following documents before exiting high school:
  - Letter of acceptance to a postsecondary institution OR
  - Letter of acceptance to the military OR
  - Letter from employer verifying employment in the workplace.

The following guidelines should be considered as students and parents think through the High School Early Exit opportunity.

- Following the completion of Section IV of the High School Early Exit/Early Graduation application form, the student will be considered an alumnus, and therefore, will not be permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities or re-enroll in high school.
- Students who exit early may attend prom and participate in the graduation ceremony. It is the responsibility of the student to know all deadlines and expectations for prom and graduation.
- Students who exit early will not be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian. In addition, no high school master schedules will be adjusted to accommodate a student who wishes to exit early.

**\*Every child between the ages of six and seventeen years shall be required to enroll in school and to attend for the entire length of each scholastic year.**

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## CREDIT IMPROVEMENT (GRADES 9-12)

Credit improvement allows students who may need or want to take a course for additional credit an opportunity to do so. Students may attempt credit improvement through advancing credit, obtaining credit, recovering credit and/or repeating credit. The alternative academic and administrative options at GRAD Academy, Project BETHEL, SPAN and the TCSS Homebound Education Program also utilize credit improvement opportunities for the students.

Admission and eligibility requirements of various organizations are subject to change, and it is the student's responsibility to consult with outside organizations such as universities, the AHSAA, NCAA, etc. to determine how credits earned through credit improvement (advancing credit, obtaining credit, recovering credit and repeating credit) might affect eligibility, admissions, or status.

A credit improvement application is required for participation. The application may be requested from the school. The application must be signed by the parent or guardian, the student, and the high school counselor or administrator.

Credit improvement incorporates the use of technology and curriculum provided through one (or a combination) of the following:

- **ACCESS (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educations and Students Statewide) Virtual Learning** – For more specific information, students should contact their school counselors or visit the ACCESS Virtual Learning website at <http://accessdl.state.al.us/>  
NOTE: The NCAA reviews ACCESS courses. The list of courses may be found at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). The six-digit CEEB/ACT Code for ACCESS Virtual Learning is 011919. Credit Recovery/Credit Advancement courses available through ACCESS are NOT accepted by the NCAA for eligibility purposes.
- **EDGENUITY** – Edgenuity is provided by the Tuscaloosa County School System. Specific courses offered through Edgenuity are approved by NCAA. There is a cost associated with these courses.
- **CORRESPONDENCE/INDEPENDENT STUDY** – Students in grades 9-12 may be approved to take correspondence or independent study courses for credit. Such courses must be offered through institutions recognized by the Alabama State Department of Education or from institutions accredited by a national accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Office of Education. Prior written approval for each correspondence/independent study course must be granted by the school Principal. Correspondence work may be taken only when the curricular offerings deny a student a course he/she particularly needs. It is the student's responsibility to consult with outside organizations such as universities, the AHSAA, NCAA, etc. to determine how credits earned through correspondence/independent study might affect eligibility, admissions, or status.
- **DUAL ENROLLMENT** - Dual enrollment allows eligible high school students to earn credit for a college course on both their high school and college transcripts.

### **CREDIT ACCELERATION – ADVANCING CREDIT**

This program allows students who already know most of the standards taught in a particular course and who are not currently enrolled in the course to prove mastery of course content by successfully completing a pretest and posttest in that subject. Students may attempt credit advancement in math, English, science (excluding biology, physical science and chemistry as directed by the ALSDE), social studies and elective classes.

The tests used for credit advancement are locally approved computer-based or paper-pencil exams. Students interested in attempting credit advancement should contact their high school's academic advisor to schedule an appointment. All computer-based credit advancement exams will be given on an electronic device—at the high school. Both computer-based and paper-pencil exams will be proctored by the principal's designee at the high school. There is no fee to participate in credit advancement.

Parent permission is required to participate in credit advancement. The permission form may be obtained from each high school. This form must be signed by the parent or guardian, the student, the high school counselor, and high school principal.

Credit advancement exams can be taken within the first five days of each semester, the last ten days of each semester, and during the month of June. Students attempting credit advancement will take a pretest for the course. If the student earns at least an 80 on the pretest, then he/she will take a comprehensive posttest. The student will need to schedule an appointment to take the posttest. The posttest must be taken within one week of the results of the pretest being released to the student. Students are permitted to take the posttest on the same day as the pretest if an appointment to do so is available. If the student makes at least an 80 on the posttest, then he/she will receive credit for the course. The final grade earned on the pretest and the posttest will be averaged. The numeric average will serve as the final grade and will be posted directly to the transcript in a separate column indicating that the credit was earned through credit advancement. Credit advancement courses are not weighted. If the student earns below an 80 on the pretest, then he/she is not eligible to take the posttest or to receive credit for the course.

There is not a limit on the number of credits that a student can earn through credit advancement; however, students will be permitted to attempt credit advancement only one time per course. All rising ninth grade through twelfth grade Tuscaloosa County School System students are eligible to attempt credit advancement.

**Any credit obtained for a course through this program is not approved by NCAA.**

### **CREDIT ACCELERATION – OBTAINING CREDIT**

Students who may need or want to take a course for additional credit may participate in this program. Students can attempt credit obtainment in math, English, science, social studies and elective classes. Unlike credit advancement, students will take the course in its entirety; therefore, a pretest will not be administered. Credit obtainment is an alternative to the traditional approach to course completion. Using this program, students must take the entire course and the course is not weighted. There is not a limit on the number of credits that a student can earn through this program.

Students eligible for credit obtainment will:

- Be a transfer student whose deficit in the required credit(s) is not due to failure of the course OR
- Be a student who exhibits the desire to earn more than the traditional credits allotted in the school year

**Whether or not a credit obtained for a course through this program is approved by NCAA depends on how the instruction is provided.**

**RECOVERING CREDIT**

In accordance with guidelines established by the Alabama State Department of Education, the Tuscaloosa County School System offers students who have received failing grades in courses that are required for graduation an opportunity to recover the lost credit through a standards-based approach that will target specific knowledge and skill deficits instead of requiring students to repeat the entire course.

In order to be accepted students will

- Have an overall average of 40-59 in the course they seek to recover credit;
- Only complete the standards from the course that caused them to fail. The identification of the standards that caused the student to fail is performed through a computer-based course and skill-specific diagnostic tool. This prevents the student from having to redo the entire course and allows them to recover the lost credit in a much shorter time frame;
- Provide their own transportation to credit recovery classes when attending the after-school sessions;
- Pay \$100.00 course fee (NOTE: Fees are subject to change.)

The maximum grade a student can receive in Credit Recovery is a 60. The original failing grade shall stay on the permanent record and be included in computing the student's overall Grade Point Average. The credit recovery grade shall be included in computing the student's overall Grade Point Average.

Transfer students from non-AdvancED accredited schools who fail the validation tests with a score of 40-59 for any core courses are also eligible for Credit Recovery.

**Any credit obtained for a course through this program is not approved by NCAA.**

**REPEATING CREDIT**

This program is primarily for those students who made less than a 40 in the class they failed. Using this program, students must retake the entire course. Instruction may be provided traditionally or non-traditionally. Also, students who are eligible for Credit Recovery, but want to try and achieve higher than a 60 on their transcript for a course they failed may choose this option because students will be expected to complete all objectives from the course they failed.

**Whether or not a credit obtained for a course through this program is approved by NCAA depends on how the instruction is provided. For example, a course taken through ACCESS Virtual Learning is approved by NCAA, but a course taken through Edgenuity is currently not approved by NCAA.**

**VIRTUAL LEARNING PROGRAM**

Through the TCSS Virtual Learning Program, the Tuscaloosa County School System provides students in grades 9-12 the option to complete courses by way of an online, virtual platform through ACCESS Virtual Learning. The virtual courses, which align with the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards, offer students the benefits of time, flexibility and program customization. Students who utilize the virtual program also assume increased responsibility in personal time management, organization, self-direction, and personal discipline to complete course and school requirements. A direct link to the TCSS Virtual Learning Program Handbook may be found in the Students & Families Section of [www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net). (Policy 4.88)

**SUMMER PROGRAMS****SUMMER PROGRAM -CREDIT IMPROVEMENT (GRADES 9-12)**

The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education may operate summer programs when needed to serve the educational goals of the Tuscaloosa County School System. All summer sessions will comply with Alabama law and current administrative code. The following procedures apply to the operation of summer schools by the Tuscaloosa County School System:

1. Prior to enrolling in a summer program course, the student must obtain written permission for each class from his or her principal or the principal's designee. Credits earned without prior approval of the principal or the principal's designee will not be recognized.
2. Summer program course content is determined by the Alabama Course of Study/Alabama College and Career Ready Standards for the particular course; mastery of the course content is determined by the teacher in the same manner as for a course taught during the regular school year.
3. A student shall not earn credit toward graduation for a course that duplicates course content for which credit has already been awarded. A student shall not earn credit toward graduation for a course whose content is subsumed by a course for which credit has already been awarded. 290-3-1-02(8)(c)1-2 (Policy: 5.26)

**SUMMER PROGRAM (GRADES 6-8)**

Summer program courses are intended for makeup work only. Failed courses must be retaken on a course-by-course basis. A student who does not pass course work may attend an Alabama State Department of Education approved summer program. The following procedures apply to the operation of summer programs by the Tuscaloosa County School System:

1. A student may make up no more than two (2) courses in any given summer program session.
2. Students must obtain the written permission of the school principal or the principal's designee to enroll in summer program courses. (Policy: 5.26)

**DETERMINING PROMOTION AND RETENTION USING SUMMER SCHOOL CREDIT (GRADES 6-12)**

Summer school grades may not be averaged with regular school year grades to determine passage or failure of a course or a portion of a course. Promotion and retention determinations for students are made by the appropriate school staff in accordance with Policy 5.26.

**SUMMER PROGRAM AVAILABILITY AND COSTS (GRADES 6-12)**

The Tuscaloosa County School System receives no funding for summer programs; therefore, the costs associated with the operation of summer programs shall be borne by the enrolled students.

**ERRORS AND OMISSIONS (GRADES 6-12)**

The student and parent(s) or guardian(s) are to be held responsible for errors in subject selection and appropriate approvals unless the above procedures are followed.

**UNIFORM GRADING SCALE**

A numerical system will be used as the uniform grading scale. The key to grades should be listed on the report cards and permanent records. Each teacher should have a minimum of one grade per week (homework, daily work, tests, etc.) for each week in a grading period. Grades may not vary from this scale (Policy: 4.71).

**A = 90 – 100%**

**B = 80 – 89%**

**C = 70 – 79%**

**D = 60 – 69%**

**F = 0 – 59%**

## REPORT CARDS

Reports cards are for transmitting an evaluation of student progress to the student and his/her parents/guardians. Report cards and progress reports for elementary, middle, and high schools will be issued at least four (4) times during the scholastic year. (Policy: 4.71). Teachers should have a minimum of one weekly grade (homework, daily assignments, tests, etc.) for each student in each grading period.

Evaluation Procedures for students in grades K-2 (primary grades) shall reflect developmentally appropriate practice and the understanding that the time required for mastery of basic skills may vary due to many developmental factors. Therefore, Primary Progress Reports indicating the degree of mastery of identified skills and academic content shall be issued to students in grades K, 1 and 2. Letter grades shall not be assigned to students in grades K, 1 and 2.

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## POWERSCHOOL PARENT PORTAL

The PowerSchool Parent Portal provides parents and students with a way to check grades, assignments, attendance, and discipline using the internet. To use the program, you must first register for an account on the PowerSchool Parent Portal website. To access the site, go to <https://tuscaloosaco.powerschool.com/public/>. The PowerSchool Parent Portal can be accessed through any device with internet access, including smartphones and iPads.

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## FINAL COURSE GRADE (GRADES 9-12)

### HALF-CREDIT, ONE NINE-WEEK COURSES

For one-half credit, one nine-week grading period courses, a mandatory comprehensive exam will be administered at the end of the nine-week grading period. For half-credit, one nine-week grading period courses, the nine-weeks average will count as 80% of the final grade and the comprehensive final exam will count as 20% of the **final grade**.

Mandatory comprehensive final examinations are administered to all students except those students meeting the exemption criteria. The final course grade for students in grades 9-12 who meet exemption criteria will be determined from the nine weeks grade.

### ONE-CREDIT, TWO NINE-WEEK COURSES

For one credit, two nine-week grading period courses, a mandatory comprehensive nine-weeks exam will be administered at the end of the first nine-week grading period. The weight assigned to the comprehensive exam will be determined by the teacher of the course and will not exceed 20% of the nine-week grade. The comprehensive final exam administered at the conclusion of the course will count 20% of the final grade for the course. The first nine-weeks grade will count as 40% of the final grade, the second nine-weeks grade will count as 40% of the final grade, and the comprehensive final exam will count as 20% of the final grade.

Mandatory comprehensive final examinations are administered to all students except those students meeting the exemption criteria. The final course grade for students in grades 9-12 who meet exemption criteria will be determined from the average of the two nine weeks' grades.

### ONE-CREDIT, FOUR NINE-WEEK COURSES

For one credit, four nine-week grading period courses, mandatory comprehensive exams will be administered at the end of the first, second, and third nine-week grading periods. The weight assigned to each comprehensive exam will be determined by the teacher of the course and will not exceed 20% of the nine-week grade. The comprehensive final exam administered at the conclusion of the course will count 20% of the final grade for the course. The sum of the four nine weeks' averages will be added to the course final exam grade. This total will be divided by five to get the course final grade.

Mandatory comprehensive final examinations are administered to all students except those students meeting the exemption criteria. The final course grade for students in grades 9-12 who meet exemption criteria will be determined from the average of the four nine weeks' grades.

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## DROPPING COURSES

A student may withdraw from a course during the first four (4) days of the course with the permission of the Principal. Schedules will not be changed after the fourth day of the term/semester. A fee of \$10.00 is required for any schedule change initiated by the student. No schedule changes will be made in contradiction to teacher recommendations. No schedule may be obtained by a student until all monies owed to the school (e.g., lost textbooks, library fines) are paid.

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# REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL EXAMINATIONS

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## REQUIRED EXAMINATIONS – SCHOOL GENERATED

The periodic use of teacher-made examinations assists school system personnel in evaluating student learning and achievement and provides a means for assessing the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process in the schools. Hence, the Board encourages teachers to ensure that students are provided with meaningful opportunities to engage in the preparation for and completion of comprehensive examinations.

Comprehensive exams must be administered at the end of each nine-week grading period in all courses. Comprehensive exams may not be given early.

The grade earned on each comprehensive nine-week exam (excluding the comprehensive final exam administered during the conclusion of the last nine-weeks of a course) shall be used in calculating each nine-week grade. The weight assigned to each comprehensive nine-week exam will be determined by the teacher of the course and will not exceed 20% of the nine-week grade.

### Grades 6-8

The comprehensive final exam administered at the conclusion of the course will count ten percent (10%) of **final grade** for the course. Written examinations or other assessment techniques which measure student mastery of the content may be used. Assessments may include portfolios, products, performances, research papers, or projects.

### Grades 9-12

The comprehensive final exam administered at the conclusion of the course will count twenty percent (20%) of **final grade** for the course. Written examinations or other assessment techniques which measure student mastery of the content may be used. Assessments may include portfolios, products, performances, research papers, or projects.

Teachers should have a minimum of one weekly grade (homework, daily assignments, tests, etc.) for each student in each grading period.

### EXAM EXEMPTION (GRADES 9-12) FOR ONE-HALF CREDIT ONE NINE-WEEKS COURSES

In order to be exempt from a final exam at the end of a one-half credit, one nine-weeks grading period course, a 9-12 grade student must

- Possess an A (90-100) average with 3 or fewer absences, or
- Possess a B (80-89) average with 2 or fewer absences, or
- Possess a C (70-79) average with 1 or fewer absences, **AND**
- Have no discipline referrals that result in detention, in-school intervention, or suspension during the term/semester.

The final course grade for students in grades 9-12 who meet exemption criteria will be the average of the one nine-week grading period.

### EXAM EXEMPTION (GRADES 9-12) FOR ONE-HALF CREDIT AND ONE CREDIT TWO NINE-WEEK COURSES

In order to be exempt from a final exam at the end of a one-half credit, two nine-week grading period course and/or a one credit, two nine-week grading period course, a 9-12 grade student must

- Possess an A (90-100) average with 3 or fewer unexcused absences, or
- Possess a B (80-89) average with 2 or fewer unexcused absences, or
- Possess a C (70-79) average with 1 or fewer unexcused absences, **AND**
- Have no discipline referrals that result in detention, in-school intervention, or suspension during the term/semester.

The final course grade for students in grades 9-12 who meet exemption criteria will be determined from the average of the two nine-week grading period for a full credit course and from the one nine-weeks grade for a one-half credit course.

### EXAM EXEMPTION (GRADES 9-12) FOR ONE CREDIT FOUR NINE-WEEK COURSES

In order to be exempt from a final exam at the end of a one credit, four nine-week grading period course, a 9-12 grade student must

- Possess an A (90-100) average with 6 or fewer unexcused absences, or
- Possess a B (80-89) average with 4 or fewer unexcused absences, or
- Possess a C (70-79) average with 2 or fewer unexcused absences, **AND**
- Have no discipline referrals that result in detention, in-school intervention, or suspension during the school year.

The final course grade for students in grades 9-12 who meet exemption criteria will be determined from the average of the four nine-week grading periods for a full credit course.

### EXAM EXEMPTION (GRADES 6-8) FOR ONE SEMESTER TWO NINE-WEEK COURSE

In order to be exempt from a final exam at the end of a one semester, two nine-week grading period course a 6-8 grade student must

- Possess an A (90-100) average with 3 or fewer unexcused absences, or
- Possess a B (80-89) average with 2 or fewer unexcused absences, or
- Possess a C (70-79) average with 1 or fewer unexcused absences, **AND**
- Have no discipline referrals that result in detention, in-school intervention, or suspension during the term/semester.

The final course grade for students in grades 6-8 who meet exemption criteria will be determined from the average of the two nine-week grading periods.

### EXAM EXEMPTION (GRADES 6-8) FOR ONE YEAR FOUR NINE-WEEK COURSE

In order to be exempt from a final exam at the end of a one credit, four nine-week grading period course, a 6-8 grade student must

- Possess an A (90-100) average with 6 or fewer unexcused absences, or
- Possess a B (80-89) average with 4 or fewer unexcused absences, or
- Possess a C (70-79) average with 2 or fewer unexcused absences, **AND**
- Have no discipline referrals that result in detention, in-school intervention, or suspension during the school year.

The final course grade for students in grades 6-8 who meet exemption criteria will be determined from the average of the four nine-week grading periods.

## REQUIRED EXAMINATIONS – SYSTEM AND STATE GENERATED

In addition to the exams administered by the teachers of the course, the Tuscaloosa County School System administers formative and benchmark assessments. In addition, the Tuscaloosa County School System administers all summative assessments mandated by the Alabama State Department of Education.

### **Civics Test (Grade 12)**

According to Senate Bill 32, all Alabama graduating seniors must pass the Civics test. The locally developed Civics test must use items that are published annually by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – along with state and local history, government, and geography components of the high school curriculum. The Civics Test is administered through the U.S. Government/Economics class.

**Two assessments required by the Alabama State Department of Education and/or the Tuscaloosa County School System to help systems determine students' college and career readiness are the ACT plus Writing and the ACT WorkKeys.**

### **PreACT (Grade 10)**

All tenth-grade students take the *PreACT* in the Fall of 2024. The *PreACT* test provides students with practice for the ACT test and measures progress towards college readiness. The *PreACT* score and predicted ACT score ranges align to the ACT 1-36 scale. Students may opt to share their information with colleges and scholarship agencies. The *ACT Interest Inventory* results provide students with a personalized view of interests with college and career alignment. The valuable results from these tools provide actionable insights to help educators, parents and students make important decisions for the future.

### **ACT plus Writing (Grade 11)**

Eleventh grade students in the Tuscaloosa County School System take the *ACT plus Writing* on in the Spring of 2025. This provides all students one opportunity to test at their local school free of charge. The *ACT plus Writing* assessment contains four curriculum-based tests that measure academic achievement in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning as well as a component to measure a student's writing skills. The assessment measures academic development based upon a student's skills in applying content knowledge and reasoning skills acquired in his or her course work. *ACT plus Writing* is an assessment used for college admission. **More information, including additional testing dates and sample test questions, may be found at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).**

In addition, the Alabama State Department of Education provides all high school juniors, free of charge, ***ACT's online prep program***. This online service provides students with practice tests with real ACT test questions, practice essays for the ACT Writing Test (with real-time scoring), comprehensive content review for each of the ACT's four required tests—English, Math, Reading, and Science, a diagnostic test and a personalized study plan. The website to access this program is [www.actonlineprep.org](http://www.actonlineprep.org). See your school counselor for more information.

### **ACT Fee Waivers for National Test Dates**

Students testing on a national test date and who cannot afford the registration fee for the ACT or ACT with Writing, may be eligible for an ACT Fee Waiver.

Students must meet **all** of the following requirements:

1. Currently enrolled in high school in the 11th or 12th grade.
2. Either a United States citizen or testing in the US, US territories, or Puerto Rico.
3. Meet one or more indicators of economic need listed on the ACT Fee Waiver form.

Eligible students may use a maximum of **four** separate fee waivers – two to be used in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade; two to be used in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The waivers can be used in any combination – full test or specific subject area retest. The waiver is used once students register, even if they do not test on the requested test date.

### **ACT WorkKeys (Grade 12)**

Twelfth grade students in the Tuscaloosa County School System will take the *ACT WorkKeys* in the Fall of 2024. *ACT WorkKeys* is a job skills assessment system that helps employers select, hire, train, develop, and retain a high-performance workforce. As part of ACT's Work Readiness System, *ACT WorkKeys* has helped students build their skills to increase global competitiveness and develop successful career pathways. Successful completion of *ACT WorkKeys* assessments in Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information can lead to earning ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a portable credential. *All seniors have access to ACT WorkKeys Curriculum online to assist with preparation for success on this assessment.* In addition, the Alabama State Department of Education provides all high school students, free of charge, ACT WorkKeys Curriculum. This complete interactive online training system is designed to help users reach foundational career readiness, enhance users' cognitive skills, and offer introductory models based on the National Career Clusters Framework. The courses are based on the same skills and skill progressions found in the [ACT WorkKeys](http://www.act.org) assessment system.

## OPTIONAL COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS EXAMINATIONS

### **PSAT – National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test**

The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) is the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) that measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. By taking the PSAT, students can become familiar with the SAT and see how their scores on a college entrance exam compare nationally with other students applying to college. Students in 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade may take the test for practice. Students must test during their junior year to be considered for National Merit Scholarships. Being selected as a National Merit Scholar is one of the highest academic honors that a student may earn. **The PSAT will be administered at participating high schools during a window in the month of October. Students must register with their school counselors at least six weeks prior to the test date. Payment (\$18) is required at the time the student registers for the test.** More information about PSAT, including sample test questions, can be found at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

### **PSAT 8/9**

The PSAT 8/9 is a test that helps students and their teachers figure out what the students need to work on most so that they are ready for college when they graduate from high school. It tests the same skills and knowledge as the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, and PSAT 10 — in a way that makes sense for their grade level. Schools choose a Fall date between late September 2024 and late January 2025, or a Spring date between late February 2025 and early March 2025. The PSAT 8/9 establishes a baseline measurement of the students' college and career readiness as they enter high school. It also gives students a chance to preview the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, and PSAT 10 and connect to AP courses. When students get their test results, they may connect their College Board and [Khan Academy](http://www.khanacademy.com)® accounts to get free personalized study recommendations.

### **SAT and SAT Subject Tests**

The SAT and SAT Subject Tests are a set of tools designed to assess student's academic readiness for college. More information about the SAT and SAT Subject Tests, including sample test questions, may be found at <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>.

### **ASVAB**

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military. More information about the ASVAB, including sample test questions, may be found at [www.official-asvab.com](http://www.official-asvab.com).

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## DIGITAL DEVICE POLICY IN A STANDARDIZED TESTING SETTING

The possession of a digital device (including but not limited to cell phones, watches, MP3 players, cameras, or other telecommunication devices capable of capturing or relaying information) is **strictly prohibited** during the administration of a secure test. If a student is **observed in possession** of a digital device during the administration of a secure test, the device will be confiscated. If a student is **observed using** a digital device during the administration of a secure test, testing for the student will cease, the device will be confiscated and is subject to search, the student will be dismissed from testing, and the student's test will be invalidated. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by the school system.

### GUIDELINES FOR THE SEARCH OF DIGITAL DEVICE SEIZED DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF A SECURE TEST:

- Assuming that a student is observed in the possession of or use of a digital device during the administration of a secure test, the device will be confiscated by the test administrator. "Smart phones" should temporarily be turned off to help prevent any remote-access data-wipe.
  - The test administrator should deliver the device as soon as practicable to a school administrator.
  - A "chain of custody" list should be kept to record everyone who had possession of the device and when the device was transferred to someone else. The device should be stored by the school administrator in a secure location until the next step is taken.
  - For the purposes of determining whether a search of a digital device should take place, the school administrator should:
    - Learn the facts regarding the seizure of the device from the test administrator, and
    - Determine whether it is reasonable under all the circumstances to believe that the student could have been using the device to cheat or for some other unpermitted purpose.
  - If the school administrator determines that the student was merely in possession of the digital device then it may be returned to the student in accordance with the Tuscaloosa County School System's procedure.
  - If the school administrator believes that it is reasonable to suspect that the student was using the device for an impermissible purpose then he or she may search the device, limiting the search to only what is necessary to reasonably determine whether the student was cheating, copying secure test information, or violating a school rule.
  - The school administrator should follow the local policy requirements regarding the search of student property.
  - If no wrongful activity is discovered on the device then it may be returned to the student in accordance with the Tuscaloosa County School System's procedure.
  - If wrongful activity is discovered on the device regarding the test at issue or, if other wrongful activity is inadvertently discovered on the device, then the school administrator should secure the device by storing it in a locked and secure location, turn off the device's network connectivity, then notify the Director of Assessment or Superintendent as appropriate.
  - Following a search in which wrongful activity is discovered, and when the device is a "smart phone," the device should be turned off after the search to help prevent a potential remote-access data-wipe.
  - Any disciplinary actions should be taken in accordance with the school system's disciplinary policy.
  - Test irregularity reports should be completed in accordance with the Alabama State Department of Education's student assessment handbook.
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# COURSE TEXTBOOKS, DEVICES, AND FEES

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEXTBOOKS AND SCHOOL PROVIDED TECHNOLOGY

All textbooks and electronic devices (i.e. e-readers, laptops, etc...) that are furnished free of charge to all students are the property of the State of Alabama and /or the Board. A receipt shall be signed by each student upon textbook issuance by school officials. Parents/guardians are responsible for every free textbook and other materials issued to their children. **Parents/guardians of any student to whom free textbooks, electronic devices or other materials are issued shall be held liable for any loss, abuse, or damage in excess of that which would result from normal use of such textbooks and materials.**

## PAYMENT FOR LOST/DAMAGED TEXTBOOKS AND SCHOOL PROVIDED TECHNOLOGY

The amount of payment for lost or damaged textbooks and school provided technology will be determined by the following schedule:

### LOST OR DAMAGED TEXTBOOKS

1st year.....	Original cost
2nd year .....	75% of original cost
3rd year .....	50% of original cost
4th year .....	25% of original cost
5th year and beyond.....	25% of original cost

### LOST OR DAMAGED SCHOOL PROVIDED TECHNOLOGY

1st year.....	Original cost not to exceed \$1,000.00 – Act 94-819
2nd year .....	75% of original cost
3rd year .....	50% of original cost
4th year .....	25% of original cost
5th year and beyond.....	25% of original cost

When unusual or excessive damage is evident, charges may be assessed up to but not to exceed the original cost (Policy: 4.21).

## STUDENT FEES

### ELEMENTARY GRADES

In accordance with law, no fees of any kind shall be mandated for collection from students attending kindergarten through grade five. Voluntary contributions may be solicited, Grades K-5, only upon approval of the local school Principal.

### GRADES 6-12

Reasonable fees may be charged for courses that are not required by the State Course of Study for graduation in grades 6-12. Reasonable fees may be charged for project-based learning (i.e. Academic Scholars Program in middle schools) throughout the school year.

### SYSTEM-WIDE COURSE FEE SCHEDULE

In order that the student course fees be consistent among the schools of the Tuscaloosa County School System, the curriculum committee will meet periodically to develop a consistent System-Wide schedule of student fees to be considered and voted upon by the Board. In all cases, it shall be the procedure of the Board that student fees will be held to a minimum.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES

Students shall not be assessed fees for the purpose of supporting general student activities. Individual clubs may assess fees directly associated with club activities when approved by the school Principal, club sponsor, and members. Participation in and financial support of student activities shall be on a voluntary basis by all students. All fees to support student activities shall be approved by the local school principal, the activity sponsor, and club members.

## FEES FOR ELECTIVE COURSES—AUTHORIZED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Fees for elective courses must be paid at the time of schedule pick-up. Some schools may allow for prepayment of fees or the payment of a deposit on fees at the time schedule cards are returned or before school is out for the current year. Contact the school Principal to discuss any difficulty with fee payments. Current fees approved by the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education are listed in the current course catalog.

### FEE REFUND SCHEDULE

Reason for Refund	Percentage Refunded Based on Length of Time Enrolled in Course		
	1 to 3 Weeks	4 to 6 Weeks	7 to 9 Weeks
Course Dropped	100%	0	0
In-System Transfer	100%	75%	50%
Out-of-System Transfer	100%	75%	50%

NOTE: No refunds are granted for last 6 weeks of course (both one term/semester and yearlong courses).

### FEE ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

Enrollment Status	Percentage Assessed Based on Length of Time Enrolled in Course		
	1 to 3 Weeks	4 to 6 Weeks	7 to 9 Weeks
In-System Transfer	100%	75%	50%
New Student to System	100%	75%	50%

NOTE: No fee is charged for last 6 weeks of course (both one term/semester and yearlong courses).

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# PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

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## RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION (RTI) AND PROBLEM-SOLVING TEAMS (PSTs)

The purpose of Response to Instruction (RTI) is to improve educational outcomes for all students. Specifically, RTI provides early intervention to struggling learners in general education settings. RTI provides a continuum of evidence-based, tiered interventions with increasing levels of intensity and duration. The central components of RTI provide procedures that will assist Problem Solving Teams (PSTs) in their team meetings, data collection, and monitoring of a student's response to instruction. Response to Instruction is defined as an instructional framework that promotes a well-integrated system connecting general, gifted, supplemental, and special education services in providing high quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students' academic, social emotional, and behavioral needs. RTI combines core instruction, assessment, and intervention within a multi-tiered system to increase student achievement and reduce behavior problems (ALSDE, 2009).

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## CHILD FIND – SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires all school districts serving children with disabilities to develop and implement procedures that ensure that all children within their jurisdiction, birth to twenty-one, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who need special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. Child Find also applies to children with disabilities who attend private schools, including children attending religious schools, within the district's jurisdiction, highly mobile children with disabilities (e.g., migrant children), homeless children, or children who are wards of the State, and children who are suspected of having a disability and are in need of special education, even though they have not failed, been retained in a course or grade or are advancing from grade to grade. If your child is birth-five and you suspect your child has a disability and may require special education services, please contact the Tuscaloosa County Special Education Department at (205) 342-2772. If you suspect your school age child has a disability and may require Special Education services, please contact your child's local school.

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## GIFTED SERVICES

Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations across all economic strata and in all areas of human endeavor. A student may be referred and considered for gifted services by school personnel, parents/guardians, or self. All second-grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist. For each student referral, information is gathered in the following three areas:

**Aptitude** – Aptitude is assessed through an individual or group test of intelligence or creativity.

**Characteristics** – A behavior rating scale designed to assess gifted behaviors is completed.

**Performance** – At least three indicators of performance at a gifted level must be evaluated. These may include, but are not limited to, achievement test scores, grades, products, work samples, and/or portfolios.

The scores from the assessments used are entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to criteria established by the Alabama State Department of Education. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services.

Gifted services for elementary students in grades K-2 in the Tuscaloosa County School System consist of regular classroom accommodations with consultation from a gifted teacher. The general education teacher will consult with the gifted teacher for differentiation to meet the special needs of gifted students. Gifted services for elementary students in grades 3-5 in the Tuscaloosa County School System will be school-based. Pullout services will be provided by certified teachers in gifted education for a minimum of 3 hours per week.

Sixth grade students who have been identified as gifted will have the opportunity to continue in the GATE program through the Creative Expressions 6-GATE course. This course will explore a variety of rigorous and creative critical-thinking topics and activities. Gifted services will be provided through the Academic Scholars Program for students in the seventh through eighth grades. Consultation will be provided by a gifted teacher.

Gifted services for high school students in the Tuscaloosa County School System are student selected and may include any or all of the following: dual enrollment or early college admission, advanced level classes, honors courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, independent study, and cooperative education placements.

For more information about gifted services for students in the Tuscaloosa County School System, please contact any school Principal, the Coordinator of Elementary Special Education at (205) 342-2789, the Coordinator of Secondary Special Education at (205) 342-2735, or the Director of Special Education at (205) 342-2756.

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## SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Special education services are provided for exceptional students in accordance with the federal and state mandates concerning education for students with disabilities.

Procedures for evaluation and eligibility are provided to each school within the system. Alabama State Department of Education criteria is used to determine a student's eligibility in one of the following areas of special education:

Autism	Gifted	Other Health Impairment
Deaf/Blindness	Specific Learning Disability	Speech and Language Impairment
Developmental Delay	Intellectual Disability	Traumatic Brain Injury
Emotional Disability	Multiple Disabilities	Visual Impairment
Hearing Impairment	Orthopedic Impairment	

Cooperative agreements and contracts are made with other service agencies to provide services that enhance the educational progress of exceptional students. Information regarding referral procedures and/or classes may be obtained from the Department of Special Education by telephoning (205) 342-2775.

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## CHILD FIND – SECTION 504 SERVICES

The Tuscaloosa County School System has a duty to locate, evaluate and identify any child residing in the district who qualifies for Section 504 accommodations or services. Children eligible for Section 504 accommodations or services include those children who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. If you suspect your child has a disability and may require Section 504 accommodations, or if you would like additional information, please contact your child's teacher or call the Director of Student Services at (205) 342-2754.

## SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

The intent of the law is to keep students and parents fully informed concerning decisions about identification and placement and to inform students and parents of their rights.

The Director of Student Services is the Section 504 Coordinator for the Tuscaloosa County School System and is responsible for assuring that the school system complies with requirements outlined in Section 504 concerning students with disabilities. Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with qualifying disabilities have the right to receive a free appropriate public education, which includes the right to an education with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

In particular, the enabling regulations for Section 504, as set out in 34 CFR Part 104, provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

- Your child has the right to an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment that is designed to meet his/her individual education needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.
- Your child has the right to free educational services, except for those fees that are imposed on nondisabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student.
- Your child has a right to nondiscrimination and to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for nondisabled students.
- Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to an initial Section 504 placement and any subsequent significant change of placement.
- Placement decisions must be made by a group of persons (i.e., the Section 504 committee), including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities.
- You have the right to examine relevant records prior to any action by the District in regard to the identification evaluation, or placement of your child upon request.
- You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the District's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement. You have the right to participate and be represented by an attorney at your expense.
- You have the right to obtain copies of your child's educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.
- You have the right to receive a response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.
- You have the right to request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child.
- You may challenge the actions of the District's Section 504 Committee in regard to your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, by filing a complaint with the District's Section 504 Coordinator within 30 calendar days from the time you received written notice of the Section 504 Committee's actions(s). A due process hearing will be scheduled before an impartial hearing officer and you will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place for the hearing. You have the right to participate in the hearing and to be represented by counsel if you choose. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer, you have a right to request a review of the decision in a court of competent jurisdiction.
- On Section 504 matters other than your child's identification, evaluation, and/or placement, you likewise have a right to file a complaint with the District's Section 504 Coordinator, who will investigate the allegations to the extent warranted by the nature of the complaint in an effort to reach a prompt and equitable resolution.
- You have a right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights. The contact information is as follows: Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 61 Forsyth Street S.W., Suite 19T70, Atlanta, GA 30303-3104. Telephone: (404) 562-6350. Fax: (404) 562-6455. Email: [OCR.Atlanta@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Atlanta@ed.gov).

## ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

The Tuscaloosa County School System expands the learning options available to intellectually gifted and highly motivated students by offering additional opportunities for creative and analytical educational experiences. These opportunities include the Academic Scholars Program, advanced level classes, honors courses, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses and electives, and Early Admission/Dual Enrollment College Credit Programs.

The high school students are served through advanced level courses. The curriculum requirements of the Alabama High School Diploma with Academic Distinction (graduating classes of 2019 and beyond) offer exciting options for students who want, and need, the most challenging courses available. Academically talented students may take college-level courses for college credit upon recommendation. Some college-bound students may choose to take these courses as an intensive preparation for college work. Advanced Placement examinations are provided for students whose goal is college credit. Examination results are sent to individual colleges or universities for use in determining student placement. Dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities are available to eligible senior high students. High school students with special talents in fine arts, sports, leadership, or other areas may select from among a variety of elective courses according to their individual needs and preferences.

## COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES – ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) AND HONORS

Advanced Placement (AP) and honors coursework provides students with an opportunity for learning that goes beyond just the facts and figures. The rich course material, classroom discussions, and demanding assignments typical of AP and honors courses will help students develop the content mastery and critical thinking skills expected of college students. AP and honors courses help students improve their writing skills, sharpen problem-solving abilities, and develop time management skills. Additionally, by participating in AP, students have the opportunity to earn college credit and to stand out in the college admission process.

Students who choose honors and AP coursework can expect the following:

- Significantly increased rigor – content is covered much more extensively
- Additional outside class responsibilities – increased homework, reading, research, study, and participation in study groups (which will meet outside school hours)
- Frequent writing assignments – essays, research papers, etc.
- Additional resources required – calculators, outside reading materials, etc.
- Testing in a timed AP format
- AP testing fees – amount varies based on grant fund availability
- Weighted GPA credit (1 point for AP courses and .5 point for honors). Students are required to take a comprehensive final exam in each honors course to receive the weighted credit and are required to take the National AP Exam in each AP course to receive the weighted credit.
- Students and parents should carefully weigh the unique demands of the honors and AP coursework with the student's demonstrated ability, extracurricular obligations, motivation, and work ethic to determine whether or not the honors /AP coursework is the right course choice. Additional information about the AP program can be found at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).
- If an AP student commits a Class III offense and is assigned to an alternative academic administrative option (GRAD – Project BETHEL – SPAN), the student will be given the opportunity to take an AP course through ACCESS Virtual Learning. If the student chooses this option, he/she will be expected to finish the AP course through ACCESS Virtual Learning; even upon returning to his/her respective school. For any fall semester two nine weeks AP course, this option is not available after October 1<sup>st</sup>. For any four nine weeks AP course or any spring semester two-nine weeks AP course, this option is not available after March 1<sup>st</sup>. Students will bear the cost of ACCESS Virtual Learning AP courses.

## COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES – DUAL ENROLLMENT (DE) and DUAL ENROLLMENT/DUAL CREDIT (DE/DC)

The Alabama State Department of Education has authorized the establishment of dual enrollment programs between public colleges and universities and local boards of education.

The following dual enrollment options may be offered:

**Dual Enrollment (DE)** is available to students who would like to earn college credit. DE students may take college courses and will receive college credit ONLY for all coursework. DE students' courses and grades **will not** be reflected on the high school transcript. DE courses **will** be reflected on the college transcript alone.

**Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit (DE/DC)** is available to students who would like to earn both high school and college credits for the equivalent course(s). DE/DC courses **will** be added to the high school transcript and **will** be calculated into the overall GPA.

The Tuscaloosa County School System currently has dual enrollment/dual credit agreements with the following colleges and universities:

- Auburn University
- Beville State Community College
- Shelton State Community College
- Snead State Community College
- Stillman College
- The University of Alabama
- The University of North Alabama
- The University of West Alabama

Each post-secondary institution listed above requires applications, transcripts, and a variety of documentation to be accepted for and enrolled in dual enrollment programs. High School Counselors may **assist** students with the completion and submission of these documents; however, questions regarding courses for post-secondary pathways (i.e. Nursing, Business Office Management) should be addressed with the dual enrollment officials at each institution. High School Counselors are not employed by the post-secondary institutions and are not responsible for advising students on post-secondary pathways.

### ELIGIBILITY/GPA FOR ACADEMIC AND/OR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DUAL ENROLLMENT

\*Students must meet and maintain the entrance and continued enrollment requirements of the post-secondary institution.

\*Students must be in grade 10, 11, or 12 (An exception may be granted upon the recommendation of the student's principal and superintendent and in accordance with Alabama Administrative Code 290-8-9-.17 regarding gifted and talented students). Students become eligible for dual enrollment following the completion of grade nine (9). If desired, students may take their first dual enrollment courses during the summer between grades nine (9) and ten (10).

\* For Shelton State Community College and Beville State Community College, students must have a minimum cumulative (unweighted) high school grade point average (GPA) of 2.50 on a 4.00 scale for academic courses and a 2.00 on a 4.00 scale for technical courses. (Shelton State Community College allows a 2.00 GPA on a 4.00 scale for technical courses.) For Stillman College, students must have a minimum cumulative (unweighted) high school GPA of 2.50 on a 4.00 scale. For Auburn University, the University of Alabama Early College, the University of West Alabama and the University of North Alabama, students must have a minimum cumulative (unweighted) high school GPA of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale.

\*Students will remain in continuous eligibility as long as a grade of "C" or better in all attempted college courses is earned.

\*An application for dual enrollment course requests must be signed and submitted to the school counselor and/or principal and be approved **before** each semester. **Credit will not be awarded retroactively.**

### ATTENDANCE

\*Students will follow the college schedule of classes to include holidays and breaks unless agreements have been made between the college and high schools that dictate otherwise.

\*Students are expected to attend each class session, to arrive on time, and to remain for the entire class session.

\*In cases of excessive absences, the student should withdraw from the course before the last date to withdraw, as published in the college's academic calendar.

### PROGRESSION

\*Students are allowed to take 2 classes per semester during the high school academic year (Fall and Spring semesters). Additional class requests must be in writing and will require approval from the high school principal. During the Summer term, students may take 2 academic classes; students in the career and technical education programs may take up to 4 classes in their program of study (no more than two of those shall be academic courses). Students are encouraged to speak with an advisor about the shortened timeframe and workload before making a decision about summer course enrollments.

\*Students in career and technical education programs who require academic courses to graduate, and whose placement scores are sufficient, may also take academic courses for Dual Enrollment credit.

\*Students who receive the Career and Technical Education Dual Enrollment (CTEDE) Scholarship are required to pass each course to continue in the program.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

\*Three or four semester hours must be used to substitute one Carnegie unit in high school (with the exception of US Government and Economics which only earn .5 credits).

**\*Prior approval is required for dual credit to be granted.**

\*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit will be recorded on a student's transcript when the high school receives an official grade report from the postsecondary institution. All DE/DC grades will be transcribed. **High school seniors may only take dual enrollment courses required for graduation during the fall of the senior year unless the academic courses will be taught by TCSS employees in the spring semester on our high school campuses; elective courses not being utilized to meet graduation requirements can be taken at any time with no restrictions.**

\*The student must coordinate all Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit coursework with his/her school counselor each semester. Additionally, all required paperwork must be submitted in a timely fashion. Forms may be found in the school counselor's office.

\*Students may earn DE/DC credit during the school year (on- or off-campus) or during the summer. Students who wish to pursue early graduation must work with their school counselor in advance to indicate their intention and discuss their plan for graduating early. In such cases, students and their parents will be required to complete and submit a signed Early Exit Application. School Counselors and Administrators will oversee this process at each high school.

\*Payment of the current rate of tuition and fees per credit hour, books, transportation, and equipment will be the responsibility of the student.

**\*The student must notify the school counselor of any changes to his/her DE/DC schedule, including any decisions to withdraw from a DE/DC course during the semester. Because a school's master schedule is built around student requests and staff availability, dropping a DE/DC course does not mean that the student can immediately be placed in the equivalent course on the high school campus.**

\*Students will earn 1.00 weighted credit for high school **academic** courses that have an AP equivalent. Students may not exceed 16 weighted academic credits (four in English Language Arts, four in Mathematics, four in Science and four in Social Studies) during their high school career when earning credit through dual enrollment. Weighted credits will include honors, AP, and dual enrollment courses.

\*Academic courses are defined as English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies courses as noted in the following chart:

**2024-2025 APPROVED DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES**  
**DUAL ENROLLMENT AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM AND**  
**AUBURN UNIVERSITY**  
**BEVILL STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**SHELTON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**SNEAD STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STILLMAN COLLEGE**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA EARLY COLLEGE**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST ALABAMA**

Approved Dual Enrollment Courses and the courses for which they are the equivalent are listed in the chart below:

ENGLISH COURSES		PREREQUISITE(S)
English Composition I (Equivalent of AP English Lang/Comp) (English 11 or English 12)	ENG 101 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	ACT English score of 18 or Level 5 Accuplacer
	ENG 131 - Stillman	N/A
	ENG 101 – UA	N/A
	EN 111 - UNA	ACT English score of 18
English Composition II (Equivalent of AP English Lit/Comp) (English 12)	ENG 102 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	A letter grade of C or higher in ENG 101
	ENG 102 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	A letter grade of C or higher in ENG 101
	ENG 132 – Stillman	ENG 131
	ENG 102 – UA	ENG 101 or AP Language or AP Literature score of 3 or higher
	EN 112 – UNA	EN 111
English Literature I (Equivalent of AP English Lit/Comp) (English 12)	ENG 251- Bevill/Shelton/Snead	AP Language or Literature (taken in grade 11) score of 4 or 5
	EN 205 - UA	AP Language or Literature (taken in grade 11) score of 4 or 5
SCIENCE COURSES		PREREQUISITE(S)
<i>*NOTE: STUDENTS MUST HAVE PASSED THE TWO REQUIRED SCIENCE CREDITS (BIOLOGY AND A PHYSICAL SCIENCE) FOR THE ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA BEFORE ENROLLING IN ANY DUAL ENROLLMENT SCIENCE COURSE(S)</i>		
Introduction to Biology I (Equivalent of AP Biology) (Science 3 or 4)	BIO 101 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	BIO 141 – Stillman	As required by program
	BSC 108 – UA	N/A
	BI 101 – UNA	N/A
Introduction to Biology II (Science 3 or 4) (Only the first semester of the course will receive weighted credit)	BIO 102 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	A letter grade of C or higher in BIO 101
	BSC 109 – UA	N/A
	BI 102 – UNA	BI 101 or 111
Principles of Biology I (Equivalent of AP Biology) (Science 3 or 4)	BIO 103 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	BSC 114 and BSC 115 – UA (Nursing & Pre-Med Majors)	N/A
Principles of Biology II (Science 3 or 4) (Only the first semester of the course will receive weighted credit)	BIO 104 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	A letter grade of C or higher in BIO 103
	BSC 116 and BSC 117 – UA (Nursing & Pre-Med Majors)	BSC 114 and BSC 115
Introductory Chemistry (Equivalent of AP Chemistry) (Science 3 or 4)	CH 104 –UA (Recommended by UA for Nursing majors)	N/A
College Chemistry I (Equivalent of AP Chemistry) (Science 3 or 4)	CHM 111 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	CH 101 – UA (Recommended by UA for pre-Med and Engineering majors)	MTH 113 or higher
College Chemistry II (Science 3 or 4) (Only the first semester of the course will receive weighted credit)	CHM 112 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	A letter grade of C or higher in CHM 111
	CH 102 – UA (Recommended by UA for pre-Med and Engineering majors)	CHM 101
General Physics I – Trig Based (Equivalent of AP Physics 1) (Science 3 or 4)	PHY 201 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	PH 101 – UA	MTH 113
General Physics II – Trig Based (Equivalent of AP Physics 2) (Science 3 or 4) (Only the first semester of the course will receive weighted credit)	PHY 202 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	A letter grade of C or higher in PHY 201
	PH 102 – UA	PH 101
General Physics with Cal I (Equivalent of AP Physics C: Mechanics) (Science 3 or 4)	PHY 213 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	PH 105 – UA	MTH 125
General Physics with Cal II (Equivalent of AP Physics C: Elec/Mag) (Science 3 or 4) (Only the first semester of the course will receive weighted credit)	PHY 214 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	A letter grade of C or higher in PHY 213
	PH 106 – UA	MTH 126 and PH 105
Introduction to Geology I (Equivalent of AP Environmental Science) (Science 3 or 4)	GEO 101 – UA	N/A
Introduction to Geology II (Science 3 or 4) (Only the first semester of the course will receive weighted credit)	GEO 102 - UA	GEO 101
Computer Science 1 for Majors (Equivalent of AP Computer Science A) (Science 3 or 4)	CIS 191 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	MTH 100 or MTH 116
	CS 100 – UA	MTH 112 or MTH 113 with a C or higher
Computer Science Principles (Equivalent of AP Computer Science Principles) (Science 3 or 4)	CS 104 – UA	MTH 112 or MTH 125



MATHEMATICS COURSES		PREREQUISITE(S)
<p><b>*NOTE: STUDENTS MUST HAVE PASSED THE THREE REQUIRED MATHEMATICS COURSES FOR THE ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA BEFORE ENROLLING IN ANY DUAL ENROLLMENT MATHEMATICS COURSE(S)</b>                      *THESE COURSES ONLY MEET THE REQUIREMENT FOR STANDARD DIPLOMA MATH PATHWAYS</p>		
*Intermediate College Algebra (Math 4)	MTH 100 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	ACT Math Score - 18, HS GPA of 2.75 & A/B in Alg II, or Placement Test
	MATH 100 – UA	ACT Math Score - 18, SAT Math Score of 480 or Placement Test
	MATH 100 - UNA	ACT Math Score of 16
*Finite Mathematics (Math 4)	MTH 110 - Bevill/Shelton/Snead	C or better in MTH 100 or Equivalent Placement Score
	MTH 110 - UA	Math Placement Test Score or ACT Math Score - 18
*Mathematical Applications (Math 4)	MTH 116 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	This math course may only be taken as the fourth math course for students pursuing dual enrollment in the Technical Degree Programs
Pre-Calculus Algebra (Math 4)	MTH 112 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	C or better in MTH 100 or Equivalent Placement Score OR ACT Math Score - 20 or Accuplacer Score of 267
	MTH 134 - Stillman	N/A
	MATH 112 – UA	ACT Math score - 24, SAT Math score 580 or Placement Test
Pre-Calculus Trigonometry (Math 4)	MTH 113 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	MTH 112 or Placement Test
	MATH 113 – UA	MATH 112
Calculus I (Equivalent of AP Calculus AB) (Math 4)	MTH 125 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	C or higher in MTH 113 or 115, or ACT Math Score – 27, or Placement Test
	CAL I 125 – UA	ACT Math Score–30, SAT Math score 710, MATH 113 or 115 or Placement
Calculus II (Equivalent of AP Calculus BC) (Math 4)	MTH 126 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	MTH 125 with a C or higher
	CAL I 126 – UA	MATH 125 or AP Calculus score of 3 or higher
Computer Science 1 for Majors (Equivalent of AP Computer Science A) (Math 4)	CIS 191 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	MTH 100 or MTH 116
	CS 100 – UA	MTH 112 or MTH 113 with a C or higher
Computer Science Principles (Equivalent of AP Computer Science Principles) (Math 4)	CS 104 – UA	MTH 112 or MTH 125
SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES		PREREQUISITE(S)
United States History I (Equivalent of Honors US History I - .5 weight) (US History I- Grade 10)	HIS 201 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	HY 103 - UA	N/A
	HI 201 – UNA	N/A
United States History II (Equivalent of AP US History) (US History II – Grade 11)	HIS 202 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	HY 104 - UA	N/A
	HY 202 – UNA	N/A
American National Government (Equivalent of AP US Government) (US Government)	POL 211 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
Principles of American Government (Equivalent of AP US Government) (US Government)	PSC 239 – Stillman	N/A
Introduction to Political Science (Equivalent of AP US Government) (US Government)	PSC 101 - UA	N/A
United States Government and Politics (Equivalent of AP US Government) (US Government)	PS 241 – UNA	N/A
Principles of Microeconomics (Equivalent of AP Microeconomics) (Economics)	ECO 232 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	EC 110 – UA	MATH 100 or higher, ACT Math score of 24, SAT Math score of 580 or Placement Test
	EC 252 – UNA	N/A
Principles of Macroeconomics (Equivalent of AP Macroeconomics) (Economics)	ECO 231 – Bevill/Shelton/Snead	High School GPA of 2.5
	EC 111 – UA	EC 110
	EC 251 – UNA	N/A
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND/OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND/OR ARTS EDUCATION		PREREQUISITE(S)
Career Technical Education	3 hours in approved course(s).	As required by program. Four-year plans should be utilized to assist in the course selection.
Foreign Language	3 hours in approved course(s).	As required by program. Four-year plans should be utilized to assist in the course selection.
Arts Education	3 hours in approved course(s).	As required by program. Four-year plans should be utilized to assist in the course selection.
ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC ELECTIVES		PREREQUISITE(S)
Additional Academic Electives	3 hours in approved course(s).	As required by program. Four-year plans should be utilized to assist in the course selection.

To ensure that students stay on track with their graduating class, the following chart specifies when students can take academic dual enrollment courses:

HIGH SCHOOL COURSE	WHEN CAN THEY TAKE IT FOR DUAL?		
	Summer AFTER 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	Spring of 10 <sup>th</sup> grade
US History I	Summer AFTER 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Spring of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade
English 11	Summer AFTER 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Spring of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade
US History II	Summer AFTER 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Spring of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade
Science Elective 3+	Summer AFTER 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Spring of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade
English 12	Summer AFTER 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	N/A*
US Government	Summer AFTER 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	N/A*
Economics	Summer AFTER 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	N/A*
4 <sup>th</sup> Math Credit***	N/A***	Fall of 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	N/A*
Science Elective 4+	Summer AFTER 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fall of 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	N/A*

\*Seniors can take academic dual enrollment courses needed for graduation credit in their final semester if they are (1) taught on the high school campus and (2) are taught by TCSS faculty members.

## **COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES – ACCELERATED HIGH SCHOOL/CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT**

**ACCELERATED HIGH SCHOOL:** Opportunities exist for students who may benefit from enrollment in higher education institutions prior to graduation from high school. If approved for early admission, a student may enroll, with the permission of the principal, in college-level courses that provide enrichment or accelerated learning. In order to enroll in academic courses, the student must have an overall 3.0 GPA. The student receives only college credit for courses taken through the early admission program.

### **ACCELERATED HIGH SCHOOL AT BEVILL STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND SHELTON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Both Bevill State Community College and Shelton State Community College offer eligible high school juniors and seniors the chance to enroll in college classes concurrently with high school classes. High school students will receive college credit only. Students may enroll in the accelerated high school program at both Bevill State Community College and Shelton State Community College the summer after successfully completing the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year.

### **CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT AT UA EARLY COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA**

The University of Alabama offers eligible sophomores, juniors and seniors the chance to enroll in college classes concurrently with high school classes. High school students will receive college credit only. Students may enroll in the accelerated high school program at UA Early College the summer after successfully completing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year.

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## **ACADEMIC TOURNAMENT ACTIVITIES**

All secondary schools participate in tournaments throughout Alabama as well as within the school system. These tournaments test students' knowledge of academics. Such activities have affected positively both the attitudes toward learning of participating students and the knowledge base to which they are exposed. Forensics and debate are also available.

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# ACADEMIC AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

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## TITLE I PROGRAM

The Tuscaloosa County School System receives funding through the Every Student Succeeds Act to provide additional resources for students at risk of failure. Schools are determined to be eligible for Title I funding assistance annually by the percentage of students in poverty. Title I funding allows participating schools to employ additional personnel, to purchase extra instructional equipment and supplies, and to implement parent involvement and professional development programs to improve student achievement. The 2024-2025 schools participating in the Title I Assistance Program are the following:

Big Sandy Elementary	Crestmont Elementary	Hillcrest High	Myrtlewood Elementary	Taylorville Primary
Brookwood Elementary	Davis-Emerson Middle	Hillcrest Middle	Northport Elementary	Tuscaloosa County High
Brookwood High	Duncanville Middle	Holt Elementary	Northport Intermediate	Vance Elementary
Brookwood Middle	Echols Middle	Huntington Place Elementary	Northside High	Walker Elementary
Buhl Elementary	Englewood Elementary	Lake View Elementary	Northside Middle	Westwood Elementary
Collins-Riverside Intermediate	Faucett-Vestavia Elementary	Matthews Elementary	Sipsey Valley High	
Cottondale Elementary	Flatwoods Elementary	Maxwell Elementary	Sipsey Valley Middle	

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## SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

The primary goal of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program is to prevent alcohol and other drug use among youth by promoting a “no use” message—through all of its programs. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program focuses on prevention by encouraging safe, health activities that build necessary life skills and develop students’ highest capabilities. Key components of the drug education program include:

- Recognizing, assessing and monitoring the program
- Implementing and enforcing a no-use policy
- Developing and implementing a drug education and prevention program
- Educating and training staff
- Promoting parent involvement and providing parent education and training
- Working with community groups and agencies

A health education curriculum that contains a substance abuse component is implemented at each school. Through all of these efforts, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program is committed to the mission of a drug-free future for our young people. Through collaboration, maximization of resources, and sharing information and ideas with others in the community, this mission can be a reality.

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## LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS

Each school in the Tuscaloosa County School System has a library media center that houses a comprehensive collection of books, audiovisual materials, and instructional equipment. Each school in the Tuscaloosa County School System provides the appropriate number of library books per student as required by the Alabama State Department of Education. Each library media center is staffed by a certified library media specialist. A variety of services is offered in the centers including the provision of materials to support the instructional program; collaboration with teachers; activities designed to increase literature appreciation and a love for reading; instruction in accessing information through both print and technological resources; reader advisory services; and a wide range of enrichment activities. The Library Media Centers use *Destiny*, a Follett software product, as the automated management system. *Destiny* provides TitlePeek™, which gives students a chance to preview books on line; One Search™, which lets students get information from the school library and the internet as a whole with a single search; and WebPath Express™, which limits student searches to approved grade-appropriate web sites. Since the *Alabama Course of Study/Alabama College and Career Ready Standards* are included in the program, teachers are able to align lesson plans using *Destiny*. Students and teachers have home access to *Destiny* via the internet. The Alabama State Department of Education publication “Alabama’s Library Media Handbook for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner” and “Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs,” published by the American Association of School Librarians, a division of the American Library Association, serve as guides for library literacy instruction.

### CIRCULATION PROCEDURES

Elementary students may check out books for a one-week period after they have become familiar with the procedures for checking out books as determined by their teachers and the library media specialist. Secondary students may check out books for a two-week period. The library media specialist will determine the number of books a student may check out at a given time. Books may be rechecked as many times as needed; however, circulation privileges will be withheld from students with overdue books or fines. Reference books and other items are subject to circulation procedures available in each school’s library. Any of these circulation procedures may be adjusted at the discretion of the librarian to meet local school needs and policies.

### OVERDUE BOOKS

Books are considered to be overdue on the first school day after they are due and fines will accrue as applicable. In the elementary schools, an overdue list will be sent to the classroom teacher. If books are still overdue at the end of a reporting period, a notice is included in the individual student’s report card stating that the book or a replacement charge is due in the library. In the secondary schools, overdue notices are sent directly to the student. The secondary overdue list is submitted to the principal at the end of the school year for collection.

### OVERDUE FINES

In the elementary schools, fines are not charged on a regular basis. In the secondary schools, a fine of 10 cents per day is charged to a maximum of \$12.50.

### LOST MATERIALS

Elementary students will be charged \$20.00 for each lost hardback library book. If the book is found and returned within the same school year, \$10.00 will be refunded to the student upon proof of payment. Secondary students will be charged \$10.00 for any paperback and \$25.00 for any hardback for each lost library book. If the book is found and returned within the same school year, \$12.50 will be refunded to the student upon proof of payment. Refunds will not be made for books returned in subsequent years. The cost of a lost elementary or secondary reference book will be determined by the replacement cost of the book. All students will be charged the replacement cost (minimum of \$7.50) for a lost paperback book; this fee is nonrefundable.

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## **STUDENT ACCESS TO NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCES**

Access to the Tuscaloosa County School System's networked information resources allows students to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards. The intent in providing access is to further the educational goals and objectives of the Tuscaloosa County School System. Users of the Internet, email, and electronic resources are accountable for their behavior and communications over the System's networks. Access is a privilege—NOT a right—and entails responsibility. Completion of a Student/Parent Technology Usage Agreement Form will be required before students have access to networked resources. These forms will be available in all schools and the district website. At times, students may be asked to use Multifactor Authentication (MFA) when accessing resources off campus and/or using non-TCSS issued devices. Violations may result in a loss of access, as well as other disciplinary or legal action. All students must abide by the district's technology acceptable use policy. (Policy 5.90)

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## **SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM**

The school counseling program is an integral part of the total educational process in the school and is accessible to all students. The counseling program consists of activities that address and meet students' various educational and developmental needs. The school counseling program is developed as a result of a thorough analysis of student needs, desired achievement goals, and related data. The school counseling program prepares students to meet the challenges and demands of the school setting as well as prepare them for success beyond high school. The goal of each school counseling program is to ensure student success in three broad domains: academic, career, and personal/social development.

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS**

To address the Academic Development Domain at the elementary level, professional school counselors assist students in their efforts to learn the skills and attitudes required for school success. Lessons such as listening, following directions, test taking, and study skills may be taught. Elementary school level professional school counselors emphasize early exploration of career and educational goals in the Career Development Domain. This domain may be addressed through hosting a Career Day, introducing community helpers, and administering interest inventories. Elementary school level professional school counselors place strong emphasis on character development, decision-making skills, development of self-awareness, and good interpersonal relationships. These concepts are addressed in the Personal/Social Development Domain. Elementary school counselors lay the foundation for the development of coping skills and problem-solving strategies that continue in middle and high schools.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELORS**

Professional school counselors at the middle school level assist students in the Academic Development Domain with their acquisition of the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that prepare them to choose from a wide range of postsecondary options that will help them to understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and life. Middle school level professional school counselors assist students in acquiring the skills to investigate the world of work and employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction. Counselors for Grades 8-12 must guide students in the development and annual revision of a four-year educational/career plan based on a career goal and have students maintain a portfolio of study based on legislative and other graduation requirements. Middle school level professional school counselors provide programs to equip students with the skills to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others, make decisions, set goals, take necessary actions to achieve goals, and develop other coping skills.

### **HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS**

At the high school level, professional school counselors build on goals established during elementary and middle school. Competencies in the Academic Development Domain are met when the high school counselor assists students in applying and enhancing acquired knowledge and understanding as they strive to become college- and career-ready. At the high school level professional school counselors offer educational opportunities that provide the workforce with a strong academic foundation and understanding of college- and career-ready standards. Counselors for Grades 8-12 must guide students in the development and annual revision of a four-year educational/career plan based on a career goal and have students maintain a portfolio of study based on legislative and other graduation requirements. High school level professional school counselors emphasize competency in decision-making and personal responsibility. Activities encourage the development of realistic and fulfilling life goals.

Counselors assume the leadership role for managing and implementing the comprehensive counseling and guidance program in their school. Counselors are responsible for the systematic delivery and evaluation of structured developmental counseling and guidance services to all students. Counselors work directly with students, individually and in small groups, to deal with unique or problem-centered concerns that require more privacy or attention than can be accommodated in structured guidance activities. Counselors serve students indirectly by acting as consultants to administrators, teachers, parents, and others to help them understand and respond to the developmental, emotional, and social needs of students. Counselors coordinate various activities within the school that are related to student welfare. Appropriate referrals, placements, and follow-ups are activities that are particularly pertinent to counseling.

PROGRAM DELIVERY COMPONENTS			
SCHOOL COUNSELING CURRICULUM	INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANNING	RESPONSIVE SERVICES	SYSTEM SUPPORT
Provides guidance content in a systematic way to all students in Grades K-12	Assists students in planning, monitoring, and managing their personal and career planning	Addresses the immediate concerns of students	Includes program, staff, and school support activities and services
PURPOSE			
Student awareness, skill development, and application of skills needed in everyday life.	Student educational and occupational planning, decision making, and goal setting	Prevention and intervention	Program delivery and support
AREAS ADDRESSED			
<p><b>Academic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Motivation to achieve</li> <li>✓ Decision-making skills</li> <li>✓ Goal setting</li> <li>✓ Planning</li> <li>✓ Problem-solving skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Awareness of educational opportunities</li> <li>✓ Knowledge of career opportunities</li> <li>✓ Knowledge of career/technical training</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal/Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Self-esteem development</li> <li>✓ Interpersonal effectiveness</li> <li>✓ Communication skills</li> <li>✓ Cross-cultural effectiveness</li> <li>✓ Responsible behavior</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Acquisition of study skills</li> <li>✓ Awareness of educational opportunities</li> <li>✓ Appropriate course selection</li> <li>✓ Lifelong learning</li> <li>✓ Utilization of test data</li> </ul> <p><b>Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Knowledge of career opportunities</li> <li>✓ Knowledge of career/technical training</li> <li>✓ Need for positive work habits</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal/Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Development of healthy self-concept</li> <li>✓ Development of adaptive and adjustive social behavior</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Academic concerns</li> <li>✓ Physical abuse</li> <li>✓ Sexual abuse</li> <li>✓ Emotional abuse</li> <li>✓ Grief, loss, and death</li> <li>✓ Substance abuse</li> <li>✓ Family issues</li> <li>✓ Sexual issues</li> <li>✓ Coping with stress</li> <li>✓ Relationship concerns</li> <li>✓ School-related concerns: tardiness, absences and truancy, misbehavior, school avoidance, drop-out prevention</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Guidance program development</li> <li>✓ Parent education</li> <li>✓ Teacher and administrator consultation</li> <li>✓ Staff development for educators</li> <li>✓ School improvement planning</li> <li>✓ Counselor professional development</li> <li>✓ Research and publishing</li> <li>✓ Community outreach</li> <li>✓ Public relations</li> </ul>
COUNSELOR ROLE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom lessons</li> <li>✓ Structured groups</li> <li>✓ Consultation</li> <li>✓ School counseling curriculum implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assessment</li> <li>✓ Planning</li> <li>✓ Placement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Individual counseling</li> <li>✓ Small-group counseling</li> <li>✓ Consultation</li> <li>✓ Referral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Program development and management</li> <li>✓ Consultation</li> <li>✓ Coordination</li> </ul>

NOTE: These lists represent examples and are not exhaustive.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATING CLASS OF 2028 (STUDENTS MUST REFER TO THE COURSE CATALOG UNDER WHICH THEY ENTERED HIGH SCHOOL)				
ALL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY. All graduates must complete a unit in Financial Literacy, complete the FAFSA (or approved waiver) and meet at least one College and Career Readiness Indicator.* The focus will be on the coursework taken that necessitates a clearly articulated and individualized four-year plan built by each student. Students are encouraged to consult school administrators, school counselors, teachers, and post-secondary institutions to determine best course selections. Post-secondary institutions have varying entrance requirements; therefore, it is the responsibility of the student to determine from the specific post-secondary institutions the appropriate high school courses needed. All students earning a high school diploma in the Tuscaloosa County School System must have a minimum of 24 units.				
COURSES	REQUIREMENTS TO RECEIVE AN ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	CREDITS	REQUIREMENTS TO RECEIVE ACADEMIC DISTINCTION TO THE ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	CREDITS
<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (4 CREDITS)</b>	EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE: • SDE APPROVED COURSES (I.E. ESSENTIAL SKILLS PATHWAY COURSES) • ADVANCED OR HONORS/PRE-AP COURSES • ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES • POST-SECONDARY COURSES		EQUIVALENT OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE: • POST-SECONDARY COURSES	
	ENGLISH 9 OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS ENGLISH 9	1
	ENGLISH 10 OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS ENGLISH 10	1
	ENGLISH 11 OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED ENGLISH 11 OR AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION OR AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION	1
	ENGLISH 12 OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED ENGLISH 12 OR AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION OR AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION	1
<b>MATHEMATICS NOTE: Students who earned a credit for Algebra I in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade are required to earn four math credits in high school. They will be required to schedule a math class each year while in grades 9-12. (4 CREDITS)</b>	EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE: • SDE APPROVED COURSES (I.E. ESSENTIAL SKILLS PATHWAY COURSES) • CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COURSES • ADVANCED OR HONORS COURSES • ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES • POST-SECONDARY COURSES		EQUIVALENT OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE: • SDE APPROVED COURSES • POST-SECONDARY COURSES	
	GEOMETRY WITH DATA ANALYSIS OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS GEOMETRY WITH DATA ANALYSIS - OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1
	ALGEBRA I WITH PROBABILITY OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS ALGEBRA I WITH PROBABILITY OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1
	ALGEBRA II WITH STATISTICS OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS ALGEBRA II WITH STATISTICS OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1
	APPLICATIONS OF FINITE MATH OR MATHEMATICAL MODELING OR EQUIVALENT	1	PRE-CALCULUS OR HONORS PRE-CALCULUS OR AP CALCULUS OR AP STATISTICS OR AP COMPUTER SCIENCE OR DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSE (MATH 112 OR ABOVE)	1
SEE POSSIBLE PATHWAYS FOR MATH ON PAGE 15				
<b>SCIENCE (4 CREDITS) *STUDENTS MUST EARN THE REQUIRED BIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL SCIENCE CREDITS BEFORE ENROLLING IN DUAL ENROLLMENT SCIENCES.</b>	EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE: • SDE APPROVED COURSES (I.E. ESSENTIAL SKILLS PATHWAY COURSES) • CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION • ADVANCED OR HONORS/PRE-AP COURSES • ADVANCED PLACEMENT • POST-SECONDARY COURSES		EQUIVALENT OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE: • POST-SECONDARY COURSES	
	BIOLOGY OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS BIOLOGY	1
	A PHYSICAL SCIENCE (I.E. PHYSICAL SCIENCE, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS) OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS CHEMISTRY	1
	ALABAMA COURSE OF STUDY FOR SCIENCE OR EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE COURSES FROM CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION/ADVANCED PLACEMENT/POST-SECONDARY COURSES/SDE APPROVED COURSES	1	AN ADDITIONAL ADVANCED, HONORS, OR AP SCIENCE CREDIT OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1
	ALABAMA COURSE OF STUDY FOR SCIENCE OR EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE COURSES FROM CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION/ADVANCED PLACEMENT/POST-SECONDARY COURSES/SDE APPROVED COURSES	1	AN ADDITIONAL ADVANCED, HONORS, OR AP SCIENCE CREDIT OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES (4 CREDITS)</b>	EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE: • SDE APPROVED COURSES (I.E. ESSENTIAL SKILLS PATHWAY COURSES) • ADVANCED OR HONORS/PRE-AP COURSES • ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES • POST-SECONDARY COURSES		EQUIVALENT OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE: • POST-SECONDARY COURSES	
	WORLD HISTORY SINCE 1500 OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS WORLD HISTORY SINCE 1500	1
	U.S. HISTORY I OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS U.S. HISTORY I OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1
	U.S. HISTORY II OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1	ADVANCED OR HONORS U.S. HISTORY II OR AP UNITED STATES HISTORY OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	1
	U.S. GOVERNMENT OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	0.5	ADVANCED U.S. GOVERNMENT OR AP U.S. GOVERNMENT OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	0.5
	ECONOMICS OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	0.5	ADVANCED ECONOMICS OR AP MACROECONOMICS OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	0.5
<b>BEGINNING KINESIOLOGY (1 CREDIT)</b>	BEGINNING KINESIOLOGY OR ONE JROTC CREDIT OR ONE MARCHING-CONCERT BAND CREDIT OR **ONE MARCHING-SYMPHONIC BAND CREDIT** OR ONE DANCE LINE CREDIT OR ONE FLAG CORPS/COLOR GUARD CREDIT OR ONE MAJORETTE CREDIT	1	BEGINNING KINESIOLOGY OR ONE JROTC CREDIT OR ONE MARCHING-CONCERT BAND CREDIT OR **ONE MARCHING-SYMPHONIC BAND CREDIT** OR ONE DANCE LINE CREDIT OR ONE FLAG CORPS/COLOR GUARD CREDIT OR ONE MAJORETTE CREDIT	1
<b>HEALTH EDUCATION (0.5 CREDITS)</b>	ALABAMA COURSE OF STUDY: HEALTH EDUCATION OR ITS EQUIVALENT/SUBSTITUTE	0.5	ALABAMA COURSE OF STUDY: HEALTH EDUCATION OR ITS EQUIVALENT	0.5
<b>CAREER PREPAREDNESS (1 CREDIT)</b>	CAREER PREPAREDNESS COURSE OR SUBSTITUTE *(May not be used to fulfill one of the CTE Credits listed below)	1	CAREER PREPAREDNESS COURSE (May not be used to fulfill one of the CTE Credits listed below)	1
<b>CTE AND/OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND/OR ARTS EDUCATION (3 CREDITS)</b>	STUDENTS CHOOSING CTE, ARTS EDUCATION, AND/OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE ARE ENCOURAGED TO COMPLETE TWO COURSES IN SEQUENCE. OR *COMMUNITY-BASED WORK INSTRUCTION; TWO CTE COURSES IN A SEQUENCE; WORKFORCE ESSENTIALS OR TRANSITION SERVICES; COOPERATIVE EDUCATION/WORK-BASED EXPERIENCE OR **AAS LIFE SKILLS *FOR STUDENTS EARNING CORE CREDIT THROUGH THE ESSENTIALS/LIFE SKILLS COURSES. **FOR STUDENTS EARNING CORE CREDIT THROUGH ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT.	3	STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO CHOOSE ONE FOREIGN LANGUAGE. STUDENTS CHOOSING CTE, ARTS EDUCATION, AND/OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE ARE ENCOURAGED TO COMPLETE TWO COURSES IN SEQUENCE.	3 NOTE: ONE OF THE THREE CREDITS MUST BE A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
<b>ELECTIVES (REMAINING CREDITS)</b>	*STUDENTS EARNING CORE CREDIT THROUGH THE ESSENTIALS/LIFE SKILLS COURSES ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE COMMUNITY-BASED WORK INSTRUCTION; TWO CTE COURSES IN A SEQUENCE; WORKFORCE ESSENTIALS OR TRANSITION SERVICES; COOPERATIVE EDUCATION/WORK-BASED EXPERIENCE **AAS VOCATIONAL, AAS COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION, AND/OR AAS ELECTIVE COURSE	REMAINING CREDITS		REMAINING CREDITS
<b>TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>24</b>

\*As approved by the State of Alabama's Legislature, all students (beginning with the Class of 2026) must meet at least one College and Career Readiness Indicator to be eligible for graduation. As defined by Alabama State Department of Education, recognized College and Career Readiness Indicators offered in the Tuscaloosa County School System include:

- ACT Benchmark (English = 18, Math = 22, Reading = 22, Science Reasoning =23)
- Qualifying AP Score (3, 4, or 5 on a scale of 1-5)
- Silver Level or higher on the ACT WorkKeys Assessment (A score of at least 4 on all three areas of the assessment)
- College credit taken and passed while in high school
- Career and Technical Program Credential
- Career and Technical Program Completer
- Enlistment in the Armed Forces before graduation
- Completion of a Youth Apprenticeship

## DIPLMA PATHWAYS

### ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS PATHWAY

The Alternate Achievement Standards (AAS) Pathway allows students access to credit-eligible courses. Students meet the required courses in English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Math. Students participate in:

- AAS Life Skills
- AAS Pre-Vocational
- AAS Vocational
- AAS Community-Based Work Instruction

Students in this pathway take the Alabama Alternate Assessment. The AAS pathway is only an option for students who are eligible for and receive special education services.

### ESSENTIALS PATHWAY

The Essential Pathway allows students access to credit-eligible courses to meet the required courses. Students meet the required courses in English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Math. In addition, students meet the requirements for graduation through Community-Based Work Training, Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, Workforce Essentials or Transition Skills II, Cooperative Education and/or Essentials Career Preparation.

Students who take four or more Essentials core course must complete all requirements of the pathway including the work component. This pathway is designed to allow students to participate in career/competitive employment.

This pathway is accepted by most community colleges but may not be accepted by most four-year institutions. This pathway is not accepted by NCAA for eligibility purposes.

The Essentials pathway is only an option for students who are eligible for and receive special education services.

### GENERAL EDUCATION PATHWAY

The General Education Pathway allows students access to general education, Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment courses leading to the Alabama High School Diploma. This diploma is designed to prepare students for college and career.

According to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), only students whose coursework is fully aligned to the state's core academic content standards or those with the most significant cognitive disabilities will count as graduates in calculating the USDOE Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for the state, school systems and local schools.

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# GENERAL INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

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## PARTICIPATION IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY

Upon completion of high school, the type of diploma or certificate a student can receive is dependent upon his or her successful completion of the required number of Carnegie units. **ALL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY.**

**IN ADDITION, PARTICIPATION IN THE PRACTICE FOR THE GRADUATION CEREMONY IS MANDATORY. ANY STUDENT WHO FAILS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRACTICE FOR THE GRADUATION CEREMONY WILL BE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY. FEES MUST BE EITHER PAID IN FULL OR A PAYMENT PLAN ESTABLISHED WITH THE PRINCIPAL PRIOR TO THE GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR A STUDENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY.** All students earning a high school diploma in the Tuscaloosa County School System must have a minimum of 24 units.

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## OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO DO NOT MEET GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

REGULAR PROGRAM STUDENTS classified as seniors and who have NOT earned the graduation credits necessary for graduation may continue to pursue the credits needed for graduation until the age of 21. When the required number of credits has been earned, the student will be issued the earned diploma and be eligible to participate in the next scheduled graduation ceremony. If the required number of credits needed for graduation has not been earned before the student has reached the age of 21, the student may pursue the GED through an Adult Education Program.

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## VALEDICTORIANS, SALUTATORIANS, AND HONOR GRADUATES

In an effort to encourage academic excellence and achievement on the part of students throughout the school system, the Board directs that each high school principal, with the assistance of appropriate staff members, select a valedictorian, a salutarian, and honor graduates as a way of appropriately honoring those students who have pursued and attained high academic goals. Following are the criteria for determining who may be eligible for these honors (Policy: 5.23):

### CRITERIA FOR VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN FOR GRADUATING CLASS OF 2021 AND BEYOND

- The candidates for valedictorian and salutarian must have been enrolled at the high school for one full school year prior to the date of their graduation.
- The student with the highest numerical grade average who qualifies to receive an Academic Distinction to the Alabama High School Diploma will be the class valedictorian.
- The student with the second highest numerical grade average who qualifies to receive an Academic Distinction to the Alabama High School Diploma will be the class salutarian.
- In the case of a tie (after carrying the grade average to 4 decimal places and rounding to 3 places), students having the same average will be recognized as co-valedictorians or co-salutatorians.
- The numerical grade average for the candidates will be computed on course work taken beginning with the freshman year (*unless Carnegie units/credits had been awarded to the candidates from an accredited institution while the candidates were enrolled in eighth grade*) through the second term/semester of the senior year. All final grades for half-credit and full credit courses will be used.
- Advanced Placement (AP) grades will be weighted by adding 10 points to each final grade earned in an AP class. All honors grades will be weighted by adding 5 points to each final grade earned in a honors class. In the case of a transfer student who has AP grades, only those courses recognized as AP by The College Board will be weighted. If a student fails an AP course, no weighted credit will be added to the configuration. Students must take a comprehensive final exam in each honors course to receive the weighted credit and are required to take the National AP Exam developed by the College Board in each AP course to receive the weighted credit.
- The candidates for valedictorian and salutarian must have been enrolled at the high school for one full school year prior to the date of their graduation.
- The candidates for other end-of-year honors must have been enrolled prior to the beginning of the second term of the senior year.
- If letter grades are present on a candidate's transcript, the candidate must have the respective school(s) attended submit the grades in numerical form. If officials of the school that the student attended cannot or will not convert the letter grades to numerical grades, then the letter grades will be converted to numerical grades as follows:

<b>A+ = 99</b>	<b>A = 95</b>	<b>A- = 90</b>	<b>B+ = 89</b>	<b>B = 85</b>	<b>B- = 80</b>	
<b>C+ = 79</b>	<b>C = 75</b>	<b>C- = 70</b>	<b>D+ = 69</b>	<b>D = 65</b>	<b>D- = 60</b>	<b>F = 55</b>

### CRITERIA FOR HONOR GRADUATES FOR GRADUATING CLASS

The honor graduates are graduating seniors who have qualified to receive an Academic Distinction to the Alabama High School Diploma and have an overall grade point average (GPA) of 4.0 (on a 4-point scale) on all courses taken during the freshman year through the second semester of the senior year. Approved College Board Advanced Placement courses will be weighted as follows when calculating grade point averages only for students who sit for the AP exam: A = 5; B = 4; C = 3; D = 2. Students must take a comprehensive final exam in each honors course to receive the weighted credit and are required to take the National AP Exam developed by the College Board in each AP course to receive the weighted credit.

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# EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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## STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

School-sponsored clubs and organizations shall be under the direct control of school officials. Such clubs and organizations shall not be affiliated or associated with any political or religious organization or any organization which denies membership on the basis of race, creed, color, or political beliefs. All school-sponsored clubs and organizations shall be sponsored by a member of the faculty approved by the school's Principal and shall have a constitution approved by the Student Council (Student Government Association) or by the school's Principal (Policy: 4.50).

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## STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Effective student governments are the forums for the training and involvement of students in the democratic processes. Members of the school community share the responsibility for shaping governments into positive instruments for student involvement.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO:

- elect student government officers and representatives who are responsive to the needs of the school and who will work constructively toward the resolution of such needs;
- become knowledgeable of School Board and individual school policies governing the actions of students;
- conduct election campaigns in a positive, mature manner, with all due respect provided their opponents;
- attend regularly scheduled meetings, if an elected student representative, and exhibit appropriate conduct at all times.

### STUDENT RIGHTS ARE TO:

- form and operate a student government within the respective schools under the supervision of a faculty advisor;
  - have access to policies of the School Board in the individual school;
  - seek office in student government, or any school organization, regardless of race, sex, color, creed, or political beliefs;
  - attend, as student government officers and representatives, official student government meetings upon approval of such meetings by the school Principal.
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## STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Education is the process of inquiry and learning, acquiring and imparting knowledge, and exchanging ideas. One of the important roles of the school is to provide effective avenues through which students may express themselves on a wide range of subjects. Official student publications, such as school newspapers, should include viewpoints representative of the student body.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO:

- refrain from publishing libelous and obscene materials;
- to seek full information on the topics about which they write; and
- observe normally accepted rules for responsible journalism under the guidance of the faculty advisor.

### STUDENT RIGHTS ARE TO:

- participate in the development and distribution of publications as a part of the educational process.
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## STUDENT ABSENCES AND PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students who are away from school because of participation in official school sponsored activities shall be marked present and allowed to make up missed work. Students who are absent from school for an excused or unexcused reason shall **not** be allowed to participate in any school extracurricular or co-curricular activities that day (athletic contests, cheerleading, band, scholars' bowl, beauty walk, prom, etc.) unless that absence is approved in advance by the school principal.

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## ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education recognizes the value of athletics and other extracurricular activities as they relate to the total education of students. The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education also recognizes and supports high academic standards and the necessity of developing a framework to assess annually the progress of each student who participates in athletics or extracurricular activities toward graduating from high school on schedule with his/her class. The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education prescribes the following regulations for eligibility:

1. **Students must be enrolled in a school of the school system**
2. Extracurricular activities associated with athletics are defined as those recognized and sanctioned by the Alabama High School Athletic Association, and other extracurricular activities are defined as those that are sanctioned by a public school that are not related to a student's academic requirements or success in a course.
3. Regular curricular activities are defined as those that are required for satisfactory course completion.
4. Students entering grades 10 - 12 must, for the last two (2) terms/semesters of attendance and summer school, if applicable, have a passing grade and earn the appropriate number of credits in each of six (6) subjects that total six (6) Carnegie units of credit, including four (4) credits from the four (4) core subjects composed of English, science, social studies, and mathematics with a numerical composite average of 70. Students entering grades 8 and 9 must, for the last two terms/semesters of attendance and summer school, if applicable, have a passing grade in five (5) subjects with a composite numerical average of 70. Students promoted to the seventh grade for the first time are eligible. (A term/semester is defined as one-half of a school year as defined by the local Board of Education adopted school year calendar.)
5. Physical education may count as only one (1) unit per year.
6. Eligibility shall be determined on the first day of the local school year and shall remain in effect for one (1) complete school year. Students deemed ineligible at the beginning of the school year by virtue of having failed to meet the requirements outlined in item #3 may regain their eligibility either by successfully completing the required courses through an accredited program by September 1<sup>st</sup> OR at the end of the first term/semester by meeting the requirements for eligibility in the two most recently completed terms/semesters,

including summer school. Eligibility restoration must be determined no later than five (5) days after the beginning of the succeeding term/semester.\* An ineligible student may not become eligible after the fifth day of each term/semester.

7. Bona fide transfers may be handled according to rules of the Alabama High School Athletic Association for sports and rules to be developed by the local Board of Education as they pertain to other extracurricular activities. The rules and regulations for athletic eligibility for transfers according to the Alabama High School Athletic Association may be found at [www.AHSAA.com](http://www.AHSAA.com).
8. Each eligible student must have a minimum composite numerical average of 70 on six (6) Carnegie units from the preceding year, including summer school. Summer school work passed may substitute for regular school work repeated in computing the 70 average.
9. Each eligible student involved in athletics must meet the definition of a regular student as defined by the Alabama High School Athletic Association.
10. Any student who earns more than four (4) credits in the core curriculum in any given year or who accumulates a total in excess of the required four (4) per year may be exempt from earning the four (4) core courses in the succeeding year as long as that student remains on track for graduation with his/her class and the grade was not previously used in calculating eligibility.
11. Sixth grade students are eligible for non-athletic extra-curricular activities. Students promoted to the seventh grade for the first time are eligible for all extra-curricular activities.
12. School sponsors are required to submit a request for each curricular activity that occurs outside the regular school day and/or school to the Principal, Superintendent, and the local Board of Education for approval.
13. Each request for full participation by all students, regardless of academic standing, in a curricular activity shall be granted if the Principal, Superintendent, and the local Board of Education approve participation in the activity as an extension of a course requirement and it is an event sanctioned by a state/national subject matter association.
14. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this regulation, activities offered by the school through mathematics, science, band, choral music, and other courses at events such as athletic events (pre-game, game, halftime, or other breaks), club conventions, parades, amusement park trips and competitions, trips by tour companies, performances at various meetings, etc., are extracurricular, and students academically ineligible under this policy shall not be allowed to participate.

\*Unit calculations for regaining eligibility at the end of the first term/semester may not coincide exactly with units for graduation for students in schools on a different academic calendar. (Policies 5.80 and 5.81).

## NCAA INITIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### NCAA DIVISION I

- Sixteen (16) core courses are required (for subject-area requirements see chart at [http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2018DIEC\\_Requirements\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_20180117.pdf](http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2018DIEC_Requirements_Fact_Sheet_20180117.pdf)).
  - Ten of the 16 core courses must be completed before the seventh semester (senior year) of high school.
  - Seven of the 10 core courses must be English, math or natural/physical science.
- Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.30
- Earn the ACT/SAT score matching your core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale  
See [http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2018DIEC\\_Requirements\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_20180117.pdf](http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2018DIEC_Requirements_Fact_Sheet_20180117.pdf)
- Graduate high school

### NCAA DIVISION II

- Division II currently requires 16 core courses.
- Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.200.
- Earn the ACT/SAT score matching your core-course GPA on the Division II full qualifier sliding scale.  
See [http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2018DIEC\\_Requirements\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_20180117.pdf](http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2018DIEC_Requirements_Fact_Sheet_20180117.pdf)
- Graduate high school.

The NCAA core GPA is calculated using NCAA core courses only

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# STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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A student's individual rights and associated responsibilities must be viewed in relationship to the health, safety, and welfare of the majority of students in each school. It is our intent to develop, with our students and parents, a better understanding of some of the rules and regulations of the Tuscaloosa County School System.

## FREE SPEECH/EXPRESSION

Citizens in our democracy are guaranteed self-expression under the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution; therefore, in a democratic society one of the basic purposes of education is to prepare students for responsible self-expression.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO:

- respect the rights of other individuals;
- to express disagreements in a manner which does not infringe upon the rights of others and does not interfere with the orderly educational process;
- act in a manner which preserves the dignity of patriotic observances;
- respect the religious beliefs of others;
- plan for, seek approval of, and conduct activities which are consistent with the educational objectives of the school.

### STUDENT RIGHTS ARE TO:

- form and express viewpoints through speaking and writing in a manner which is not obscene, slanderous, or libelous;
  - affirm their identity with American ideals (i.e., pledging allegiance to the American Flag);
  - refrain from any activity which violates the precepts of their religion.
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## DUE PROCESS

A student must know what conduct is appropriate and what is forbidden; therefore, the rules and regulations of the Board of Education governing student conduct shall be distributed to the students and parents and posted in a conspicuous place. Prior to any suspension the Principal or his/her designee shall advise the student in question of the particular misconduct and the basis for accusation; provide the student an opportunity to explain his/her version of the situation; and immediately remove from the school premises without benefit of the above procedures any student whose continued presence in the school poses a danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process. The necessary procedure shall follow as soon as practicable [REF: Goss v. Lopez, 95 S. Ct. 729 (1975) Tuscaloosa County]. Student rights are to

- be informed of rule violations and given the opportunity to present evidence in their defense;
  - appeal disciplinary actions. (All appeals should be made in accordance with the appeals and grievance procedures.)
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## PRIVACY AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Federal and State laws and recent court rulings uphold the authority of school officials to conduct reasonable searches and seizures of property when there are "reasonable grounds." The law permits the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education, its employees, agents, or designees to conduct reasonable searches of students and to seize student property to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all students.

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## STUDENT SEARCHES BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS

### SCHOOL PROPERTY

School officials shall inspect or search lockers or desks only if there is a reasonable cause to believe that articles are kept there that may endanger other individuals in the school or that such articles possessed are contrary to law or the regulations of the Board.

### INDIVIDUALS

School officials (school Principal or approved designee under the direction of the school Principal only) may make searches of a student and/or personal belongings, if there is reasonable cause to believe that the student is carrying articles that may endanger other individuals in the school or that such articles possessed are contrary to law or the regulations of the Board. If a student is searched, it shall be in private by a school official of the same sex with a certified staff member of the same sex present. In any case in which the Principal or designee determines that a search of more than a student's pockets, jacket, cap, outer shirt, shoes, socks, belt, purse, book bag, other outer garments and articles, and electronic devices is justified by sufficient reasonable cause, the Principal or designee shall notify the student's parent/guardian prior to the search and the parent/guardian shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be present.

### AUTOMOBILES

Vehicles driven onto school property by students are subject to search by the Principal or designee if the Principal or designee reasonably suspects that the contents of the vehicle may present a threat or a potential threat to the health, safety or welfare of other students, staff, or to the school in general. In the case of a locked vehicle, every effort will be made to have the vehicle unlocked by the student before proceeding with the search. **A student who refuses to cooperate in allowing a search of a vehicle brought by him or her on school property shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including long-term suspension.** Student will lose all parking privileges on school campus and will be ineligible for parking permits.

### IMPOUNDMENT

If a search as noted above reveals items specifically prohibited by law, Board policies/regulations, or school regulations, such items shall be impounded and notification of such action given to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) (Policy: 5.31).

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## STUDENT SEARCHES BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

To provide and maintain a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and visitors, the Board may permit law enforcement agencies to make periodic, unannounced visits, as applicable law allows, to any public school in the Tuscaloosa County School System for the purpose of detecting the presence of illegal drugs or weapons. The possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or weapons will result in immediate suspension from school and possible criminal charges being brought against the student(s). In addition, staff and visitors are subject to possible criminal charges if found in possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or weapons. These visits by law enforcement officials should be conducted with the knowledge and cooperation of the local school Principal and Superintendent or his/her designee (Policy: 5.31).

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## INTERROGATIONS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

### INTERROGATIONS AT THE REQUEST OF SCHOOL OFFICIALS

When the Principal or his/her designee has evidence and/or reasonable cause to believe that a crime has been committed on-campus by one or more students, law enforcement officials, to include juvenile authorities, may be requested to come to the school to investigate the incident. Such investigations may include interrogation of students. In the event a student is to be interrogated about a crime committed on-campus, the law enforcement official must read the Miranda rights pertaining to the student being interviewed. The juvenile Miranda rights are distinguished from the adult Miranda rights based on the student's right to contact a parent/guardian through the provided reasonable means. The decision to contact a parent/guardian is solely up to the student to be interviewed. A waiver of the Miranda rights is available to the student who agrees to an immediate interview. School officials have no duty to notify the parent/guardian of any student to be interviewed. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted by the student through reasonable means or cannot be present within a reasonable time, the law enforcement official may proceed with the interview in the absence of the parent (Attorney General Ruling, December 9, 1974). School officials have no duty to intervene in the interview process on the ground that the parent cannot be reached. A school official must be present at the interview, but cannot refuse the law enforcement officer permission to conduct the interview.

### INTERROGATIONS AT THE REQUEST OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

When law enforcement officers make it known that they wish to talk to a student concerning an off-campus crime while under the supervision of the school, the student will be called to the office of the Principal. The law enforcement officer must read the student the juvenile Miranda rights from which the student becomes aware of the distinguished right to notify a parent/guardian of the impending investigation. Neither the law enforcement officer nor the school Principal or his/her designee has the duty to contact the student's parent/guardian. The decision to communicate with a parent/guardian is a decision to be made only by the student to be interviewed. The student may exercise the right to communicate with a parent/guardian through provided reasonable means. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted through the provided reasonable means or cannot be present within a reasonable time, the law enforcement officials may proceed with the interview (Attorney General ruling, December 9, 1974). The student may sign a waiver to the Miranda rights and agree to an immediate interview with a law enforcement officer. If the parent wants to be present, then the law enforcement officer can take the student in custody and conduct the interview with the parent present.

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## RANDOM DRILLS USING WEAPONS DETECTORS, METAL DETECTORS AND/OR CANINE UNITS

To provide and maintain a safe and secure environment for students, school personnel, and authorized visitors random drills using metal detectors and/or canine units may be utilized. Metal detectors may be employed by trained school Board employees and/or law enforcement officials at the request and approval of the local school Principal and Superintendent or his/her designee. Canine units may be employed by trained law enforcement officials at the request and approval of the local school Principal and Superintendent or his/her designee. (Policy: 5.31.2).

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## SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

To provide and maintain a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and authorized visitors, the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education may use surveillance equipment on properties owned and/or maintained by the school system. Properties include buildings and grounds as well as vehicles owned and/or operated by the school system. Equipment shall not be used where there is an expectation of privacy (i.e., bathrooms, gyms, locker rooms, private offices, and classrooms). All school personnel, students, and parents shall be informed that they are subject to being videotaped while in school buildings, on school grounds, at school events, and on system-owned/maintained vehicles. Any information obtained through the use of surveillance equipment shall be used only by Tuscaloosa County School System administration for school safety, disciplinary matters, law enforcement, or other lawful purposes [*The Code of Alabama*, 16-4-7, 16-6B3, -4, -6 (1975); *Alabama Administrative Code* 290-4-1-.01(4, 5) Alabama State Department of Education, September 2, 1997; (Tuscaloosa County: November 13, 2000)]. (Policy: 5.31.1) Due to student privacy rights, surveillance video recording shall not be shared with any student's parent or legal guardian.

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## STUDENT RECORDS

A well-developed student record file contains information needed for making appropriate educational decisions for the students. Student records are to be treated confidentially and should contain information that is relevant, accurate, and appropriate.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND GUARDIANS ARE TO:

- inform the school of any information that may be useful in making appropriate educational decisions;
- authorize the release of pertinent information to those individuals or agencies who are working actively and constructively for the benefit of the student; release of records of students 17 years of age or younger who attend an elementary or secondary school requires the signature of the parent/guardian except when released to other educational institutions or when subpoenaed by the courts.

### RIGHTS OF STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND GUARDIANS ARE TO:

- inspect, review, and challenge the information contained in records directly relating to the student;
- be protected by legal provisions which prohibit the release of personal identifiable information to other than legally authorized persons without the consent of the parent, guardian, or eligible student; eligible students are those 18 years of age or older.

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## FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. Generally, the school must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's records; however, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:

- School employees who have a need-to-know;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Certain government officials in order to carry out lawful functions;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations doing certain studies for the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- Individuals who have obtained court orders or subpoenas;
- Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile system, pursuant to specific state laws.

The Tuscaloosa County School System designates the following as “directory” information:

- Student’s name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number

Schools may also disclose, without consent, “directory” type information. **Should parents decide not to release directory information for their child, they must notify the school Principal in writing within ten (10) days of the beginning of the school year or within 10 days of enrollment for transfer students. A new request for non-release must be completed each school year.**

## STUDENT GRIEVANCES

The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education believes that the students have both the right and responsibility to express school-related concerns and grievances to the faculty and the administration. Therefore, students shall be assured the opportunity for an orderly review of grievances. Students should request an appointment with the Principal or his/her designees which will not interfere with the regularly scheduled classes or school activities. The faculty and administration will strive to resolve student grievances at the most immediate level of supervision. In all cases when the student’s grievance cannot be resolved at the local school, students shall follow the system’s grievance procedure.

## MARRIED STUDENTS

Married students are eligible to attend the schools of the school system and participate in regular school programs. Such students must maintain a responsible relationship to the school and other students and shall be expected to abide by all rules and regulations applicable to all students.

## STUDENT USE OF MOTORIZED VEHICLES

Student use of motorized vehicles is limited to high school campuses. Students operating motorized vehicles on school premises shall do so in accordance with Alabama traffic laws and such rules and regulations as may be formulated by local school officials. The privilege to operate a private vehicle on school property will be revoked if safety rules are violated. Students may be required to present evidence of an Alabama driver’s license before they are authorized to bring a vehicle on school premises. In an effort to maintain order and safety in and on school parking facilities, school personnel are authorized to secure and require students operating motorized vehicles on campus to purchase parking decals, numbers, etc.

Violation of this policy may result in arrest and prosecution in accordance with Alabama law and/or disciplinary action by local school officials.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION

The state of Alabama legislative support for character education started in 1995, Act(s) 1975 Code of Alabama, Section 16-6B-2(h); 1995 Accountability Law, Act 5-313. The State Board of Education and all local boards shall develop and implement a comprehensive character education program for all grades to consist of not less than ten minutes instruction per day focusing upon the students’ development of the following character traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, and perseverance. Each plan of instruction shall include the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag” (1995 Accountability Law)

## STUDENT BULLYING PREVENTION

### (THE JAMARI TERRELL WILLIAMS STUDENT BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY)

It is the policy of the Board that no student shall engage in or be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence, or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics that have been identified by the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

The term “bullying” as used in this policy means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior that takes place on or off of school property, on a school bus, at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:

- place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
- have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student;
- have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school;
- have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function;
- have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Bullying, intimidation, violence or threats of violence are prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary consequences and sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the victim of such conduct:

- The student’s race;
- The student’s sex;
- The student’s sexual orientation;
- The student’s religion;

- The student's national origin; or
- The student's disability.

#### REPORTING, INVESTIGATION, AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

- Complaints alleging violations of this policy must be made on Board-approved complaint forms available on the Tuscaloosa County School System website ([www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net)), the local school website, the school office, or in the Tuscaloosa County School System Parent/Information Guide. The complaint must be delivered to the principal or principal's designee by either mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of this policy may be presented and resolved informally.
- Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the designee will undertake an investigation of the complaint in a reasonably prompt time period. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violation(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.
- Any reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.
- The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS

It is the policy of the Board that sexual harassment of a student by other students or employees is unlawful behavior and will not be permitted in the school setting. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of the student's academic progress or completion of a school-related activity; OR
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis in evaluating the student's performance in a course of study or other school-related activity; OR
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

A student who feels that he or she has been sexually harassed should report the incident to the school Principal and the designated reporting officer.\* The student may request that the school Principal appoint a designee of the same sex to hear his/her complaint. The complaint should be made within ten (10) calendar days following the incident or the latest occurrence in the series of such incidents. The complaint may be made to the Principal in person or may be made in writing, signed by the complainant and then delivered to the reporting officer by the Principal. If such report is first made verbally, then it will be the responsibility of the Principal or reporting officer to reduce the same to writing and to have the complainant sign the written complaint (Policy: 3.43).

\*The Tuscaloosa County School System's Sexual Harassment Officer may be contacted at (205)-342-2725.

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# STUDENT CONDUCT

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It is the belief of the Tuscaloosa County School System that a uniform code of conduct for students is important to the pursuit of academic excellence in order that the students may have meaningful learning experiences. This can only be accomplished in schools where the environment is free from distraction caused by disruptive behavior. Creating such an environment requires the cooperation of the parents/guardians, students, Board of Education, and all employees of the school system. It is important that each person connected with the school understands the importance of a consistent set of behavior standards in order that a positive environment can be established and maintained.

As students progress in our school system, it is reasonable to assume that an increase in age and maturity will result in the students assuming greater responsibility for their actions. It is recognized that differences in age and maturity require different types of disciplinary action; however, the procedures identified shall apply to all students in grades K - 12. For effective instruction to occur there must be a cooperative relationship among student, parent, and educator.

This relationship may be described as follows:

## **PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:**

- maintain regular communication with the school authorities concerning their children's progress and conduct;
- insure that their children are in daily attendance and promptly report and explain an absence or tardiness to the school;
- provide their children with the resources needed to complete class work;
- bring to the attention of school authorities any problem or condition which affects their children or other children of the school;
- discuss report cards and work assignments with their children;
- maintain up-to-date work and emergency telephone numbers at the school, including doctor, hospital preferences, and emergency health care form;
- attend scheduled parent/teacher conferences

## **STUDENTS SHOULD:**

- attend all classes daily and be punctual in attendance;
- be prepared to come to class with appropriate working materials;
- be respectful of all individuals and property;
- refrain from profane or inflammatory statements;
- conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner;
- be clean, neat, and appropriately dressed;
- be responsible for their own work;
- abide by the rules and regulations of the school and each classroom teacher;
- seek changes in an orderly and recognized manner.

## **SCHOOLS SHOULD:**

- encourage the use of good guidance procedures;
  - maintain an atmosphere conducive to good behavior;
  - exhibit an attitude of respect for students;
  - plan a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of students;
  - promote effective training or discipline based upon fair and impartial treatment of all students;
  - develop a good working relationship among staff and with students;
  - encourage the school staff, parents/guardians, and students to use the services of community agencies;
  - promote regular parental communication with the school;
  - encourage parent participation in affairs of the school;
  - seek to involve students in the development of policy;
  - endeavor to involve the entire community in the improvement of the quality of life within the community;
  - notify parents, if possible, when students are absent;
  - bring to the attention of parents any problem or condition which exists with their children.
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## **PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S CONDUCT**

The Board hereby advises parents/guardians of their responsibility for the conduct of their children based on *Legislative Act 93-672* which amends Section 16-28-12, *Code of Alabama*. The Act has important implications for parents and students of the school system. Section I Title 16, *Code of Alabama*, 1975 is amended to read:

- (A) Each parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of any child required to attend school or receive regular instruction by a private tutor who fails to have the child enrolled in school or who fails to send the child to school, or to have him or her instructed by a private tutor during the time the child is required to attend a public school, private school, denominational school, or parochial school or be instructed by a private tutor, or fails to require the child to regularly attend the school or tutor, or fails to compel the child to properly conduct himself or herself as a pupil in accordance with a written policy on school behavior adopted by the local Board of Education and documented by the appropriate school official which conduct may result in the suspension of the pupil, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than one thousand five-hundred dollars (\$1500) and may also be sentenced to hard labor and/or jail time for up to one year. The absence of a child without the consent of the principal teacher of the school he or she attends or should attend, or of the tutor who instructs or should instruct the child, shall be prima facie evidence of the violation of this section.
- (B) Any parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of any child enrolled in public school who fails to require the child to regularly attend the school or tutor, or fails to compel the child to properly conduct himself or herself as a pupil in accordance with a written policy on school behavior adopted by the local Board and documented by the appropriate school official which conduct may result in the suspension of the pupil, shall be reported by the Principal to the Superintendent of the school system in which the suspected violation occurred. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall report such suspected violations to the district attorney within 10 days. Any Principal or Superintendent or his/her designee intentionally failing to report such a suspected violation shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor. The district attorney shall vigorously enforce this section to ensure proper conduct and required attendance by any child enrolled in the public schools.

## **OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

In an effort to implement and communicate the basic principle of the Act, parents/guardians and students shall be informed of the intent of Act 93-672 and Section 16-28-12, **Code of Alabama** through the printing of its basic principles in student handbooks and/or in school newsletters. Such information should be communicated at the beginning of each school year.

## BASIC PRINCIPLES

### Parents/Guardians

- must enroll their child in school (i.e., all children between the ages of 6 and 17 shall be required to attend school);
- are responsible for the regular attendance of their child;
- are to compel their child to properly conduct himself or herself in accordance with the policies of the Board related to student behavior;
- should be informed that inappropriate conduct or behavior on the part of their child may result in suspension from school and such suspensions will be reported to the Superintendent and District Attorney by school administrators;
- will be subject to prosecution by the District Attorney on the third suspension of their child pursuant to Section 16-28-12, **Code of Alabama**.
- may be referred to the District Attorney's office on the first or second suspension if, in the opinion of the Principal, the offense committed by their child warrants such action.

School Principals and the Superintendent are responsible for reporting violations of this Act to the District Attorney's office. School Principals and the Superintendent are hereby informed that the intentional failure to report a suspected violation of this Act could result in being declared guilty of a Class C misdemeanor. Such reports shall be made using the school system's *Notification of Suspension* form.

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## JURISDICTION OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Students enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County School System are subject to the policies of the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education and to the rules and regulations of the schools.

This authority applies to all school-sponsored activities including but not necessarily limited to:

- regular school activities;
- transportation on school buses;
- field trips;
- athletic functions;
- activities during which appropriate school personnel have supervisory responsibility for students.

All school regulations and prohibitions pertain to motorized vehicles driven or parked on school property. In addition to the foregoing, jurisdictional control over the student may be extended to the immediate vicinity of the school when the conduct of the student is deemed to have a detrimental effect on the health, safety, and welfare of the school. The authority of the school officials to control student conduct off school grounds and outside school hours is well settled in the law. When the students are engaged in a school-sponsored activity, the authority of the school officials is the same as if the activity took place on school property.

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## STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THEIR CONDUCT

Students enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County School System are to obey all school policies, rules, and regulations and become familiar with the contents of the *Student-Parent Information Guide*.

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## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity ensures students possess the responsibility to acquire skills honestly in the classroom that aids them in college and the workforce. Academic integrity also guarantees students a quality learning experience in which work is evaluated fairly and hard work is recognized and valued. Students in the Tuscaloosa County School System are expected to submit original work and give credit to other peoples' ideas. Maintaining academic integrity involves:

- Creating and expressing your own ideas in course work;
  - Acknowledging all sources of information;
  - Completing assignments independently or acknowledging collaboration;
  - Accurately reporting results when conducting your own research or with respect to labs;
  - Honesty during examinations.
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## CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Students are responsible for their own work. Students who share homework assignments are often unprepared for classroom assignments and exams. Cheating in any form is unacceptable. Students must understand that plagiarism is not only a form of cheating, but it is also against the law.

Any action which misleadingly implies someone else's work is your own in plagiarism. Some examples of plagiarism are:

- Submit a paper to be graded or reviewed that you have not written on your own.
  - Copy answers or text from another classmate and submit it as your own.
  - Quote or paraphrase from another paper without crediting the original author.
  - Cite data without crediting the original source.
  - Propose another author's idea as if it were your own.
  - Fabricate references or using incorrect references.
  - Submit someone else's presentation, program, spreadsheet, or other file with only minor alterations.
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## CONSIDERATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

For students with disabilities, refer to special education rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

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## ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The primary goal of the technology environment is to support all educational and instructional endeavors of the students and the teachers of the Tuscaloosa County School System.

### INTRODUCTION:

- **User** will include anyone, including employees, students, and authorized guests by the TCSS IT Department for the use of any of TCSS technology, including, but not limited to, computers, both wired and wireless networks, Internet, email, chat rooms, phones and other forms of technology services and products.
- **Network** is both the wired and wireless networks' includes our Wide Area Network.
- **Equipment** includes, smart phones, cellular phones, PDA's, Mp3 Players, iOS devices, desktop computers, tablets, laptops, netbooks and any portable storage or network device.

To ensure that students receive a quality education and that employees are able to work in a professional and intellectually stimulating environment, it is the intention of the Tuscaloosa County School System to provide all students and employees with access to a variety of technology resources. All TCSS students and staff must acknowledge and adhere to this agreement regardless of whether such use occurs on or off school district property when using TCSS technological resources.

The creation of a large and varied technology environment demands that technology usage be conducted in legally and ethically appropriate ways. We recognize that the use of technology always requires attempts to balance the benefits against the possibilities of danger, security problems, and abuse. Rapid changes in technology and growth in the range of content available makes this a constant challenge. Thus, it is the intention of the Tuscaloosa County School System that all technology resources will be used in accordance with any and all school system policies and procedures as well as local, state, and federal laws.

Some of these procedures pertain to technology equipment personally owned by school employees and students and brought into school facilities. All personal technologies used on any TCSS campus are subject to this agreement and may be used only if such use is in compliance with all school system policies, procedures, and guidelines as well as local, state, and federal laws. This would also include any external storage medium including Dropbox, Google Docs or similar online storage.

Employees are prohibited from emailing outside the school system or storing/saving on external storage devices or portable devices that do not remain on campus, electronic (or printed) copies of student or staff personal information. This information includes but is not limited to data containing social security numbers, information protected by FERPA, and any other sensitive and/or protected information. In the event that this type of information is stored on a portable or external device and/or said device is lost or stolen, the Director of Information Technology should be notified immediately.

Any questions about this agreement, its interpretation, or specific circumstances shall be directed to the Director of Information Technology before proceeding. Violations of this agreement will be handled in a manner consistent with comparable situations requiring disciplinary and/or legal action.

### ACCESS & USE OF TCSS TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- The use of all Tuscaloosa County School System technology resources is a privilege, not a right. Any inappropriate or suspected inappropriate use can result in a cancellation of those privileges, pending investigation. Moreover, users of Tuscaloosa County School System's technology must be aware that Tuscaloosa County School System cannot assume any liability arising out of the illegal or inappropriate use of technology resources. The Director of Information Technology, technology managers, and/or school system administrators will determine when inappropriate use has occurred, and they have the right to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts.
- Individuals may use only accounts, files, software, and/or other technology resources that are assigned to, provided, or approved for him/her.
- Individuals identified as a real or suspected security risk can be denied access.
- Any use of technology resources that reduces the efficiency of use for others can be considered a violation of this Agreement.
- Personal technology-related devices (if connected to the TCSS network) such as, but not limited to laptops, mobile devices, smart-phones, iPods, etc. used on school grounds are subject to all items covered in this Agreement and other applicable published guidelines.
- Employees are responsible for reporting information security violations to appropriate personnel. Employees should not demonstrate the suspected security violation to other users.
- Users may be held responsible for any loss or damage caused by intentional or negligent acts in caring for computers while under their control.
- Further guidelines on how one should care for an issued district-owned and -maintained technology resource (e.g. iPad, MacBook, etc.) can be found in the TCSS-Connect Student Family Handbook and TCSS-Connect Faculty Implementation Guide.

### PRIVACY

- Users should not have any expectation that their use of technology resources, including files stored by them on the Tuscaloosa County School System's network, will be private and secure from access by others. Reasonable steps will be taken to maintain the security of technology resources, but no assurance can be given that penetration of such security will not occur.
- Because communications on the Internet are public in nature, all users should be careful to maintain appropriate and responsible communications. Tuscaloosa County School System cannot guarantee the privacy, security, or confidentiality of any information sent or received via the Internet, an email correspondence, telephone, etc.
- To maintain network integrity and to insure that the network is being used responsibly, local school technology representative, technicians and/or other designated technology staff reserve the right to inspect any and all data, including data stored by individual users on individual school or personal devices (if connected to the TCSS network). Users should be aware that activities might be monitored at any time, without notice.
- Under certain circumstances, TCSS may be required to disclose such electronic information to law enforcement or other third parties, for example, as a response to a document production request in a lawsuit against TCSS, as a response to a public records request, or as evidence of illegal activity in a criminal investigation.
- Users are encouraged to avoid storing personal and/or private information on technology devices or network resources owned by the district and/or school.

### DATA SECURITY

- Students and staff are expected to follow all local, state and federal laws in addition to this acceptable use agreement regarding the protection of student and staff confidential data.
- Individuals may not attempt to log into the network using any network account and/or password other than the login(s) assigned to him/her. Individuals may not allow someone to use his/her network account and/or password to access the network, email, or the Internet.

- In emergency situations, student pictures or other personally identifiable information can be shared with outside agencies in accordance with this signed "Tuscaloosa County School System Acceptable Use Agreement" and in accordance with FERPA guidelines.
- District or school data, such as but not limited to SIS information, accessed through school system technology resources may not be used for any private business activity.
- The system-wide technology staff does perform routine backups in an effort to assure continuity of business. There can be no assurance, however, that technology resources will be available within a particular time frame following an outage. There is no guarantee that information that existed prior to an outage, malfunction, or deletion, can be recovered. **Users are expected to maintain and back up their critical files and data using the district-provided cloud platform.**

## **COPYRIGHT**

Any questions about copyright provisions should be directed to the district Director of Information Technology, local school technology representatives, or local school media specialist.\

- Legal and ethical practices of appropriate use of technology resources will be taught to students and employees in the system (i.e. as part of the Technology Education Curriculum, during lab orientation, network orientation, or faculty meetings, etc.). Again, all questions regarding legal and ethical practices of appropriate use should be directed to the local school technology representative and/or district Director of Information Technology.
- Copyright is implied for all information (text, data, and graphics) published on the Internet. Student and employee web page authors will be held responsible for the contents of their pages. Do not "borrow" icons, sounds, or graphics from other pages without documented permission. It is the student or employee's responsibility to secure proper usage permission. Duplication of any copyrighted software is prohibited unless specifically allowed in the license agreement and then should occur only under the supervision and direction of the technology staff.
- Media Streaming on the internet (including, but not limited to, Disney+, Amazon Prime, etc.), must be used in respect to the platform's own terms of use. Most streaming services prevent the redistribution of their media, meaning that they are not suitable for classroom use. If a clip from a movie or other piece of media is to be used, employees should seek alternative legal means for showing these copyrighted materials.

## **EMAIL**

Tuscaloosa County School System provide access to email accounts for all employees, long-term substitutes, and students. Email accounts may also be granted for school related organizations, classes with designated employee sponsors, or board-approved contractors. This agreement addresses each user. Tuscaloosa County School System make a reasonable effort to maintain (backup) email for normal business operations. Technical support is provided for Tuscaloosa County School System email accounts used to conduct educational and/or instructional business.

- Personal use of email is permitted as long as it does not violate this Tuscaloosa County School System's Acceptable Use Agreement and/or adversely affect others or the speed of the network.
- Use of Tuscaloosa County School System's email accounts for harassing or threatening is strictly prohibited.
- Tuscaloosa County School System's email accounts may not be used for political activity, personal gain, commercial purposes, or profit.
- Tuscaloosa County School System's email accounts may not be used for attempting to send or sending anonymous messages or for sending mass emails unless to parent lists or for other educational purposes.
- Tuscaloosa County School System's email accounts may not be used for posting or forwarding other user's personal communication without the author's consent.
- Because email is not securely transmitted, discretion must be used when sending, or encouraging the receipt of email containing sensitive information about students, families, school system employees, or any individuals. There can be no assurance that email will be confidential and/or private.
- There is a system-imposed limit on storage for email accounts. Users meeting or exceeding the limit will be unable to send or receive emails. Users who are required to maintain email for more than 365 days should print said emails.
- Incoming and outgoing email is filtered by the district for inappropriate content. However, no filtering system is foolproof, and material deemed inappropriate by individual users may be transmitted in spite of filtering. Tuscaloosa County School System cannot assume any liability for such breaches of the filter.
- At the discretion of the Director of Information Technology, email accounts may be locked without notice.
- Users should follow district procedures for encrypting email with sensitive data, for reporting suspected Phishing emails, and other email -related guidelines as directed by the TCSS IT Department.

## **INTERNET USE**

The Internet and electronic communications offer fluid environments in which students may access or be exposed to materials and information from diverse and rapidly changing sources, including some that may be harmful to students. The intent of the Tuscaloosa County School System is to provide access to resources available via the Internet with the understanding that staff and students will access and use information that is appropriate for their various curricula. All school rules and guidelines for appropriate technology usage, as well as local, state, and federal laws apply to usage of the Internet. Teachers should always screen all Internet resources before projecting them in the classroom.

- Students gain access to the Internet by agreeing to conduct themselves in a considerate and responsible manner and by acknowledgement by their parents/legal guardian via this agreement. The acceptable use agreement is not transferable, and therefore, may not be shared. Existing acceptable use agreements are valid until new forms are received.
- Internet activity can and will be monitored in accordance with state and federal laws (e.g. CIPA), along with other aspects of technology usage. Internet access for all users is filtered, through one central point, by URL (web address) and by IP address and may be filtered by keyword. URLs (web addresses) and IP addresses may be added to or deleted from the filtered list by the Director of Information Technology and his or her designee. Staff members may request to review filtered categories. Users requesting sites for blocking or unblocking must list specific URLs.

Successful or unsuccessful attempts to bypass the Internet filter by using proxies or other resources are a violation of this agreement.

## **WEB PUBLISHING**

The Tuscaloosa County School System's web site is limited to usage associated with activities of Tuscaloosa County School System. The web site cannot be used for personal financial gain, to express personal or political opinions, or to editorialize. The Director of Public Relations reserves the right to reject all or part of a proposed or posted web page.

- Links from pages housed on the Tuscaloosa County School System's website to personal blogs, social networking sites, advertisements unrelated to school system business, and/or personal web pages are prohibited.
- Student pictures or other personally identifiable information can be used in accordance with the signed "Tuscaloosa County School System Acceptable Use Agreement" and in accordance with CIPA and FERPA guidelines. Student posting of personally identifying information of any kind on the
- Tuscaloosa County School System's website or linking to personal information from the Tuscaloosa County School System's website is prohibited. Personally identifying information includes home and/or school address, work address, home and/or school phone numbers, full name, social security number, etc.
- Individual students may be identified by first name and first letter of last name.
- Caution should be used when photographs of any students are included on web pages. Group photographs without names are preferred.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS**

Social media can be a valuable tool for both personal and professional use. However, as with any tool, it must be used with skill and care. The guidelines below have been developed to help protect students and employees from charges of inappropriate use. Although many of the items below may reference specific sites, these guidelines and cautions apply to all social networking venues.

A potential danger exists when employees communicate directly with students or instruct students to communicate directly to each other or the general public on social media sites that are not hosted by Tuscaloosa County School System. It is strongly recommended that teachers do not "friend" current students and/or students under 18 years of age. There may be exceptions, such as a relative, a friend's child, etc.; however, as a general rule, it is recommended that teachers do not "friend" students. If an employee chooses to do so, that employee assumes all personal responsibility.

District-sponsored and approved methods for contacting students include Microsoft 365 platforms and School Status and should be the primary means for electronic parent communication. District technology personnel have immediate access to online dialogue when challenges are made regarding inappropriate use if the sites are hosted by Tuscaloosa County School System.

- Remember, once something is posted on a social networking site, it may be available forever.
- Please avoid posting comments that discuss or criticize others.
- Only post what could be shared in a face-to-face meeting with the public. No confidential student information should be shared.
- Make sure posts and pictures are presented in a professional role or manner

## **DISCLAIMER**

TCSS makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the service it is providing. TCSS will not be responsible for any damages suffered by any user. Such damages include, but are not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions, whether caused by the school district's or the user's negligence, errors, or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The school district specifically disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its Internet services.

## **EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE USE OF RESOURCES**

Anything that would be considered inappropriate in "paper form" is also considered inappropriate in electronic form. The following are examples of inappropriate activities when using any Tuscaloosa County School System's network, email system, hardware, software, technology service, and/or Internet access. This list is not all-inclusive but is intended to provide general guidance.

- Using another user's password or attempting to discover another user's password
- Sharing passwords
- Unauthorized access of another user's files, folders, home directory, or work
- Saving information on any network drive or directory other than your personal home directory or a teacher-specified and approved location
- Downloading, installing, or copying software of any kind onto a workstation, laptop, home directory, or any network drive
- Harassing, insulting, embarrassing, or attacking others via technology resources
- Damaging any technology resources, including, but not limited to, printers, telephones, computers, computer systems, or computer networks.
- Placing irresponsible demands on limited resources such as Internet bandwidth, disk space and printing capacity
- Accessing inappropriate material from web sites or attempting to bypass the Internet filter to access web sites that have been blocked.
- Sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene, racist, profane, discriminatory, threatening, or inflammatory language in a document, email, etc.
- Using a digital camera, camera phone, or any other device capable of storing a still or video image to take inappropriate and/or embarrassing pictures
- Editing or modifying digital pictures with the intent to embarrass, harass or bully
- Posting any false or damaging information about other people, the school system, or other organizations
- Using images or text from an online source without appropriate reference (i.e. plagiarism)
- Use of technology resources to create illegal materials (i.e. counterfeit money, fake identification, etc.)

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## **DESCRIPTIONS OF CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

### **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

To establish and maintain an educational climate conducive to learning, the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education permits the use of corporal punishment (paddling) as a last resort and under the following conditions:

- The student has been notified of the offense for which he/she is to receive corporal punishment, and the student has been given an opportunity to explain his/her actions;
- The punishment is administered by the school principal or his/her designee and witnessed by a certified school employee, preferably of the same gender as the student;
- The punishment is administered out of view of any other students;
- The use of corporal punishment shall at all times be reasonable and proper and must not be severe enough to cause bodily injury to the student;
- All cases of corporal punishment shall be documented by both the person administering the punishment and the witness;
- Documentation shall be filed in the principal's office;
- Parents/guardians shall be notified that their child has received corporal punishment; and;
- Corporal punishment shall consist of no more than three (3) licks administered to the buttocks with a smooth surface paddle free of holes and/or cracks.

### **BEHAVIOR PLAN**

A supervised behavior plan for correction of misbehavior may be designed to address persistent, disruptive, or continued disregard for general school rules. The school's Problem Solving Team may initiate a Behavior Intervention Plan in conjunction with the student, parents, and teachers. All Problem Solving Team members will be included in the dialogue. Special education teachers will be included in the dialogue for students with an IEP. The 504 Chairperson and specified teachers will be included in the dialogue for students with a 504.

### **DETENTION**

A student may be detained for disciplinary purposes before, during, or after school and will be under the supervision of a certified school staff member. Detention can be scheduled at the discretion of school administration and may include Friday evening or Saturday.

**BUS SUSPENSION**

A student who misbehaves on the bus or one who demonstrates misbehavior at the bus stop may lose privilege of riding the bus for a period of time. The period of time that a student is suspended from riding the bus may range from one day to permanent removal of bus privileges.

**SUPERVISED WORK/CLEAN-UP PROGRAM**

A student may be assigned to a school work/clean-up program for disciplinary purposes and will be supervised by a Tuscaloosa County School System's staff member assigned by an administrator.

**RESTITUTION FOR DAMAGES**

A student or his/her parents may be assessed the exact amount of replacement, repair, or service costs which result from damage to school property or the property of others caused by the student. If cost of damage is not paid then school or board administrator may file criminal charges in order to collect restitution.

**SUPERVISED TIME-OUT**

A student may be temporarily removed from regular classes for disciplinary purposes. The student will have the opportunity to complete missed work.

**REQUIRED PARENT CONFERENCE**

Parents or legal guardians must attend a conference for students whose behavior requires parental/guardian intervention. Parents or legal guardians must attend a reinstatement conference following out-of-school suspension.

**IN-SCHOOL INTERVENTION PROGRAM (ISI)**

A student may be temporarily denied attendance in regular classes for disciplinary purposes. A student assigned to ISI will continue to come to school and receive credit for assigned work that is completed; however, he/she will be isolated from the school's student population. While in ISI, a student may not attend any Tuscaloosa County School System's school activities during normal school hours.

The fundamental purposes of ISI are to:

- ensure a calm and safe climate in all regular classrooms where all students are afforded the opportunity to learn and achieve at their maximum rates; provide unruly students the opportunity to remain in the school setting and to continue their education, while at the same time impressing on them the need to accept standards of conduct that are in their best interest and the best interest of all students;
- keep all students enrolled in and attending school;
- provide an alternative to out-of-school suspension and to attempt to modify disruptive behavior by isolating disruptive students from their classmates.

**ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM**

The alternative program is designed for students whose behavior warrants removal from the regular school program for an extended period of time (typically 10-45 days). While assigned to the alternative program, parents may be required to transport students to and from school. Students will be prohibited from attending or participating in any Tuscaloosa County School System's school activities, on or off campus, during the time assigned to long-term ISI/alternative program. Students will receive credit for all work completed during the assigned long-term ISI/alternative program placement.

**OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS)**

Suspension is defined as the temporary removal of a student from school for violation of school policies, rules, regulations or for interfering with the orderly operation of the school. A suspension shall not exceed 10 school days per term/semester for non-special education students and 10 days per YEAR for special education students. Only the Superintendent or his/her designee, Principal, or assistant Principal shall have the authority to suspend students. Students shall be given notice of the charges against them and shall have the opportunity to present their explanation of the situation before any action is taken. A suspended student shall not attend school or any school-related activities during the suspension nor enroll in another school in the Tuscaloosa County School System until the suspension is completed. A suspended student will not return to regular classes on the day of suspension, but will leave school only when the parent/guardian or other proper authority assumes responsibility for the students. Parents or legal guardians, student, an administrator must attend a reinstatement conference following out-of-school suspension. If a student's behavior is so serious and disruptive that expulsion is recommended, the student may be suspended upon the Superintendent's or his/her designee's approval, until an expulsion hearing can be scheduled before the Board of Education. When a student has been suspended for an accumulated total of 10 days during the school year, an administrative hearing with the Superintendent or his/her designee shall be held (Policy: 5.33.2).

**IMPACT (INTERVENTION, MEDIATION, PARENT INVOLVEMENT, ACHIEVEMENT, CHANGING TOMORROW)**

A collaboration between the Tuscaloosa County School System, the Tuscaloosa County District Attorney's Office, and the Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Department has been formed to establish an early warning disciplinary program for the school/system. Members of the three agencies will collectively attempt to foster a positive, nurturing environment for the students and parents of this school system. The intent of the new early warning program will be to help decrease the number of disciplinary infractions and make a positive impact on the number of students dropping out of school. The following explains how the program will be implemented.

- The Principal will send a letter home to the parents when a student is suspended from school the first time.
- The Superintendent will send a letter home to the parents when a student is suspended from school for the second time.
- When a student is suspended for the third time, a member of the sheriff's office will deliver a letter to the parent(s) or guardian(s), and the Director of Student Services for the Tuscaloosa County School System will set up the Early Warning Disciplinary Hearing at the Tuscaloosa Municipal Court.

State law, Code of Alabama (1975), 16-28-12-7 and 22, requires parents to ensure that their children are enrolled in school, attend school on a regular basis and **conduct themselves appropriately while in attendance**. The law holds parents accountable for their child's behavior in the school setting. A violation of this law is a Class C Misdemeanor and is punishable by up to 90 days in the Tuscaloosa County Jail.

**ALTERNATIVE ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE OPTIONS**

The Tuscaloosa County School System's beliefs serve as the foundation for creating alternative academic/administrative options for students who have violated the Student Code of Conduct and/or may need an alternate learning environment to the traditional school setting. The authority to expel a student is vested only in the Board. The Board and its administrators may consider mitigating circumstances before imposing punishment, including risk of harm, intent, age and grade of student; therefore, in some situations rather than expelling students from the Tuscaloosa County School System on a long term, or permanent basis, alternative academic and administrative options have been established for students who have violated the Student Code of Conduct. During the administrative conference with the Superintendent and/or his/her designee and the school principal or his/her designee, if an alternative academic and administrative option is recommended rather than expulsion, the recommendation for expulsion will be placed on hold. **Temporary, alternate placement may be considered for students who have serious, criminal charges pending.** Additionally, students that presently have criminal charges pending may be placed at the Alternative School until those charges have been adjudicated

The alternative academic and administrative options are located at GRAD Academy, Project BETHEL, and SPAN. All three programs are for any violation classified as major (Class III) or for an accumulation of 10 days of out of school suspension.

Students participating in one of the academic/administrative options may only be physically present on any school system grounds, campus and/or property of the school system for academic purposes only. Students will be excluded from any extracurricular activities (to include, but not limited to athletic team sports, games, sports, tryouts), any meetings or any other scheduled activity sponsored by any school of the school system. Violation may subject such student to additional discipline that may range from a suspension, enforcing the expulsion, to referral for appropriate action by law enforcement.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR LONG-TERM SUSPENSION/EXPULSION**

Serious misconduct or continuing misconduct of any student may be referred to the Superintendent or his/her designee with a recommendation for long-term suspension (more than ten days) or possible expulsion. After review of the case, the Superintendent may

1. uphold the long-term suspension recommendation,
2. make a recommendation for expulsion to the Board, or
3. refer the case back to the principal for consideration.

The Board has the exclusive authority to expel a student from school. The Board shall convene a hearing and shall render a decision within ten days of the Superintendent's recommendation for expulsion. A student shall remain suspended from school pending the decision. The Superintendent shall notify the parent/guardian, in writing, of action taken by the Board.

**EXPULSION**

Expulsion is defined as any denial of school attendance for a period longer than 10 school days (defined as 10 days per term/semester for non-special education students and 10 days per year for special education students). The authority to expel a student is vested only in the Board. The Board will have the duty to review the evidence advanced by the Principal, other school system personnel, and other interested parties in support of the recommendation for an expulsion and to hear and review any rebuttal advanced by the student, parents, guardians, or representative. The Board and its administrators may consider mitigating circumstances before imposing punishment, including risk of harm, intent, age and grade of student. Expulsion may be for the remainder of the school year or for a definite period of time extending beyond the remainder of the school year, or it may be permanent. The Board may require that at the end of an expulsion period, the student and his/her parents/guardians appear before the Superintendent and/or Board to determine if changes in behavior on the part of the student have occurred which indicate a willingness and ability to function in the school setting. Moreover, the Board may require that the expelled student participate in activities which would reasonably be assumed to change his/her behavior in a positive direction as a condition for re-admittance to school (Policy: 5.33). Students with disabilities who are receiving special education services other than gifted may not be expelled from school for any misbehavior that has a direct and significant relationship to that student's area of disability. If the IEP Committee determines that the behavior in question does not have a direct and significant relationship to the student's areas of disability, the public education agency may expel the student; however, a complete cessation of education service is not permissible (Policy: 5.33).

**ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE**

An administrative conference with the Superintendent and/or his/her designee will be conducted on proposed expulsions when a student has accumulated a total of 10 days suspension, or when other circumstances dictate the need for a hearing. Administrative conferences are considered non-adversarial; therefore, there will be no need for legal counsel to represent the parent or school system. Should a parent opt for legal representation at any administrative hearing, the parent must notify the Office of Student Services at least one school day prior to the hearing to ensure the presence of the Board Attorney. Failure to provide proper notification shall necessitate the rescheduling of the administrative conference.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY AND REGULATIONS**

The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education believes that regular school attendance is important to students and to the school system. Regular attendance by students facilitates development of the skills and knowledge necessary to function in a democratic society. Therefore, the Board endeavors to secure, in compliance with Alabama law, the prompt and regular attendance of students and to secure their proper conduct, and to hold the parents, guardians, or other persons in charge or control of students responsible and liable for such students' nonattendance and improper conduct. (Policy: 5.40 and 5.41).

**ABSENTEEISM**

An absence is defined as nonattendance in a regularly scheduled class or activity. To be counted present, a student must be present at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the full academic day as stated on page 10 of the State Attendance Manual...

**CHRONIC ABSENTISM**

Chronic Absenteeism is habitually missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absences for any reason—excused absences, unexcused absences and suspensions.

**EXCUSES**

In accordance with Alabama law, parents/guardians MUST explain the cause of every absence of students under their control or charge. Every student, upon return to school, MUST bring a written excuse from home within two (2) days following the absence signed by the student's parent/guardian for each absence and present it to the Principal or his/her designee. After a total of 10 absences in a school year for elementary and middle school students, the parent/guardian of student will be required to provide medical or legal documentation for absences to be excused. After a total of 5 absences per term/semester for high school students, the parent/guardian of student will be required to provide medical or legal documentation for absences to be excused. All written excuses shall be retained for the remainder of the school year in the Principal's office or other approved locations.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**

All student absences shall be designated as either excused or unexcused. In accordance with Alabama law, a student shall be excused for an absence from school for any ONE of the following reasons:

- personal illness of the student
- death in the immediate family
- inclement weather which would be dangerous to the life or health of the student as determined by the Principal
- legal quarantine or subpoena
- with prior permission of the Principal and consent of parent
- emergency conditions as determined by the Principal
- official religious holidays

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Absence for reasons other than those defined above shall be considered as unexcused. Any student seventeen years of age or older who has not registered within the first five school days of the beginning of a new school term/semester will be denied admission unless extenuating circumstances are approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee, unless the student qualifies for services under applicable state and federal law. In such instances, any student seventeen years of age or older may be enrolled and is eligible for educational services until age of twenty-one.

**MAKE-UP WORK: EXCUSED ABSENCES**

If a student is absent for any excused reason as defined above, the student will be allowed to make up all major assignments and other work missed during said absence or absences at a time agreeable to the teacher(s). Teachers shall not be required to reteach lessons, but students shall be given a reasonable opportunity to learn the lessons missed due to excused absences. **At the secondary level, the student shall be responsible for contacting the teacher or teachers to arrange to make up the work. At the elementary level, the parent/guardian shall be responsible for arranging necessary make-up work.** Students shall have two (2) days for each day of excused absence to complete and return make-up work. It is the responsibility of the student to request and return make-up work.

**MAKE-UP WORK: OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

**ELEMENTARY (GRADES K-5)**

Students in grades K-5 will have 2 days from the last day of the suspension to turn in assignments to their teachers at their home school for a minimum of 65% of the original credit assigned. The parent/guardian shall be responsible for arranging necessary make-up work.

**SECONDARY (GRADES 6-8)**

Students in grades 6-8 will have 2 days from the last day of the suspension to turn in assignments to their teachers at their home school for a maximum of 65% of the original credit assigned. The student shall be responsible for contacting the teacher(s) to arrange to make up work.

**SECONDARY (GRADES 9-12)**

FIRST INFRACTION IN A YEAR RESULTING IN A SUSPENSION. Students in grades 9-12 who have been suspended from school will have 2 days from the last day of the suspension to turn in assignments to their teachers at their home school for a maximum of 65% of the original credit assigned. Major examinations will be allowed to be made up.

SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT INFRACTIONS IN A YEAR RESULTING IN A SUSPENSION. Students in grades 9-12 who have been suspended from school will not be allowed to make-up work other than major examinations. Teachers, at their discretion, may require students to make up homework, class work, etc., on a noncredit basis in order to help such students maintain academic pace. Teachers will assign zeroes to students when graded assignments were given during days missed.

**MAKE-UP WORK: UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

**ELEMENTARY (GRADES K-5)**

Teachers may provide make-up work or examinations for students absent for unexcused reasons. At discretion of the principal, teachers may allow students absent **up to three times** for unexcused reasons to make up any work for a maximum of 100% of the original credit assigned. Students will have two (2) days for each day of absence to complete and return make-up work. **The parent/guardian shall be responsible for arranging necessary make-up work.** Teachers will not automatically assign a failing grade to students absent for unexcused reasons; a failing grade may be assigned to such students only when graded assignments were given during days missed. Extenuating circumstances will be resolved at the discretion of the principal or designee.

**SECONDARY (GRADES 6-8)**

Teachers may provide make-up work or examinations for students absent for unexcused reasons. At their discretion, teachers may allow students absent **up to three times** a semester for unexcused reasons to make up any work for a maximum of 65% of the original credit assigned. Students will have two (2) days for each day of absence to complete and return make-up work. **The student shall be responsible for contacting the teacher or teachers to arrange to make up the work.** Teachers will not automatically assign zeroes to students absent for unexcused reasons; zeroes may be assigned to such students only when graded assignments were given during days missed. Extenuating circumstances will be resolved at the discretion of the principal or designee.

**SECONDARY (GRADES 9-12)**

Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to make-up work. Teachers, at their discretion, may require students absent for unexcused reasons to make up homework, class work, etc., on a noncredit basis in order to help such students maintain academic pace. Teachers will assign zeroes to students when graded assignments were given during days missed.

**STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND ATTENDANCE AWARDS**

As stated on page 10 of the State Attendance Manual, students must be present at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the school day to be counted present.

*Perfect Attendance* is based upon **no tardies, check-ins nor check-outs.**

**STUDENT TARDINESS PROCEDURE**

A tardy is defined as a student's arrival after the official time set for the commencement of the respective school's regular daily activities (i.e., homeroom, roll call, etc.). Tardiness is a Class I Offense in the Student Code of Conduct. Tardiness, for the most part, reflects improper planning and a disregard for punctuality. If a student is late, he/she is considered tardy. Students who are repeatedly tardy to school or to class will be assigned the following administrative responses:

**PROCEDURES FOR TARDIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

6 <sup>th</sup> tardy per semester .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention (if available)
8 <sup>th</sup> tardy per semester .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention (if available)
10 <sup>th</sup> tardy per semester .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention (if available)
Each additional tardy per semester .....	Parent conference required

**PROCEDURES FOR TARDIES IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS FOR EACH SEMESTER**

4 <sup>th</sup> tardy .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
6 <sup>th</sup> tardy .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
8 <sup>th</sup> tardy .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
10 <sup>th</sup> tardy and each additional tardy .....	In-School Intervention

**PROCEDURES FOR TARDIES IN HIGH SCHOOLS FOR EACH NINE WEEKS GRADING PERIOD**

3 <sup>rd</sup> tardy .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
4 <sup>th</sup> tardy .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
5 <sup>th</sup> tardy and each additional tardy .....	In-School Intervention

**NOTE: Tardies begin new each nine-week grading period.**

**STUDENT CHECK-OUT PROCEDURE**

A check-out is defined as a student's departure from school before the official time set for dismissal. Check-outs are a Class I Offense in the Student Code of Conduct. Any check-outs in excess of the numbers stated below must be approved in writing by the administration. Students who repeatedly check-out from school or from class will be assigned the following administrative response:

**PROCEDURES FOR CHECK-OUTS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

6 <sup>th</sup> check-out per semester .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention (if available)
8 <sup>th</sup> check-out per semester .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention (if available)
10 <sup>th</sup> check-out per semester .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention (if available)
Each additional tardy per semester .....	Parent conference required

**PROCEDURES FOR CHECK-OUTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS FOR EACH SEMESTER**

4 <sup>th</sup> check-out .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
6 <sup>th</sup> check-out .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
8 <sup>th</sup> check-out .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
10 <sup>th</sup> check-out and each additional check-out .....	In-School Intervention

**PROCEDURES FOR CHECK-OUTS IN HIGH SCHOOLS FOR EACH NINE WEEKS GRADING PERIOD**

3 <sup>rd</sup> check-out .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
4 <sup>th</sup> check-out .....	After School Detention, Saturday Detention, or In-School Intervention
5 <sup>th</sup> check-out and each additional check-out .....	In-School Intervention

**TRUANCY**

Truancy is the habitual and unlawful absence from school. In accordance with the *Code of Alabama*, the parent/guardian is responsible for requiring any student under his/her control or charge and under 17 years of age to attend school (Policy: 5.43).

**EARLY WARNING TRUANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM (EWTPP)**

The Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program (EWTPP) requires that a weekly report be submitted to the attendance office for all students between the ages of 6 and 17 having unexcused absences. The student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to attend this meeting. The team will discuss strategies/develop a plan of action for addressing the student's truancy issues. Once the plan is implemented, if the student continues to have unexcused absences, the student is referred for EWTPP. Upon the occurrence of a fifth unexcused absence, the parents/guardians and student are required to attend an EWTPP conference at the Juvenile Court. At the conference, the parents/guardians and student are informed of the State's compulsory attendance laws, court procedures, and consequences of further unexcused absences (Policy: 5.43).

**AVOIDING TRUANCY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES AND NEW DECISIONS (ATTEND)**

ATTEND is a recently developed attendance program designed to decrease chronic absences and avoid truancy, while increasing student and parent engagement in school. The intent is to foster a positive, nurturing environment for students and families of this school system and to educate them on the importance of regular school attendance. Presentations are made to the parents of students who have missed 10% of the previous school year. The program helps parents understand the definition of chronic absenteeism (a student who misses an average of two days of school per month throughout the school year). The presentation outlines the negative impact chronic absences can have on their student's academic performance, such as not reading proficiently by third grade and how chronic absenteeism in sixth grade is a leading indicator for a student's potential to drop out of high school. On the contrary, the program also emphasizes the positive aspects of regular school attendance which leads to higher academic scores and improved chances of graduating from high school.

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND DRIVER'S LICENSE/LEARNER'S PERMIT****PURPOSE OF ACT**

The purpose of Legislative Act 93-386 as enacted by the Alabama Legislature is to require school attendance by persons 16 - 19 years of age as a prerequisite for the issuance of a driver's license/learner's permit by the State of Alabama for the operation of a motor vehicle. School attendance standards may be met by enrollment in a school, General Educational Development (GED) program, or job training program approved by the State Superintendent of Education.

**PENALTY PROVISIONS OF THE ACT: ENROLLMENT, SCHOOLING, EMPLOYMENT**

Section 1 of the Act states, "The Department of Public Safety shall deny the issuance of a driver's license/learner's permit or the renewal of a driver's license to operate a motor vehicle to any person under the age of 19 who does not, at the time of application, present a diploma or other certificate of graduation from a secondary high school or documentation that the person is enrolled in a secondary school; or is enrolled and making satisfactory progress toward the GED certificate; or is participating in an approved job training program approved by the State Superintendent of Education; or is gainfully and substantially employed; or is a parent with care and custody of a minor or unborn child; or has a physician's statement that the parents of the person depend on him or her as their sole source of transportation; or is exempt from this requirement based on Section 16-28-1 of the *Code of Alabama*."

**SUSPENSION OF CURRENT DRIVER'S LICENSE/LEARNER'S PERMIT**

Further, persons 16 years and older who have a driver's license/learner's permit who withdraw or who are absent from school for 10 consecutive days or 15 days total for unexcused reasons during a term/semester shall be reported by the school authorities to the Department of Public Safety. The Department of Public Safety shall notify persons that their driver's licenses/learner's permits will be suspended on the 30th day following notification unless re-enrollment occurs or one of the other conditions is documented.

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES: PRINCIPALS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Principals or their designees shall provide students with information relative to the Act and procedures for compliance. Principals or their designees shall complete Part 1, Section I of the "Student Enrollment/Exclusion Status Form" at the request of students enrolled in their schools. Principals or their designees should provide students with information relative to completing Part 1, Section 2, and Part 2 sections of the form; however, it is the responsibility of the student/parent/guardian to secure signatures, documentation statements, etc., for the GED and Exclusion Status Sections. Principals or their designees shall complete and transmit the *Department of Public Safety Notification* form on each student who drops out or is absent from school for 15 consecutive days or 20 days total for unexcused reasons during school year.

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES: STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students, 15 - 19 years of age, who are enrolled in a school of the school system and desire to acquire their driver's license or learner's permit, should obtain a *Student Enrollment/Exclusion Status* form at the office of the school in which they are enrolled prior to going to the Department of Public Safety. Students should complete the name and personal information portion of the form and request the Principal or his/her designee to complete Section I of the form.

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES: FORMER STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Persons, 15 - 19 years of age, who are not enrolled in a school of the school system and desire to acquire a driver's license or learner's permit, should obtain a *Student Enrollment/Exclusion Status* form at the office of the school they previously attended or at the Central Office prior to going to the Department of Public Safety. Such individuals must contact their former Principal and the appropriate agency/individual to complete other applicable sections (Policy: 5.42).

**COMPUTER OPPORTUNITIES, SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS, AND WEBSITES**

In each school, students have the opportunity to have hands-on experiences using computers and telecommunications technology. Opportunities for student access to Internet resources and other technology-based materials are provided. Library Media Centers, teachers, and the Central Office have acquired a variety of first-quality software to enhance computer education in the schools. Each student at all grade levels is presented with opportunities to become computer literate.

A list of software applications, resource websites and individual school websites is accessible on the district website at [www.tcass.net](http://www.tcass.net).

**DRESS CODE**

The Board and administration recognize the effects which student dress and grooming have upon student behavior and commitment to learning. The Board and administration further recognize the importance of personal rights and privileges of each individual student in the school system; however, individual rights stop where the rights of the group (the school) begin; no student has the right to dress or appear in such a manner that disrupts the teaching-learning process. The Board strongly believes it is the responsibility of students and parents /guardians to use reason, good judgment, and common decency in the choice of dress and physical grooming in the school setting. Therefore, it is believed that the following dress and appearance standards are essential to the orderly operation of the schools of the School System on the basis of health, sanitation, safety, and prevention of disruptive appearances at school:

- Students must wear shoes; shoes that mark or damage floors will not be permitted; shoes that have wheels or other attachments may not be worn;
- Hats/caps/toboggans/sock caps/bandannas are not to be worn inside buildings; hoodies may not cover a student's head while in the building.
- Dark glasses may be worn only with a doctor's prescription;
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be appropriate for school; those that are tight fitting and/or unreasonable in length may not be worn;
- Belts and pants must be fastened at the waist; overalls must be properly fastened and buttoned;
- Clothing or personal items associated with gang affiliation or gang activity are prohibited;
- Clothing should be in good taste for the age, maturity, and size of the student; apparel which renders one's appearance as suggestive or indecent is prohibited; no midriffs may be exposed at any time; no undergarments are to be exposed;
- Slogans, symbols, patches, and obscene writings which are disruptive or suggestive are prohibited.

The Principal or his/her designee has the authority to determine inappropriate or unacceptable dress. When the dress or appearance of the individual student disrupts the teaching-learning process, the Principal has the authority to take disciplinary action.

**STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

In an effort to provide students with safe and secure transportation to and from home, the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education has set procedures and guidelines every parent and student must follow. These procedures are applicable to any school activity in which buses are used.

- The Director of Transportation or his/her designee shall authorize all bus routes and stops;
- All students being transported will be allowed one (1) consistent pick-up location and one (1) drop-off location;
- Bus stops shall be established at points that are a minimum distance of two-tenths ( $2/10^{\text{th}}$ ) of a mile apart, unless otherwise justified by extenuating circumstances or safety factors;
- The distance off a main road must be at least five-tenths ( $5/10^{\text{th}}$ ) of a mile in order to provide service;
- Buses shall not be routed over roads that are not maintained by federal, state, or local government;
- School buses shall only be used for the transportation of students to and from school and other educational purposes;
- Only authorized employees of the school system or students shall be permitted to ride buses to and from school;
- Special transportation is available for students with disabilities and is based on the IEP/504 team's decision that special transportation is needed as a related service;
- Transportation for students with disabilities may include travel to and from school, between schools, and with additional personnel assigned.
- Students will provide written permission from a parent to the principal in an emergency situation to request for a student to ride a bus different from the one they are assigned to ride or differing from their designated stop. The principal may approve the request based on available space on the bus.
- All students are required to be at their designated bus stop five (5) minutes prior to their scheduled pick-up time.

**KINDERGARTEN BUS INFORMATION**

Student safety is of paramount importance to the Tuscaloosa County School System. To ensure the height of safety and security for kindergarten students being transported on school buses, please note the following recommendations and requirements:

**MORNING (AM) ROUTE:** It is **RECOMMENDED** to have an adult\* present at the kindergartener's designated stop until loading is complete.

**AFTERNOON (PM) ROUTE:** It is **REQUIRED** to have an adult\* visible to the driver at the kindergartener's designated stop for the child/children to be unloaded. In the event that an adult is not visible to the driver at the designated stop at the time of unloading, the student(s) will be returned to their school of attendance to be picked up. Should multiple return trips to the school occur, a fee may be incurred for the additional mileage and time expended.

*\*An "adult" is considered anyone who is not enrolled in a K-12 school.*



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## LOCATING SCHOOL ZONES, BUS ROUTES, AND BUS STOPS – INFOFINDER I

INFOFINDER I is the Tuscaloosa County School System's bus transportation routing software that will provide parents with the ability to locate school zones, bus routes and stops based on their home address via the Internet and a web browser. A direct link to INFOFINDER I may be found at [www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net)

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### SCHOOL BUS CONDUCT

The Board recognizes the school bus as an extension of the classroom and requires students to conduct themselves in a responsible manner on the bus. The Board further recognizes that riding a school bus is a privilege that will be revoked if appropriate conduct by the student is not observed. When a student does not maintain appropriate conduct on a bus, the bus driver shall bring such instances to the attention of the principal or the principal's designee. The principal or principal's designee shall inform the student's parent immediately of serious misconduct and request cooperation in controlling the student's behavior. The principal or the principal's designee shall also discipline students who misbehave in accordance with policies and procedures governing misconduct.

Should misconduct on a Tuscaloosa County school bus create a danger to the driver or students, the bus driver is authorized to drive immediately to the nearest school for removal of the student(s) creating the danger. The principal will notify the student's principal and the Board's discipline process will be followed. Denial of the privilege of riding the bus shall be authorized as an appropriate consequence to serious bus misconduct.

The Board shall assume the responsibility for the supervision of students who ride the bus when they board the bus. During transportation of students on school district buses or other modes of transportation used from time-to-time, video cameras may be used by school personnel for the purpose of supervision of students using said transportation. That supervision shall end when the student is discharged from the bus at the end of the school day. **Questions and/or concerns should be directed to the Director of Transportation at (205) 342-2636.**

### SCHOOL BUS RULES OF CONDUCT

1. Students will maintain proper conduct at all times while riding the bus.
2. Students will not use profanity, offensive or disrespectful language or gestures.
3. Students will remain seated facing forward with feet on the floor and legs out of the aisle.
4. Students will keep all body parts inside the bus at all times.
5. Students will maintain a low level of conversation with person(s) in same seat.
6. Students will not spit or throw anything in the bus or out the windows.
7. Students will not push, shove, intimidate, harass, fight, or make other students or staff uncomfortable.
8. Students will be at the designated stop five minutes before the designated pick-up time.
9. Students will not damage the bus. (Parents are financially responsible.)
10. Students will not have any food, drink, or gum on any Tuscaloosa County bus at any time.
11. Students will respectfully follow the directions of the bus driver at all times.
12. Students will load and exit in a prompt, orderly manner.
13. Students will stay off public roads while waiting for the bus.
14. Students will not be picked up or dropped off at transfer points.
15. Students will remain quiet when the bus is approaching a railroad crossing stop.
16. Students will not carry items on the bus which are not allowed at school, including but not limited to, matches, tobacco products or paraphernalia (lighters, matches, vapor pens, e-cigarettes, rolling papers, cigarettes, smoke-less tobacco, and any similar devices or objects), knives, guns, explosives, laser pointers, live animals, glass containers, and/or large bulky items. No bulky item designed as luggage is allowed. If an item is too large to sit on a student's lap or by his/her feet, the bus driver shall be the judge as to whether it may be transported at all. The aisles of the bus must remain unobstructed at all times in order to allow easy passage for all students.

Parents and students should be aware that the bus driver's job is to protect students' lives by having eyes on the road at all times. Failure by any student to follow the above rules and the Tuscaloosa County Schools Code of Conduct will lead to disciplinary actions.

### STUDENTS SHOULD ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS WHEN EXITING AND CROSSING IN FRONT OF THE BUS:

1. Students must make certain that the bus has come to a complete stop, that the door is still open, and that the stop signal is extended;
2. Students must cross in front of the bus within sight and hearing of the driver, look both ways, and stay out of the line of traffic until the roadway is free from danger;
3. Students must proceed across the roadway upon signal from the driver or bus patrol;
4. Students will not cross four-lane roadways; they will be picked up and dropped off on their side of the four-lane roadway.

**Anytime throughout the school year, if a student is considered a threat to the safety of the students and/or the safe operations of the bus, the student may be removed from the bus for the remainder of the school year. Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right.**

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## CIVIL LIABILITIES AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES

The following laws relate to civil liabilities and criminal penalties for violence or other misbehavior by students on school property or against school employees:

### **ATTENDANCE AND CONDUCT (ACT 94-782)**

Each parent, guardian or other person having control or custody of a child required to attend school who fails to require the child to enroll, to regularly attend school, or to compel the child to properly conduct himself or herself as a pupil in accordance with the written policy on school behavior adopted by the local Board of Education shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and may be fined up to \$1500 and may be sentenced to hard labor/jail time for up to one year.

### **TEACHER ASSAULT (ACT 94-794)**

A person commits the crime of assault in the second degree (Class C felony) if the person assaults with intent to cause serious physical injury to a teacher or to an employee of a public educational institution during or as a result of the performance of his/her duty (Code of Alabama Section 13A-6-21).

### **DRUG DEALING (ACT 94-783)**

A person who unlawfully sells, furnishes, or gives a controlled substance to a minor may be liable for injury or damage or both suffered by a third person caused by or resulting from the use of the controlled substance by the minor, if the sale, furnishing, or giving of the controlled substance is the proximate cause of the injury or damage.

### **DRUGS, ALCOHOL, WEAPONS, PHYSICAL HARM, OR THREATENED PHYSICAL HARM (ACT 94-784)**

The school Principal will notify appropriate law enforcement officials when a person violates local Board of Education policies concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatened physical harm to a person. If any criminal charge is warranted, the Principal is authorized to sign the appropriate warrant. If that person is a student, the local school system shall immediately suspend that person from attending regular classes and schedule a hearing within 5 school days. If a person is found to have violated a local Board of Education policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, the person may not be readmitted to the public schools until criminal charges, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities and the person has satisfied all other requirements imposed by the local Board of Education as a condition for readmission.

### **WEAPONS IN SCHOOLS (ACT 94-817)**

No person will knowingly with intent to do bodily harm carry or possess a deadly weapon on the premises of a public school. Possession of a deadly weapon with the intent to do bodily harm on the premises of a public school or school bus is a Class C felony. (NOTE: Deadly weapons include, but are not limited to, a hand grenade; an explosive or incendiary device; a pistol, rifle, or shotgun; or a switch-blade knife, gravity knife, stiletto, sword, or dagger; or any club, baton, billy, blackjack, bludgeon; or metal knuckles.)

### **VANDALISM (ACT 94-819)**

The parents, guardian, or other person having control of any minor under the age of 18 with whom the minor is living and who have custody of the minor shall be liable for the actual damages sustained to school property, plus the court costs, caused by intentional, willful, or malicious acts of the minor.

### **PISTOL POSSESSION/DRIVER'S LICENSE (ACT 94-820)**

Any person over the age of 14 who is convicted of the crime of possession of a pistol on the premises of a public school, or a public school bus, shall be denied issuance of a driver's permit or license to operate a motor vehicle for 180 days from the date the person is eligible and applies for a permit or license. If a person over age 14 possesses a driver's license on the date of conviction, the driver's license will be suspended for 180 days.

### **DROPOUT/DRIVER'S LICENSE (ACT 94-820 Which Amended ACT 93-368 as Codified In Section 16-28-40, Code of Alabama 1975)**

The Department of Public Safety shall deny a driver's license or learner's permit to any person under 19 who is not enrolled or has not received a diploma or graduation certificate. Exceptions are students who are enrolled in a GED program, are enrolled in a secondary school, are participating in an approved job training program, are gainfully employed, are a parent of a minor or unborn child, or are the sole source of transportation for the parent.

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## FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

It is a violation of Board policy for any student to have in his/her possession weapons or firearms of any kind at any time and at any place on school property. Students who are found in violation of this policy may be placed on immediate suspension from school. In addition, the authorities from the criminal justice and/or juvenile delinquency system will be notified. If a student is determined to be in possession of a firearm, he or she will be expelled from the school system for a period of not less than one (1) year. In accordance with the *Gun-Free School Act*, the Superintendent may modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis to meet the requirements of IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Policy: 5.32).

### **ITEMS FORBIDDEN INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:**

- knives of any kind and any length
- razors or razor blades
- box openers
- firearms
- explosive devices including fireworks of any description
- any items which may be used as clubs
- all sharp/pointed objects designed for use as weapons, including weapons used for recreation
- tear gas or other chemical weapons or devices

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## STUDENT ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE (SUBSTANCE ABUSE)

It is the policy of the Board that each student shall be specifically prohibited from being under the influence of, having consumed prior to arriving, bringing onto school grounds, or having in his or her possession on a school bus, on school premises, or at any school function away from the school, any alcoholic beverages, intoxicating liquors, narcotic drugs, marijuana, steroids or any mind-altering drug or material, including prescribed medications or over-the-counter medication including any violation of the Board's medication policy. Failure to follow the procedures outlined in the Medication Guidelines will constitute violation of the Student Alcohol and Drug Policy (Policy: 5.45).

Any alcohol or drug-related violation of criminal law, state or federal, committed on school property shall be prosecuted as provided by law. Provided students are apprehended possessing, using, being under the influence of, or dispensing any substance as described above, school officials, teachers, and/or other Board employees will report all such students to their immediate supervisor who shall cooperate with the proper law enforcement agency and the prosecuting attorney's office.

The Principal also will immediately notify the parent or guardian by telephone of any student found in violation of this policy. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached by phone, the Principal will then notify the parent or guardian of the action by sending a certified letter within twenty-four (24) hours. Care will be given to afford due process to all students.

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## APPLICABLE PROCEDURES – SUBSTANCE ABUSERS

A school staff member will be expected to accompany any student to the Principal's office or to the administrator in charge when there is reasonable cause to believe the student is currently in possession of, has previously been in possession of, has used or previously used, is under the influence of, or has transmitted above substances while on school property or while on a school bus, or while attending a school sanctioned/sponsored function or activity. Additionally, this designee will comply with the following procedures in order to safeguard the student and the total school environment:

1. Keep the student in a secured area of the building away from other students.
2. Notify, if possible, the parent or guardian of the student and request he/she come to the school immediately.
3. Notify the juvenile authorities.
4. Place in the possession of the Principal or designee any suspected illegal or prohibited substance surrendered by the student and seal it in an envelope in the presence of another school staff member with both persons verifying that the substance is contained in the sealed envelope.
5. Place the envelope in which the substance is contained in the possession of law enforcement authorities in the presence of a witness.
6. Upon weighing all available information and evidence, the Principal, based on reasonable belief that the student is in violation of the school System's substance abuse policy or applicable laws, may suspend the student from school for up to ten (10) days pending an expulsion hearing before the Board. If the initial information and evidence is inconclusive relative to the student's violation of the School System's drug policy, the Principal may permit the student to remain in school until such time as any conclusive test information is received from law enforcement officials. In the event that conclusive evidence is subsequently obtained through law enforcement officials or other sources that the student was in violation of the School System's substance abuse policy, the student then may be subject to suspension for up to ten (10) days with a recommendation for expulsion. In all cases the Principal will ensure that all due process procedures are accorded the student.
7. Inform the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) of appropriate substance abuse treatment facilities.

**NOTE:** In the event a student sells or distributes or proposes to sell or distribute a substance represented to be an illegal substance, all of the above procedures will be followed up to and including suspension with a recommendation for expulsion.

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## APPLICABLE PROCEDURES – SUBSTANCE ABUSE EMERGENCIES

Provided a student experiences a substance abuse emergency while under the supervision of school authorities, the Principal or his/her designee will comply with the following procedures to safeguard the student and the total school environment:

- obtain appropriate licensed medical assistance for the student; school authorities, if possible, will provide the medical assistants with (a) the name of the substance, (b) the amount of the substance consumed, and (c) the time of consumption;
- notify, if possible, the parents/guardians of the student and inform them of the emergency.

If confirmation is received that the medical emergency is related to substance abuse that is in violation of the Tuscaloosa County School System's substance abuse policy or applicable laws, the Principal may suspend the student for up to ten (10) days (see Policy 5.33.2 for definition of days) pending a hearing before the Board for expulsion. In all cases, the Principal will ensure that all applicable due process procedures are accorded the student (Policy: 5.29).

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## STUDENT POSSESSION OR USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS OR PARAPHERNALIA

**(LIGHTERS, MATCHES, VAPOR PENS, E-CIGARETTES, ROLLING PAPERS, CIGARETTES, SMOKE-LESS TOBACCO, AND ANY SIMILAR DEVICES OR OBJECTS)**

It is the policy of the Board that students will not be permitted to possess, smoke, or use tobacco products in any form while in school buildings, on school grounds, or in school buses during the school day or during any school sponsored activities. Possession, control, or use of tobacco products is a Class II/Intermediate Offense in the Student Code of Conduct. Administrative responses to this violation may include but are not limited to the following: parent contact(s) conference(s), corporal punishment, out of school suspension (not to exceed five days) and legal action.

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# TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

\*\*\*\*\* PLEASE REMEMBER \*\*\*\*\*

*The guidelines and expectations set forth in this document are applicable to all students who are enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County School System, inclusive of both traditional (all-day) and non-traditional (virtual, charter, homeschool) students.*

All students and their parents/guardians are required to sign or electronically sign an acknowledgment of the receipt of a copy of the Student Code of Conduct and Attendance at the beginning of each school year.

It is the intent of the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education that our schools remain safe and drug-free for all students and school employees. The Board, therefore, has established policies and practices consistent with laws that promote a safe school environment - free of illegal drugs, alcohol, or weapons on a school bus or campus.

All policies of the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education are provided on the system website [www.tcass.net](http://www.tcass.net)

### **Our Mission**

The mission of the Tuscaloosa County School System is to educate and empower all students to be college and career-ready graduates-prepared to make positive contributions to our global society.

### **Our Beliefs**

High expectations are necessary to achieve goals and expand opportunities for all.

Education is a shared responsibility that positively impacts the quality of life.

Equity, fairness, accountability, and fiscal responsibility are the foundations of our decision-making.

Safe, well-equipped, student-center school support student success.

Diversity and individual learning needs are respected, included, and valued.

### **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in any of its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated groups.

The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies.

Tyrone Blocker; *Director of Student Services (Title IX - student concerns, 504)* [tublocker@tcss.net](mailto:tublocker@tcss.net)

Steven Sims, II; Coordinator of Student Services [ssims@tcss.net](mailto:ssims@tcss.net)

Dr. Allison Mays; Director of Human Resources (Title IX – employee concerns) [amays@tcss.net](mailto:amays@tcss.net)

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT - INTRODUCTION

We believe that instruction should occur in an environment conducive to learning because effective quality instruction requires orderly procedures and discipline. The purpose of this handbook, as well as the enforcement of its rules, is to ensure the presence of a safe environment in which students and school personnel work cooperatively toward mutually accepted goals. Acting in the best interest of all the residents of Tuscaloosa County, the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education requires principals, faculties, staff, students, parents, and guardians to comply with this adopted **Student Code of Conduct** handbook.

The contents of this handbook:

- Describe student rights and responsibilities.
- Define student discipline in the context of the Board of Education's philosophy.
- Identify formal disciplinary actions.
- Identify classifications of violations and describe procedures for disciplinary actions.
- Standardize procedures for administering formal disciplinary actions.
- Conform to the mandates provided Under Section 504, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and The Alabama Exceptional Child Education Act.

## EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education that no person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, sex, race, religion, national origin, color, or age. Ref: Section 1983, Civil Rights Act 42 U.S.C.: Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504; Age Discrimination of Employment Act; Equal Pay Act of 1963; and the Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972. For more information, contact the Title IX, and 504 Coordinator.

## DUE PROCESS

The policy of the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education is to adhere to due process when carrying out the procedures contained in this handbook. Principals are responsible for familiarizing their staff with due process procedures and providing each staff member with a copy of this handbook.

### Due Process

The student(s) has the right to be given notice of the disciplinary infraction that has been violated, will be given the opportunity to present evidence in their defense, and be given the opportunity to provide a statement prior to the administrator(s) imposing disciplinary action.

The handbook has been published with the following due process protections in mind:

1. School rules must be clearly stated and related to the educational purposes of the school.
2. School rules must be fair and specific enough for students to know what they may or may not do.
3. Students, parents, and guardians must be informed of the rules affecting behavior and discipline.
4. When disciplinary action is involved, school personnel and students must comply with required procedures set forth in the **Student Code of Conduct**.
5. When addressing disciplinary action, a student should be informed of the school rule(s) that has been violated and given an opportunity to share his/her account of the incident with school personnel.
6. School personnel are permitted to speak to students regarding school-related issues without obtaining prior parent permission.

The regulations in this handbook are intended to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students as well as ensure the efficient operation of the schools.

## JURISDICTION OF SCHOOL BOARD

Tuscaloosa County Schools' students are subject to the rules of the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education during the school day, while in attendance at school-related activities, and while being transported to and from school or school-related activities.

Jurisdictional control over student behavior may be extended beyond the school campus whenever the conduct of the student is deemed to have detrimental effect on the health, safety, and welfare of the school community.

Administrators and teachers, with required collaboration with the student(s) enrolled in school, have jurisdiction to implement the disciplinary procedures of the Code of Conduct on any campus in the school system even though the student(s) may not be enrolled at the school in which the violation(s) occurs. For example, suppose a student from one of our high schools is attending a basketball game at another high school in the system and violates the student code. In that case, the student will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by administrators and teachers at the school being visited in collaboration with the home school administrator.

## **SUMMARY OF CIVIL LIABILITIES AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES**

The following summaries of laws relate to civil liabilities and criminal penalties for violence or other misbehavior by students on school property or against school employees. Local boards of education are required to provide notice to parents, guardians, and students.

### **Attendance and Conduct (§16-28-12)**

Each parent/guardian or other person having control or custody of a child required to attend school who fails to require the child to enroll, to regularly attend school, or to compel the child to properly conduct himself/herself as a pupil in accordance with the written policy on school behavior adopted by the local board of education shall be guilty of a misdemeanor (may be fined up to \$100 and may be sentenced for hard labor up to 90 days).

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (§26-14-1)**

Certain persons and institutions are required by law to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect under a penalty of a misdemeanor, fine, or sentence. Those who are required by law to report are: hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, nurses, school teachers and officials, peace officers, law enforcement officials, pharmacists, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, or any other personnel called upon to render aid of medical assistance to a known or suspected victim of child abuse or neglect. Besides those persons who are required by law to report child abuse and neglect, any person may make such report, if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.

### **Drug Dealing (§6-5-72)**

A person who unlawfully sells, furnishes, or gives a controlled substance to a minor may be liable for injury or damage or both suffered by a third person cause by or resulting from the use of the controlled substance by the minor, if the sale, furnishing, or giving of the controlled substance is the proximate cause of the injury or damage.

### **Drugs, Alcohol, Weapons, Physical Harm, or Threatened Physical Harm (§16-1-24.1)**

The school principal shall notify appropriate law enforcement officials when a person violates the local boards of education policies concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person. If any criminal charge is warranted, the principal is authorized to sign the appropriate warrant. If that person is a student, the local school system shall immediately suspend that person from attending regular classes and schedule a hearing within 5 school days.

If a person is found to have violated a local board of education policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, the person may not be readmitted to the public schools until criminal charges, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities and the person has satisfied all other requirements imposed by the local board of education as a condition of readmission.

### **Firearm Possession (§16-1-24.3)**

All city and county boards of education shall develop and implement local policies and procedures requiring the expulsion of students, for a period of one year, who are determined to have brought to school or have in their possession a firearm in a school building, on school grounds, on school buses, or at other school-sponsored functions.

### **Sexual Harassment (§26-14-3)**

A student who believes that he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment shall immediately report the matter to a teacher, the school counselor, principal, or the Superintendent. Any student who suspects that another student is being sexually harassed shall immediately report the information to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or the Superintendent. A student's request to make his or her report to someone of the same sex will be granted.

### **Teacher Assault (§13A-6-21)**

A person commits the crime of assault in the second degree (Class C felony) if the person assaults with intent to cause serious physical injury to a teacher or to any employee of a public education institution during or as a result of the performance of his or her duty.

### **Tobacco Possession (§28-11-13)**

It is unlawful for any minor to purchase, use, possess, or transport tobacco or tobacco products within this state (see Alabama Law §28-11-14 for additional reference).

### **Vandalism (§6-5-380)**

The parents, guardian, or other person having control of any minor under the age of 18 with whom the minor is living and who have custody of the minor shall be liable for the actual damages sustained to school property, plus the court costs, caused by the intentional, willful, or malicious act of the minor.

### **Weapons in Schools (§13A-11-72)**

No person shall knowingly with intent to do bodily harm carry or possess a deadly weapon on the premises of a public school. Possession of a deadly weapon with the intent to do bodily harm on the premises of a public school or school bus is a class C felony. (Note: Deadly weapons include but are not limited to a hand grenade, explosive or incendiary device; a pistol, rifle, or shotgun; or a switch-blade knife, gravity knife, stiletto, sword, or dagger; or any club, baton, billy, black-jack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles.)

**LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS OF EDUCATION ARE REQUIRED TO PUBLISH THE FOLLOW ACT AND SECTION  
Expectations of Parents Regarding Attendance and Behavior in Public Schools, Alabama Code §16-28-12**

(a) Each parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of any child required to attend school or receive regular instruction by a private tutor who fails to have the child enrolled in school or who fails to send the child to school, or have him or her instructed by a private tutor during the time the child is required to attend a public school, private school, church school, denominational school, or parochial school, or be instructed by a private tutor, or fails to require the child to regularly attend the school or tutor, or fails to compel the child to properly conduct himself or herself as a pupil in any public school in accordance with the written policy on school behavior adopted by the local board of education pursuant to this section and documented by the appropriate school official which conduct may result in the suspension of the pupil, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) and may also be sentenced to hard labor for the county for not more than 90 days.

The absence of a child without the consent of the principal teacher of the public school he or she attends or should attend, or of the tutor who instructs or should instruct the child, shall be prima facie evidence of the violation of this section.”

(b) Each local public board of education shall adopt a written policy for its standards on school behavior. Each local public school superintendent shall provide at the commencement of each academic year a copy of the written policy on school behavior to each parent, guardian, or other person having care or control of a child who is enrolled included in the written policy shall be a copy of this section. The signature of the student and the parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of the child shall document receipt of the policy.”

(c) Any parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of any child enrolled in public school who fails to require the child to regularly attend the school or tutor, or fails to compel the child to properly conduct himself or herself as a pupil in accordance with the written policy on school behavior adopted by the local board of education and documented by the appropriate school official which conduct may result in the suspension of the pupil, shall be reported by the principal to the superintendent of education of the school system in which the suspected violation occurred.

The Superintendent or his or her designee shall report suspected violations to the district attorney within 10 days. Any principal or superintendent or his or her designee intentionally failing to report a suspected violation shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

The district attorney shall vigorously enforce this section to ensure proper conduct and required attendance by any child enrolled in public school.”

**Seclusion and Restraint for ALL Students, Alabama Administrative Code §290-3-1-.02(1)(f)**

1. Definition

(iii) Physical Restraint - Direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly restricts a student’s movement. The term physical restraint does not include mechanical restraint or chemical restraint. Additionally, physical restraint does not include providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to promote student safety or prevent self-injurious behavior, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing guidance to a location, providing comfort, or providing limited physical contact as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person’s property.

(iv) Physical Restraint that restricts the flow of air to the student’s lungs - any method (face-down, face-up, or on your side) or physical restraint in which physical pressure is applied to the student’s body that restricts the flow of air into the student’s lungs. Use of this type of restraint is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs.

(v) Seclusion - a procedure that isolates and confines the student in a separate, locked area until he or she is no longer in immediate danger to himself/herself or others. The seclusion occurs in a specifically constructed or designated room or space that is physically isolated from common areas and from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include situations in which a staff member trained in the use of de-escalation techniques on restraint is physically present in the same unlocked room as the student, time-out as defined in paragraph (1)(vi) of this rule, in-school detention, detention, or a student-requested break in a different location in the room or in a separate room. Use of seclusion is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs.

2. Requirements

(i) The use of seclusion is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs.

(v) The use of physical restraints is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs except in those situations in which the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques. Notwithstanding the foregoing, physical restraint is prohibited in Alabama public schools and educational programs when used as a form of discipline or punishment.

(vi) All physical restraint must be immediately terminated when the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others or if the student is observed to be in severe distress.

**HARASSMENT, VIOLENCE, THREATS OF VIOLENCE, AND INTIMIDATION**

Passed by the state of Alabama Legislature, House Bill 216 became effective July 1, 2010. As a result, public school districts in Alabama are required to establish school board policies to address and prevent harassment, violence, threats to do violence, and intimidation in the school environment. The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education has adopted its own anti-harassment policy which strictly prohibits this behavior.

**Harassment Defined**

Harassment is defined as a continuous pattern of intentional behavior and includes, but is not limited to, written, electronic, verbal, or physical acts that are reasonably perceived to be threatening by the student victims.

In an effort to minimize this type of behavior in the school environment, the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education has created a process whereby a student, or the student’s parent or legal guardian, may report instances of harassment to the school administrator for further review and



investigation. The reporting form is available through the school district's website. When incidents of harassment are investigated and confirmed, the school administrator will apply appropriate disciplinary consequences to the student(s) involved.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS**

It is the policy of the Board that sexual harassment of a student by other students or employees is unlawful behavior and will not be permitted in the school setting. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of the student's academic progress or completion of a school-related activity; OR
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis in evaluating the student's performance in a course of study or other school-related activity; OR
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

A student who feels that he or she has been sexually harassed should report the incident to the school Principal and the designated reporting officer. The student may request that the school Principal appoint a designee of the same sex to hear his/her complaint. The complaint should be made within ten (10) calendar days following the incident or the latest occurrence in the series of such incidents. The complaint may be made to the Principal in person or may be made in writing, signed by the complainant and then delivered to the reporting officer by the Principal. If such report is first made verbally, then it will be the responsibility of the Principal or reporting officer to reduce the same to writing and to have the complainant sign the written complaint (Policy: 3.43).

The Tuscaloosa County School System's Sexual Harassment Officer may be contacted at (205)-342-2725.

### **JAMARI TERRELL WILLIAMS STUDENT BULLYING PREVENTION ACT POLICY - Code of Alabama §16-1-30**

- I. Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited - No student shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics set forth in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Student Code of Conduct and applicable law, subject to the investigating school administrator's authority and decision.
- II. Definitions - In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:
  - A. "Bullying" means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of the school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to: cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:
    - Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
    - Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student;
    - Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school whether the conduct occurs on or off school property, online, or electronically;
    - Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function; or
    - Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.
  - B. "Hostile environment" means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, threat of assault, or assault.
  - C. "Violence" means the unjustified infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.
  - D. "Threat" means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an electronic, written, verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat.
  - E. "Threat of violence" means an unjustified expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.
  - F. "Intimidation" means an unjustified threat or another action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension to a student.
  - G. "Student" as used in this policy means a person who is enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County school system.
- III. Description of Behavior Expected of Students -
  - A. Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting bullying, violence, or intimidations; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of

another student, and 3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.

- B. Bullying, intimidation, violence, or threats of violence are prohibited and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the student:
- Race
  - Sex
  - Religion
  - National Origin
  - Disability
- IV. Consequences for Violations - A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.
- V. Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures -
- A. Complaints alleging violations of this policy may be made on a Board approved complaint form available in the handbook, on the website, or at the school's office. The complaint must be delivered to the Principal or the Principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally. The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.
- B. Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake a reasonable prompt investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanction may be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violations may also be imposed by the Principal or the school system. The person reporting the violation may, upon request, be given an explanation of the outcome of the investigation and of the steps taken to prevent a recurrence of the violation, subject to any limitations on the disclosure thereof that may be imposed by law. A person reporting a violation who is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal the decision in writing to the Superintendent.
- C. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.
- VI. Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules and Forms – This policy and any procedures, rules and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published on the website of Tuscaloosa County Schools and each school shall be available at each school office, and shall be included in the student handbook that is distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.
- VII. Construction of Policy – This policy is supplemental to other Board policies and procedures and does not repeal, replace, or supersede any other prohibition on harassment, violence, threats of violence or intimidation found elsewhere in Board policy or procedure, including the Code of Student Conduct. This policy shall not be construed to allow bullying, violence, and threats of violence or intimidation for any reason not specifically listed in this policy or to prohibit the Board from disciplining students for acts of bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation not specifically listed herein. Students who engage in bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation not specifically covered by this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

#### **CHARACTER EDUCATION**

The state of Alabama legislative support for character education started in 1995, Act(s) 1975 Code of Alabama, Section 16-6B-2(h); 1995 Accountability Law, Act 5-313. The State Board of Education and all local boards shall develop and implement a comprehensive character education program for all grades to consist of not less than ten minutes instruction per day focusing upon the students' development of the following character traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, and perseverance. Each plan of instruction shall include the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag" (1995 Accountability Law)

## ANNUAL NOTIFICATION REGARDING SCHOOL PROVIDED OR SPONSORED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

### **Mental Health Services**

The school system provides or sponsors the following mental health services:

1. **Small group guidance-** includes small group of students with school counselor or professional to discuss topics such as test anxiety, grief, healthy coping skills, etc.
2. **Mentoring-** Peer Helpers, Student Social Work Interns etc. work with students in school on topics such as friendships, healthy relationships, anger management, and anxiety.
3. **Crisis intervention-** short-term, immediate assistance by school counselor or professional for a specific situation.
4. **Technology-Based Education-** computer-based programs designed to help students learn topics such as identifying feelings, friendships, anger management, and anxiety.
5. **School-Based Mental Health-** On-going counseling services by school professionals or private practitioners in the school setting. Parent or legal guardian's permission will be obtained during an intake meeting before services are provided.

### **Review of Materials**

You may request to review any materials used in the guidance and counseling programs available to students by contacting the student's principal.

### **Information Regarding How to Allow, Limit, or Prevent Your Child's Participation in Mental Health Services**

Under Alabama law, no student under the age of fourteen may participate in ongoing school counseling services including, but not limited to, mental health services, unless (1) the student's parent or legal guardian has submitted a written opt-in granting permission for the student to participate or (2) there is an imminent threat to the health of the student or others. Therefore, if your child is under fourteen, they will only be allowed to participate in mental health services if you opt-in. **If you would like the school system to be able to offer and/or provide mental health services to your child, you must opt-in for each service listed for them to participate in that service.**

Even if you do not opt-in to mental health services, your child may be provided mental health services if there is an imminent threat their health or others. School employees may determine in their discretion whether such an imminent threat exists and provide any mental health services they deem necessary under the circumstances.

**Parent of students with disabilities:** Please note that the opt-in process is not applicable to any school counseling services or "mental health services" contained in a student's IEP or §504 plan. Consent for those services will be obtained and information regarding your child's mental health services will be provided through the usual special education process.

### **DEFINITIONS AND RULES RELATING TO FORMAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

**All students shall be afforded an opportunity for due process in all matters pertaining to disciplinary matters.**

#### **Due Process**

The student(s) has the right to be given notice of the disciplinary infraction that has been violated, will be given the opportunity to present evidence in their defense, and be given the opportunity to provide a statement prior to the administrator(s) imposing disciplinary action.

#### **Detention**

Detention is defined as a required period of time that may be used for study, isolation, or work detail before or after school. Detention assignments are supervised by school personnel and take place inside the school building. It is the parent's responsibility to provide transportation.

#### **In-School Intervention**

In-school detention is a structured disciplinary action in which a student is isolated or removed from regular classroom activities but not dismissed from the school setting. The principal or principal's designee has the authority to assign students to in-school detention for a reasonable and specified time.

#### **Suspension**

Suspension is defined as the temporary removal of a student from school for violating school policies, rules, or regulations or for interfering with the orderly operation of the school. Without an appropriate disciplinary hearing, cumulative suspensions shall not exceed 10 (ten) school days per semester for non-special education students and 10 (ten) days per year for special education students. In the event a proposed suspension results in cumulative suspensions exceeding ten (10) school days per semester for non-special education students or ten (10) full days per year for special education students, an appropriate disciplinary hearing will be held.

Only the Superintendent or designee, principal, or assistant administrator shall have the authority to suspend students.

- A. Days absent from school because of suspension are unexcused.
- B. Students will have 2 days following a suspension to obtain make-up work. The deadline to submit make-up work shall be at the discretion of each teacher.
- C. Any single suspension shall not exceed ten (10) school days without an administrative hearing by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee. Any suspension of 5 or more days is considered "long-term suspension".

- D. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will be notified of all suspensions.
- E. A student being suspended will be informed of the reason for suspension, the number of suspension days, and appeal rights. A disciplinary action notice form will be available to the custodial parent or legal guardian.  
The custodial parent or guardian and student may be required to attend a reinstatement conference before he/she returns to class.
- F. After an administrative hearing, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee may suspend the student until action is taken by the Board.
- G. Students suspended for any portion of the school day are not allowed to participate in or attend any school related activities as directed by the school administrator.

#### **Alternative School Placement**

The Tuscaloosa County Schools operates an Alternative Educational Program to which students may be referred depending on the circumstances and conduct involved instead of receiving long term suspension or expulsion. There is no guarantee or commitment on the part of the Tuscaloosa County Schools or its employees that all high school curriculum can be duplicated while a student is in attendance at the Alternative School.

Students who commit a Class III or IV violation, as defined by the Student Code of Conduct, or who repeatedly commit Class II violations such that they frequently disrupt the education of others may be referred to the Alternative School Program by the school administrators. Additionally, students that presently have criminal charges pending may be placed at the Alternative School until those charges have been adjudicated.

Alternative School placements are used in the place of a long-term suspension and/or expulsion. Students who are assigned to the alternative school may not attend any school related function while enrolled. This includes, but is not limited to, all extracurricular activities including sports games and competitions, school dances, field trips, group class activities, graduation ceremonies, and other school activities. Students are expected to follow all guidelines and procedures established at the school. Transportation to the Alternative School is not provided at the expense of the Board. Upon a student's completion of his/her alternative school assignment and return back to the home school, the local school administrator will conduct a transition conference to support a successful new start.

#### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is denial of school attendance by the Board of Education. Expulsion may be recommended for the remainder of the school year or for a time period determined on a case-by-case basis. Upon the receipt of the principal's recommendation, the Superintendent shall schedule an administrative hearing. In the event the expulsion is recommended, the custodial parent will be notified by registered mail prior to action by the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education.

#### **Early Warning**

The Early Warning Program is a school/community-based program to assist public school personnel, parents, and law enforcement personnel in providing for early intervention for children and youth who are truant or in danger of becoming truant or for conduct.

#### **Juvenile Court Referral**

Students may be referred to Juvenile Court for attendance or behavior related problems. Once a student is referred, the Court will take such action as it deems appropriate. Student referral will be in the form of a complaint or petition. The kinds of petitions are as follows:

- A. **Child In Need of Supervision (CHINS)**, for status offenders;
- B. **Delinquent**, for juveniles committing misdemeanors or felonies;
- C. **Dependent**, for abused or neglected juveniles.

#### **CLASSIFICATION OF VIOLATIONS**

Proper behavior is that which enhances the learning environment. Classroom teachers are responsible for maintaining classroom discipline and will deal with general classroom disruptions. **Only when the action taken by the teacher is ineffective or the disruption is sufficiently severe should the student be referred to the principal or the principal's designee.**

Parents or guardians of students who consistently disrupt class and/or exhibit poor work habits should be notified by the teacher or other school official and/or referred to a guidance counselor. When a student is brought to the office of the supervising employee, the principal/designee shall hear the student's explanation and consult further with other school personnel, if necessary, before determining the classification of violation or disciplinary measure.

Violations of the Code of Conduct are grouped into four classes: Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV. Each classification is followed by a disciplinary action that is to be implemented by the principal or the principal's designee. Parental contact (verbal and/or written) will be made as disciplinary consequences are assigned to a student for misconduct.

#### **CLASS I VIOLATIONS**

- 101 **EXCESSIVE TARDINESS** - Incidents of reporting late to school, class, or assigned area (For further information refer to attendance policy and regulations)
  - 101.1 **TARDIES TO SCHOOL**
  - 101.2 **TARDIES TO CLASS**
- 102 **DISTRACTION OF OTHER STUDENTS OR THE SCHOOL PROGRAM IN GENERAL** - Any behavior which is disruptive to the educational process.
- 103 **NON-CONFORMITY TO DRESS CODE**
- 104 **MINOR DISRUPTION ON A SCHOOL BUS**
- 105 **INAPPROPRIATE PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION**
- 106 **LITTERING OF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

- 107 **FAILURE TO COME TO CLASS PREPARED WITH ALL NECESSARY MATERIALS**  
 108 **UNAUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL OR ANOTHER PERSON'S PERSONAL PROPERTY**  
 109 **POSSESSION OF NUISANCE ITEMS** - Any item which disrupts the instructional day at school or is a distraction on a bus is not allowed. Such items will be confiscated and may be claimed by a parent or guardian. Examples include but are not limited to: iPods/MP3 players, radios, toys, trading cards, playing cards, or other hand-held video games. Students bring these items to school at their own risk. The local school is not responsible for attempting to recover these items should they be lost or stolen while at school.  
 110 **FAILURE TO ATTEND ASSIGNED CONSEQUENCES**  
 111 **TECHNOLOGY VIOLATION- PLEASE SEE GUIDELINES FOR TECHNOLOGY FOR INFRACTION AND CONSEQUENCES**  
 112 **HORSEPLAY**  
 113 **ANY OTHER OFFENSE WHICH THE PRINCIPAL MAY REASONABLY DEEM TO FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY**

***Class I Disciplinary Actions***

ADMINISTRATIVE OPTIONS FOR CLASS I VIOLATIONS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Student conferences
- Parental contact/conferences
- After-school detention
- Suspension from school/bus
- Out-of-school suspension not to exceed 3 school days
- Assignment to in-school intervention (where available) CLASS II VIOLATIONS

- 201 **DEFIANCE OR DISRESPECT OF SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE'S AUTHORITY**  
 201.1 **DEFIANCE**  
 201.2 **DISRESPECT**
- 202 **POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF PRESCRIPTION, NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION, INHALANTS, AEROSOL SPRAYS, OR OTHER OVER-THE-COUNTER PRODUCTS** - Failure to comply with the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education Medication Policy and Procedures. Required medications must be delivered to the school by the parent or other responsible adult accompanied by the completed Alabama State Department of Education designated medication authorization form and kept in accordance with the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education medication policy and procedures.
- 203 **MINOR FIGHTING - INTENTIONALLY TOUCHING OR STRIKING ANOTHER PERSON AGAINST THE WILL OF THE OTHER WITHOUT CREATING A MAJOR DISRUPTION**
- 204 **USE OF PROFANE OR OBSCENE LANGUAGE OR POSSESSION OF PORNOGRAPHIC, SUGGESTIVE, OR INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL (PRINTED OR DRAWN) AND DOES NOT INCLUDE THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY**
- 205 **VANDALISM** - Intentional and deliberate action resulting in injury or damages of less than \$200 to public property or the real or personal property of another. A police report will be filed and the student will be expected to pay for damages.
- 206 **"SKIPPING" CLASS OR SCHOOL/OUT OF ASSIGNED AREA** – Unauthorized absence from class or school. Group skip days are included in this category and are not permitted by the Board of Education.
- 207 **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY** – A breach of academic integrity. Typically, with instances of academic dishonesty, the student will receive either reduced credit or no credit on the particular assignment along with other appropriate disciplinary action.
- 208 **GAMBLING** – Any participation in games of chance for money and/or other items of value.
- 209 **INTENTIONALLY PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION TO A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE**
- 210 **STEALING, LARCENY, PETTY THEFT** – The intentional taking, and/or carrying away of property valued at less than \$100 belonging to or in the possession or custody of another.
- 211 **POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY**- The possession of stolen property valued at or less than \$100 with the knowledge that it is stolen.
- 212 **THREATS TO DO EXTORTION** – Verbal or written
- 213 **TRESPASSING**- Willfully entering or remaining in any school property after being prohibited by an authorized person.
- 214 **INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR-VERBAL, WRITTEN OR PHYSICAL**
- 215 **USE OF PHYSICAL OR GRAPHIC OBSCENE GESTURES**
- 216 **THE UNAUTHORIZED USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES**
- 217 **POSSESSION OF INAPPROPRIATE DEVICES** – Including but not limited to bullet casings, artificial weapons, facsimiles and/or replicas.
- 218 **DISRUPTION ON A SCHOOL BUS**
- 219 **UNAUTHORIZED ORGANIZATION** - Any on campus participation in non-sanctioned fraternities, sororities, secret societies, or non-affiliated school clubs.
- 220 **MINOR VIOLATIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY**- see Guidelines for technology for consequences.
- 221 **MINOR MISUSES OF BATHROOM FACILITY** - Includes wasting bathroom supplies, intentional clogging toilet/sinks, writing in stalls, violating another student's privacy, etc.
- 222 **MULTIPLE OR REPETITIVE CLASS I OFFENSES**
- 223 **GIVING UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO SCHOOL-BOARD PROPERTY**
- 224 **USING SCHOOL-BOARD PROPERTY WITHOUT PERMISSION**
- 225 **FLEEING A BOARD EMPLOYEE**
- 226 **SHARING A BATHROOM STALL WITH ANOTHER STUDENT**
- 227 **ANY OTHER OFFENSE WHICH THE PRINCIPAL MAY REASONABLY DEEM TO FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY**

**Class II Disciplinary Action****ADMINISTRATIVE OPTIONS FOR CLASS II VIOLATIONS (INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO)**

- Student conferences
- Parental contact/conferences
- After-school detention
- Suspension from school/bus
- Out-of-school suspension not to exceed 5 school days
- Assignment to in-school intervention (where available) or Saturday school (alternative to suspension)
- Legal action
- Educational class/counseling may be required
- Loss of parking privileges
- TCSS Academy

**CLASS III VIOLATIONS**

301 **POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF PRESCRIPTION OR NON-PRESCRIPTION NARCOTICS, MEDICATIONS, INHALANTS, AEROSOL, SPRAYS, OR OTHER OVER-THE-COUNTER PRODUCTS WITHOUT SCHOOL APPROVAL-** Required medications must be delivered to the school by the parent or other responsible adult accompanied by the complete Alabama State Department of Education designation medication authorization form and kept in accordance with the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education medication policy and procedures.

302 **STEALING, THEFT, POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY** - Knowingly or intentionally taking, obtaining, receiving, or exerting unauthorized control over property values at more than \$100 belonging to another person.

303 **BURGLARY OF SCHOOL PROPERTY** - Entering or remaining in a structure or conveyance with the intent to commit an offense therein.

304 **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF/VANDALISM** - Willful and malicious injury or damages at or in excess of \$200 to public property or to real or personal property belonging to another.

305 **POSSESSION OF A KNIFE**

306 **POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS DEVICES** - including but not limited to mace, tear gas, "blank" guns, facsimiles, replicas, BB guns, airsoft guns, and/or artificial weapons, ammunition, tasers, stun guns, or any items used inappropriately with intent to harm.

307 **INDIVIDUALS AND/OR GROUPS INCITING OR PARTICIPATING IN UNAUTHORIZED DEMONSTRATIONS AND/OR DISORDERLY ACTIVITIES** - which lead to disruption of the normal school program. This includes any gang related behavior and instigators and hazing of any kind.

308 **THREAT, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING OF STUDENTS** - The threat by word or act to do harm to another student with an apparent ability to do so, or doing some act which creates a well-founded fear in the person that such violence is imminent. Harassment is inclusive of name-calling, as well as conduct, which directly affects another individual's emotional state of mind.

309 **FIGHTING** - Any major physical conflict involving two or more individuals where continued aggression causes a major disruption to the school environment.

310 **DIRECTING OBSCENE, PROFANE LANGUAGE OR GESTURES (VERBAL OR WRITTEN) TO A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE**

311 **SEXUAL HARASSMENT** - Any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

312 **MAJOR VIOLATION OF STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY** - Examples of major violations could include: tampering with another student's class work; the intentional use of school system or personal technology, while on school property, to break laws involving theft, identity theft, and distribution of stolen and/or illegal items; the intentional destruction of school-owned technology equipment; the intentional disruption of network services resulting in school or district level network outages; viewing or sending of obscene material. Please see Guidelines for Technology for consequences under this violation.

313 **INTENTIONALLY PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION TO A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE OR HINDERING THE INVESTIGATION IN REGARD TO A CLASS III OFFENSE**

314 **UNJUSTIFIED ACTIVATION OF A FREE ALARM SYSTEM OR ITS COMPONENTS, EMERGENCY OR SECURITY SYSTEMS**

315 **ASSAULT**

316 **THE MISUSE AND/OR ABUSE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES** - Sending inappropriate messages and/or images via electronic communication devices or any other form of technology whether owned or owned by the school district, at any time may result in serious school, personal, and/or civil criminal legal consequences.

317 **SEXUAL OFFENSES** - Acts of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, lewd behavior, indecent exposure, sexual contact, sexual intercourse, sexting, viewing or sharing obscene material or other conduct intended to result in sexual gratification.

318 **POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS, LIGHTERS, MATCHES, ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES/VAPOR, SYNTHETIC NICOTINE PRODUCTS** and/or paraphernalia to include pens, batteries, etc.. **(SEE VAPE POLICY FOR CONSEQUENCES)**

318.1 **TOBACCO, POSSESSION**

318.2 **TOBACCO, SALE**

318.3 **TOBACCO, USE**

318.4 **E-CIGARETTES/VAPOR**

318.5 **SYNTHETIC NICOTINE**

It is the policy of the Board that students will not be permitted to possess, smoke, or use tobacco products in any form while in school buildings, on school grounds, or in school buses during the school day or during any school- sponsored activities. Possession, control, or use of tobacco products is a Class III Intermediate Offense in the Student Code of Conduct. Administrative responses to this violation may include but are not limited to the following: parent contact(s) conference(s), out - of - school suspension (not to exceed five days), and legal action.

**VAPING OFFENSES (Secondary Students)**

Below is a full list of penalties for each violation of the policy:

**1st Offense**

- Possession – Five (5) days of ISI
- Distribution –Five (5) days of ISI

**2nd Offense**

- Possession –Three (3) days of suspension and attend Juling Awareness Class
- Distribution –Three (3) days of suspension and attend Juling Awareness Class
- Failure to attend Juling Awareness Class may result in short-term placement in Alternative School

**3rd Offense**

- Possession – Alternative School recommendation
- Distribution – Alternative School recommendation

**4th Offense**

- Possession – Recommendation for Expulsion
- Distribution – Recommendation for Expulsion

***Elementary Students in violation of this policy shall be disciplined at the discretion of the principal not to exceed the procedures as outlined for Secondary Students.***

- 319 **MAJOR MISUSE OF BATHROOM FACILITY** - includes vandalism/destruction of property, making bathroom unusable, using camera/video in bathroom, using wrong bathroom, etc.
- 320 **POSSESSION AND/OR IGNITING FIREWORKS OR FIRECRACKERS**
- 321 **POSSESSION/CONSUMPTION OF CBD PRODUCTS** - includes gummies, supplements, oils, etc.
- 322 **REFUSING OR HINDERING AN ADMINISTRATIVE SEARCH OR SEIZURE OF PROPERTY**
- 323 **ANY OTHER OFFENSE WHICH THE PRINCIPAL MAY REASONABLY DEEM TO FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY.**
- 324 **MULTIPLE OR REPETITIVE CLASS II OFFENSES**
- 325 **ACCUMULATION OF TEN (10) DAYS OF SUSPENSION**

***Class III Disciplinary Action***

The Office of Student Services shall be informed about any infraction that falls within this category. The disciplinary action for such violations committed on school premises or during school related functions may be in-school detention or out-of-school and/or bus suspension up to ten (10) days with possible recommendation for expulsion or referral to Alternative School. Educational class/counseling may be required. Parental contact will be made as soon as possible.

Law enforcement and/or juvenile court personnel **may** be contacted and a complaint or petition may be filed after consultation with juvenile authorities.

**CLASS IV VIOLATIONS**

- 401 **ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS** - The unauthorized use, sale, transfer, possession, soliciting, trafficking, misuse, and/or abuse of drugs. These include alcoholic beverages, barbiturates, central nervous system stimulants, hallucinogens, synthetic replicas, drug paraphernalia, THC products including gummies, wax, oils, vapor, any mood altering substance, and all other drugs to which the narcotic and drug abuse laws of the United States, local municipalities, and the State of Alabama apply.
- 401.1 **ALCOHOL, POSSESSION**
- 401.2 **ALCOHOL, SALE**
- 401.3 **ALCOHOL, USE**
- 401.4 **DRUGS, POSSESSION**
- 401.5 **DRUGS, SALE**
- 401.6 **DRUGS, USE**
- 402 **ARSON** – The willful and malicious burning of any part of School Board property.
- 403 **ASSAULT UPON SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEES** – The intentional touching or striking of a school employee against his or her will or the intentional causing of bodily harm to a School Board employee.
- 404 **POSSESSION, USE OF, OR DISCHARGING OF DANGEROUS WEAPONS OR DEVICES** – in the school building, on the school campus, in a vehicle, or at any school related function. The term “dangerous weapon” means a firearm or anything designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious physical injury and such term includes, but not limited to, a bazooka, hand grenade, missile, or explosive or “incendiary device,” a pistol, rifle, or shotgun, or a switch-blade knife, gravity knife, stiletto, sword or dagger.
- 404.1 **KNIFE USE**
- 404.2 **MACE/ TEAR GAS USE**
- 405 **EXPLOSIVES, AMMUNITION, AND/OR CARTRIDGES** – Preparing, possessing, or igniting on School Board property explosives likely to cause serious bodily injury or property damage.
- 406 **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT** - Acts of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, abuse, battery, electronic pornography, attempted rape, or rape.
- 407 **AGGRAVATED ASSAULT** – Intentionally causing great bodily harm, disability, or permanent disfigurement; use of a deadly weapon.

408 **ROBBERY** – The taking of money or other personal property from a person by force, violence, assault or putting the person in fear of the same.

409 **THE CHARGE OF A CRIME** – As defined under the laws of the city, State of Alabama, or United States while on school property or participating in a school activity (§16-1-24.1, *Code of Alabama*, 1975).

410 **BOMB THREAT** – Any such communication(s) which has the effect of interrupting the education environment.

411 **POSSESSION OF A HANDGUN RESULTS IN EXPULSION FROM THE TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN ONE YEAR.**

411.1 **HANDGUN, POSSESSION**

411.2 **HANDGUN, SALE**

411.3 **HANDGUN, USE**

411.4 **RIFLE/SHOTGUN, POSSESSION**

411.5 **RIFLE/SHOTGUN, SALE**

411.6 **RIFLE/SHOTGUN, USE**

412 **INTENTIONALLY PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION TO A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE OR HINDERING THE INVESTIGATION IN REGARD TO A CLASS IV OFFENSE**

413 **MISUSE OR ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS** – The unauthorized use, sale, transfer, possession, soliciting, trafficking, misuse of prescription drugs. These include any drug that requires a doctor's prescription to legally possess.

414 **TERRORIST THREAT** - Threatening by any means (verbal, written or otherwise) to commit a crime of violence or to damage any property in a manner that intentionally or recklessly terrorizes another person or causes disruption of school activities.

415 **THE INTENTIONAL THREAT, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, STRIKING OR BULLYING OF A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE** – The threat by word or act to do harm to an employee, with an apparent ability to do so, and doing some act which creates a well-founded fear in the person that such violence is imminent. Harassment is inclusive of name-calling, as well as conduct, which directly affects another individual's emotional state of mind.

416 **ANY SECOND MAJOR OFFENSE FROM THE CLASS III CATEGORY**

417 **ANY OTHER OFFENSE WHICH THE PRINCIPAL MAY REASONABLY DEEM TO FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY**

#### ***Class IV Disciplinary Action***

The Office of Student Services shall be informed about any infraction that falls within this category. The disciplinary action for such violation committed on school premises or during school related functions shall be suspended up to ten (10) days with possible recommendation for expulsion. Parental contact will be made as soon as possible. Law enforcement and/or juvenile court personnel shall be contacted and a complaint or petition may be filed after consultation with juvenile authorities. Additional disciplinary actions as a result of Class IV Violation may result in one of the following:

1. Additional suspension days from school and/or bus or other disciplinary action as determined by the principal after consultation with the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.
2. Long-term assignments to the Alternative School.
3. Expulsion from the Tuscaloosa County School System.

The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education finds that there is a compelling public interest in ensuring that all schools are safe and drug free. The Tuscaloosa County Board of Education is consistent with Ala. Code §16-1-24.1, adopted disciplinary actions which **will** be enacted in addition to any other disciplinary outlined in the Code of Conduct.

When a student violates any Tuscaloosa County Board of Education policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatened physical harm to a person, the principal **shall** notify appropriate law enforcement officials. If any criminal charge is warranted arising from the conduct, the principal is authorized to sign the appropriate warrant. The local schools **shall** immediately suspend that person from attending regular classes and schedule a hearing at the earliest possible date, which shall not be later than five (5) days.

If the student is found to have violated any Tuscaloosa County Board of Education policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatened physical harm to a person, the student **shall not** be readmitted to a Tuscaloosa County school until (1) criminal charges or offenses arising from the conduct, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities, and (2) the student has satisfied all other requirements imposed for readmission.

Readmission of any student determined to be guilty of an offense involving drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person, threatened physical harm to a person, may be conditioned upon the student meeting certain conditions mandated by the Board of Education, the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's designee.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR TECHNOLOGY INFRACTIONS**

This is a companion document to the TCSS Code of Student Conduct. Refer to the TCSS BOARD POLICY and the TCSS Code of Student Conduct for additional information.

Technology offenses will be handled as set forth below. Technology discipline offenses will also result in the restricted use of personal mobile computing devices while on school grounds.

##### **CLASS I - MINOR OFFENSES 111 Technology Infraction (a-e)**

- a. Unauthorized or inappropriate written/oral communication, use of e-mail, websites, apps, games, messaging services, chat rooms, or other non-school related activity. School personnel may authorize educational use of the above applications during school hours or otherwise when school is not in session.
- b. Use of non-directed profane, inflammatory, or abusive language.
- c. Downloading, loading, storing, creating, unauthorized files, images, video, music, apps, data, or programs that do not result in damages to person or property.



- d. Unauthorized transmission of personal information over the internet.
- e. Activity that may be disruptive to the school environment

#### **CONSEQUENCES**

- Classroom warning
- Possible loss of device access
- Temporary loss of device access
- Parent contact
- Referral to administrator
- Before or after school detention
- In-school-intervention not to exceed three (3) days
- Out-of-school suspension not to exceed three (3) days

#### **CLASS II – INTERMEDIATE OFFENSES**

221 Technology Infraction (a-m)

- a. Negligent care of or vandalism such as malicious attempt to harm or destroy any TCSS device resulting in damage less than \$500.
- b. Changing software/hardware configurations.
- c. Downloading, loading, storing, or creating unauthorized files, images, video, music, apps, data, programs, or viruses resulting in damages to any TCSS device.
- d. Taking pictures, audio, and/or video without subject's or school's permission.
- e. Use of unauthorized anonymous and/or false communications via social media sites and/or electronic communication.
- f. Unauthorized change of program settings or any behavior or activity that damages or disrupts network performance on school devices.
- g. Deletion, examination, copying, or modifying of files/data/device settings belonging to other users including staff, students, and district to include sharing, using, or modifying usernames and/or passwords.
- h. Bypassing the TCSS web filter through a web proxy.
- j. Cheating (refer to TCSS Code of Student Conduct, Class II 207)
- k. Subsequent offenses that may be disruptive to the school environment.
- l. Harassment
- m. Action violating existing board policy

#### **CONSEQUENCES**

- Temporary loss of device access
- Parent contact
- Referral to administrator
- Before or after school detention
- In-school-intervention
- Out of school suspension not to exceed five (5) days
- Possible referral to law enforcement
- Restitution in vandalism instances for actual loss, damage, or repair
  - Indemnification - TCSS may be indemnified for any losses, costs, or damages including reasonable attorney fees incurred by the district relating to any breach of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

#### **CLASS III – MAJOR OFFENSES**

312 - Technology Infraction (a-g)

- a. Any activity that voids the device, service agreement, software license or warranty such as, but not limited to jail breaking or rooting (process of hacking a device to bypass digital rights management software).
- b. Unauthorized entry to program files/hacking.
- c. Vandalism such as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy a TCSS owned device resulting in damages in excess of \$500.
- d. Sending, transmitting, accessing, uploading, downloading, distributing, or publishing obscene, offensive, profane, threatening, harassing, pornographic, or sexually explicit materials that result in personal injury to staff or students.
- e. Use of school/district's Internet or email accounts for financial gain or personal gain, or any illegal activity.
- f. Offenses on multiple occasions that may be disruptive to the school environment.
- g. Any use that violates local, state and/or federal laws or regulations.
- h. Sending, transmitting, accessing, uploading, downloading, or distributing inappropriate, obscene, offensive, profane, threatening, harassing, pornographic, or sexually explicit materials intended to harm or demean staff or students

## CONSEQUENCES

- Loss of device access
- Parent contact
- Referral to administrator
- Before or after school detention
- In-school-intervention
- Out of school suspension not to exceed ten (10) days
- Suspension and/or recommendation for Superintendent Level Probation or expulsion and forfeiture of device.
- Restitution in vandalism instances for actual loss, damage, or repair
- Indemnification - TCSS may be indemnified for any losses, costs, or damages including reasonable attorney fees incurred by the district relating to any breach of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

## Suspension/Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

Any student who has been identified as disabled under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, may be suspended or expelled when all procedural safeguards set forth in the above mentioned applicable laws are followed. Concerns and questions relating to Section 504 should be referred to the Special Education Department.

**All transfer students must be in good disciplinary standing from their previous school(s) with no outstanding suspension or expulsion offenses pending. Tuscaloosa County Board of Education honors suspensions, alternative placements, and expulsion from other official Boards of Education.** A student enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County Schools System assigned to an alternative school from their previous school system will be required to serve their alternative placement before returning to the regular school setting.

## Complaints

The proper channeling of complaints involving individual students or a local school matter is as follows: 1) the teacher; 2) the principal; 3) the Superintendent; 4) the Board of Education.

## Grievance Procedures

The primary purpose of this procedure is to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints, grievances, and appeals for long-term suspensions (suspensions of 5 or more days), Alternative School placement or expulsions.

A grievance shall mean a complaint by a student or group of students that there has been a violation, a misinterpretation, or inequitable application of any policy or practice of the school or school system.

Attendance hearings, disciplinary hearings, or other matters not specifically mentioned herein, that may be appealed under provisions provided in the Student Code of Conduct and Attendance or other authorized and prescribed procedures are not subject to the provisions of this policy. The grievance may be initiated orally or in writing at Level One and must be filed within 10 work days following the act or condition which is the basis for the complaint. Beyond the initial step, the grievance shall be in writing.

## Procedures

Each level of the procedure shall be observed and proper channels followed. At the request of the student or parent, exceptions may be granted by the Superintendent in emergency situations.

- A. Level One (Informal Procedures) The aggrieved student shall first seek resolution of the complaint or grievance through free and informal communication as close as possible to the point of origin. A student with a grievance may first take it to his/her immediate teacher or principal. Both shall be consulted prior to further solution procedures.
- B. Level Two (Formal Procedures)

**Step 1** If, as a result of the discussion between the student, teacher, and principal, the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, then within five (5) work days, the student shall set for the grievance in writing to the Superintendent specifying the following:

1. The nature of the complaint or grievance
2. The nature or extent of the injury, loss, or inconvenience
3. Relief sought
4. The results of previous discussions
5. Dissatisfaction with the decision previously rendered

The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall hear the grievance and render a decision within 15 workdays after receiving notice of appeal for long-term suspension, Alternative School placement or expulsion.

**Step 2** If the student is not satisfied with the disposition of his grievance at Level Two, Step 1, the student may file the grievance in writing with the Board of Education. Said appeal must be filed within five (5) work days after the decision at Level Two, Step 1.

At the Board hearing, the aggrieved student may be accompanied by a representative of his/her choice and present evidence supporting the grievance.

**Step 3** In the event the student is not satisfied with the Disposition of the grievance by the Board of Education, the student may appeal the decision to the appropriate authorities as provided by law or seek recourse through the state or federal court system.

### Miscellaneous Provisions

- A. Time Lines: It shall be understood that the time lines imposed at each level and step shall be strictly enforced, and unless the appeal is made within the time allotted, the grievance shall be deemed to have been settled and the student shall have no further right of appeal the said grievance.
- B. Hearing Procedures: The Superintendent and/or the Board of Education may establish hearing procedures to be followed at Level Two Step 2.

### ADDITIONAL CONDUCT POLICIES

#### Participation in Graduation Ceremonies and Class Recognition Programs

Any student, including a graduating senior, may be denied the opportunity to participate in graduation ceremonies and special recognition programs at the discretion of the principal. The principal may deny participation and assign appropriate disciplinary action for major conduct infractions, class pranks, and other incidents which disrupt the educational process and reflect a negative image on the individual class or school in general.

#### Search and Seizure Policies

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, principal and/or designee may search a student under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search. This can include the use of specially trained dogs and metal detectors.

As used in this policy, the term "unauthorized" means any item dangerous to health or safety of the students or school personnel, or disruptive of any lawful function, mission, or process of the school, or any item described as unauthorized in school rules available beforehand to the students.

A student's failure to permit searches and seizures as provided in this policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

#### Personal Searches

School officials (school Principal or approved designee under the direction of the school Principal only) may make searches of a student and/or personal belongings, if there is reasonable cause to believe that the student is carrying articles that may endanger other individuals in the school or that such articles possessed are contrary to law or the regulations of the Board.

If a student is searched, it shall be in private by a school official of the same sex with a certified staff member of the same sex present. In any case, in which the Principal or designee determines that a search of more than a student's pockets, jacket, cap, outer shirt, shoes, socks, belt, purse, book bag, other outer garments and articles, and electronic devices is justified by sufficient reasonable cause, the Principal or designee shall notify the student's parent/guardian prior to the search and the parent/guardian shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be present.

#### Searches Involving Outside Personnel, Dogs, and/or Detection Devices

Searches of students which involve outside (non-school) personnel, dogs, and/or detection devices are permitted and will be conducted when appropriate.

#### Locker Searches

Student lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school; however, students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers. Periodic general inspections of lockers may be conducted by school authorities for any reason at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

Students shall not be issued lockers until such time that the "Acknowledgement Concerning use of Student Lockers" form has been electronically signed.

#### Vehicle Searches

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspections of the exteriors of student vehicles on school property. The interiors of student vehicles may be inspected whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal, unauthorized, and/or contraband materials are contained inside. Such patrols and inspections may be conducted without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. **A student who refuses to cooperate in allowing a search of a vehicle brought by him or her on school property shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including long-term suspension.** Student will lose all parking privileges on school campus and will be ineligible for parking permits.

#### Seizure of Illegal Materials

If a properly conducted search yields illegal, unauthorized, and/or contraband materials, said items may be impounded by school officials. Students shall be given a receipt for any items impounded and parents or guardians shall be notified of all items seized.

#### Documentation

The Principal shall fully document every incident where a search is conducted. Such documentation shall include a detailed account of the search, items impounded, the student(s) involved, a list of all witnesses present, and other information regarding the incident.

### Field Trips

Students making a trip under the sponsorship of the school are required to have a form signed by their parents/guardians giving them permission to take the trip and releasing the school from any liability for any accident or injury. Students will be transported via school bus and/or charter bus to/from field trip locations. Prior to the day of the field trip, students should communicate with teachers about deadlines and due dates of class requirements.

### Dress Code

A standardized dress code of Tuscaloosa County Schools has been adopted to ensure that all students are provided safe and appropriate educational opportunities which are free from unnecessary disruptions or outside influences and to instill in students the need to dress appropriately and have respect for each other and authority.

Students who have questionable or inappropriate dress will not be allowed to attend class. The following items will serve as a minimum guide to acceptable dress for Tuscaloosa County Schools students. Each school reserves the right to establish dress code guidelines in addition to this guide.

### Dress Code Guidelines

- A. All students must wear shirts, blouses, or dresses with a collar or with a non-revealing neckline such as, crew neck, jewel neck, or boat neck. Low cut, open back, bare midriff or clothing that allows the midriff to be exposed, are not permitted.
- B. Students may wear sleeveless garments which adequately cover undergarments. Spaghetti and/or thin-strapped shirts may be worn only if over another T-shirt or if covered by a blouse with sleeves.
- C. No obscene language and/or illegal substance advertisements (to include alcoholic and tobacco advertisements) may be worn on clothing or accessories.
- D. Pants, shorts, and skirts must be worn at the waist and fit properly. Pajama-style pants are prohibited. Skirts, shorts, and dresses must be mid-thigh or longer in front and back. No slits, holes, or leg openings may be allowed about mid-thigh. Leggings should be worn with the appropriate outer garments.
- E. Shirts should fit properly and not be too large, too tight, too short, or too long.
- F. Blankets may not be brought or worn to school.
- G. No hats, caps, head coverings, hair curlers, picks, bandanas, bonnets, head dressings, or sunglasses will be worn in school.
- H. Students are required to wear appropriate shoes at all times. Shoes with wheels are not appropriate for the school environment. Tennis shoes will be required for a physical education class.
- I. Student's clothing should be neat and clean and not in noticeable disrepair.
- J. Appropriate undergarments must be worn and not visible.
- K. Ear piercings are allowed. Earrings, hairstyles, and other adornments that draw attention to oneself in a manner that may be disruptive to the educational process or pose a safety risk are prohibited.
- L. Students are prohibited from wearing any metal chains, metal spiked apparel, or accessories that may pose a safety risk.
- M. Students are to wear clothing in the manner it is designed to be worn (i.e., Clothing worn backwards or inside out is not allowed.) No excessively tight or revealing clothing, or see-through garments, may be worn.
- N. Students are prohibited from wearing any sign, symbol, logo, or garment which has become synonymous with any gang or unauthorized club or organizational activity. This also included any avenue for the promotion of products or activities prohibited by school policy or that are inflammatory and may generate negative feelings among the student body.

The above items serve as a minimum guide. The principal shall have the discretion to outline other appropriate guidelines for their campus for special occasions.

### Enforcement of Dress Code

Parents, teachers, and principals will strictly enforce the dress code. A student may be sent home to make any necessary alterations. Since this normally works a greater hardship on the parents and guardians than the students, parents are urged to supervise their child's dress daily. We expect parents to take an active role in supporting this dress code. **WHEN IN QUESTION, THE PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE SHALL BE THE FINAL AUTHORITY IN DECIDING WHAT IS APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR SCHOOL.**

### Student Pregnancy

Pregnant students may attend school and participate in regular school programs. The principal/school counselor should be contacted for the purpose of a possible limitation of normal activities.

### School Visitors

Visitors to the school must report to the principal's office for permission to visit. Authorized visitors will be issued a visitor's badge prior to visiting the school. Persons without badges will be considered trespassers.

### Transportation

Parents and students should be aware that the sole purpose of the school bus is to transport students safely to and from school. Since the school bus driver carries this heavy burden of responsibility, the school bus is considered an extension of the classroom and all Tuscaloosa County Board of Education rules apply. The following guidelines are to be followed when riding the bus. Any student not abiding by these guidelines may be subject to discipline as outlined in the DEFINITIONS AND RULES RELATING TO FORMAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION in this publication.

- A. Students will be picked up and dropped off at their residence or designated bus stop only.
- B. Students should be at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the designated time.
- C. Once students arrive at their school bus Stop, they are subject to the rules of the school system. It is recommended that parents assist with supervision at the bus stop.
- D. Students must obey instructions given by the driver.
- E. Students must be courteous to fellow pupils and the bus driver. (Do not annoy other students).
- F. Horseplay, threats, and fighting are not permitted on or around the bus or at bus stops.
- G. Students should remain silent when approaching and crossing the railroads.
- H. Students should talk only in a normal voice and not use profane or obscene language.
- I. Students should remain properly seated, not change seats, and keep heads and hands inside the bus.
- J. Students are not allowed to eat, chew gum, drink, smoke, or strike matches on the school bus.
- K. Weapons of any kind are not permitted on the bus.
- L. Students are not allowed to tamper with any of the equipment on the bus, especially the emergency door.
- M. Students are not allowed to litter the bus, or throw objects within or outside the bus.
- N. Students are not allowed to leave the bus except at the regular bus stop without written permission from the administration.
- O. No objects should be transported on a school bus that may compromise the safety of the students or the driver. This includes, but is not limited to, animals, fireworks, sharp objects, glass, balloons, and any other objects that could obstruct a driver's vision, distract a driver's attention, or otherwise endanger the lives of anyone who rides a school bus.
- P. Books, packages, coats, band instruments and other items should not be in the aisle or in the driver compartment and should not be left on the bus. These items must be held in the child's lap and must not occupy the seat of another child.
- Q. Students are not allowed to transport prescription, or non-prescription medications on the bus except emergency medications and approved medications prescribed for self-administration.
- R. Due to the possible distraction to the bus driver by the use of cell phones, or other personal electronic communication devices, the use of those items will be at the bus driver's discretion. Under emergency situations (i.e., mechanical breakdown of the school bus, accidents, or other possible safety issues) the use of these items will be allowed.

### Student Arrival at School/Dismissal at End of School Day

Students not transported by bus should not arrive prior to the arrival of the first bus since supervision is not available. It is the parent's responsibility to pick up their student when school dismisses. Habitual late pickups may be reported to the police department or the Department of Human Resources. **Additionally, parents may be assessed fees for students not picked on time.**

### PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Integrity means to integrate one's values and beliefs into every activity that is undertaken. The Tuscaloosa County School District believes that honesty is right and that stealing and cheating is wrong. Academic integrity means doing one's own work to the best of one's ability, without the unauthorized help of assistance of someone else. Therefore, in an effort to foster academic integrity in all students, this honor code has been created to help students recognize, understand, and practice ethical conduct with regard to their academic assignments.

There are various academic scenarios pertaining to the completion of academic assignments that would be considered unethical. These instances include, but are not limited to the following:

- Cheating: copying another student's work, and is inclusive of both giving and receiving information on an academic assignment.
- Plagiarism: defined as either the intentional or unintentional use of another person's words, ideas, or data without providing the proper acknowledgement of the source through quotations, references, or footnotes.
- Fabrication/Falsification: scenario in which one either invents or distorts the origin or content of information used as authority. This is inclusive of citing a source that does not exist, citing information from a source that does not actually contain the information that was cited, as well as listing a bibliography source when the source was neither referenced or cited in the assignment.

Generally, when academic assignments are made, the expectation is that each student will do their own work without the help or assistance of others. Exceptions to this expectation might include group projects in which the teacher authorized certain students to work together on a particular assignment. When instances of academic dishonesty have been discovered, typically, either reduced credit or possibly no credit (i.e., a "zero") will be awarded. Further, instances of academic dishonesty will be documented in the student's individual conduct file, and additional consequences may also be assigned as applicable to the particular incident.

**STUDENT CELL PHONE/PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY DEVICE USE**

A personal technology device (PTD) is a portable Internet-accessing device that is not the property of the school district that can be used to transmit communications by voice, written characters, words, or images; share information; record sounds; process words; and/or capture images, such as a laptop computer, tablet, smartphone/smartwatch, cell phone, personal digital assistant, or e-reader.

Possession of a PTD by a student is a privilege that may be revoked for violations of the Code of Student Conduct. Each school reserves the right to place conditions on, restrict, or prohibit the use of devices. Violations may result in the confiscation of the PTD (to be returned only to a parent) and/or other disciplinary actions. Students whose cell phones contain any illegal or inappropriate material are subject to the appropriate school consequences, as well as possible legal consequences. The school district is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage to PTDs or other electronic devices brought onto school district property. Students permitted to use PTDs during the school day must follow Board policy concerning Internet safety and use of technology. Students may only use devices during school hours when given specific permission to do so by their teacher or school administrator.

Under no circumstances may students possess or use a PTD during any state assessment or secure exam. Please see the section entitled "DIGITAL DEVICE POLICY IN A STANDARDIZED TESTING SETTING" for further details.

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## ALABAMA'S SCHOOL BUS STOP LAW

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The driver of a vehicle upon meeting or overtaking from either direction any school bus which has stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children on a highway, on a roadway, on school property, or upon a private road shall bring the vehicle to a complete stop before reaching the school bus. The driver of a vehicle upon a divided highway having four or more lanes which permits at least two lanes of traffic to travel in opposite directions need not stop the vehicle upon meeting a school bus which is stopped in the opposing roadway; however, when a school bus stops for passengers on four-lane roadways without a median separation or with a center turning lane, all traffic from both directions must stop.

Violations of the school bus passing law are as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense – \$150 to \$300 Fine
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense – \$300 to \$500 Fine, 100 hours community service, and 30 day license suspension
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense – \$500 to \$1000 Fine, 200 hours community service, and 90 day license suspension
- 4<sup>th</sup> Offense – \$1000 to \$3000 Fine, Class "C" Felony, and one year license suspension

For more information, contact the Alabama Department of Education, Pupil Transportation Section, at (334) 242-9730 or [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu).

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## STUDENT-PARENT INFORMATION GUIDE

The *Student-Parent Information Guide* is based on policies and procedures. It is a valid resource regarding the Tuscaloosa County School System's policies and procedures; however, it is not intended to replace the Tuscaloosa County School System Policy Manual. Detailed documentation of official policies is available for review at [www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net).

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### UPDATES AND INFORMATION CONCERNING EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

TCSS uses our Parent/Guardian Notification System to notify parents/guardians through automated phone call and/or text message, when there is an emergency school closing, delay, or early dismissal. The Notification System uses contact information provided by parents/guardians through the student registration process. If parent/guardian contact information changes during the school year, the parent/guardian should contact their student's school office to provide the updated information. If a parent or guardian believes they are not receiving messages from the Notification System, they should contact the school office to make sure their contact information is correct.

Information regarding emergency closings, dismissals, and delays is also posted on our TCSS web site and on our official TCSS social media accounts. If a closing, delay, or early dismissal is not system-wide, this information will be posted on the affected school web site(s) and/or official school social media accounts.

Information is also available on our TCSS mobile app. Get our Mobile app from iTunes for the iPhone or from GooglePlay for Android phones.

TCSS also shares information regarding closings/delays with local media outlets.

As a result of the advanced technology utilized by the Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service, the decision to dismiss school by zones is a possibility, during severe weather events.

As a result of the advanced technology utilized by EMA, the National Weather Service, and the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education, the decision to dismiss school by zones is an available option.