

HPSD EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Revised 7/30/2025



BUILT FOR GREATNESS

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MOTTO

Built for Greatness

HPSD MISSION

The mission of the Hattiesburg Public School District is to educate all students to become productive citizens of a dynamic, global community.

HPSD VISION

To create a model teaching and learning environment that graduates **EVERY** student prepared for success in life, college, and the workforce.

GOALS

1. **Academic Success:** **EVERY** student proficient and showing growth in all assessed areas.
2. **Effective and Committed Staff:** **EVERY** classroom and department is led by caring, supportive, and highly effective staff.
3. **Positive School Climate and Culture:** **ALL** schools are safe, supportive, and welcoming.
4. **Family and Community Engagement:** **ALL** families and the community are informed, connected, and contribute to the success of our students and schools.
5. **Fiscal Responsibility and Sustainable Resources:** **ALL** District resources support the full implementation of the strategic plan.

DISTRICT BELIEFS

- ❖ We believe students are the central focus of all District activities and can achieve at high levels.
- ❖ We believe every adult plays a vital role in our students' growth and development.
- ❖ We believe in strategically allocating resources to educate students in high-quality learning environments.
- ❖ We believe in providing students a wide range of academic and extracurricular opportunities and experiences.
- ❖ We believe everyone is a leader.
- ❖ We believe the community plays an essential role in the District's success.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help acquaint you with some of the basic information about the Hattiesburg Public School District and to provide you with a brief overview of the wide array of policies, benefits, and services that relate to your employment. In addition to this handbook, Board Policies are made available for your review on the District's website at www.hattiesburgpsd.com and the Central Administrative Office. Should any provision of this handbook conflict with Hattiesburg Public School District board policy and/or Mississippi or federal law or regulations, the relevant policy, law, or regulation will govern.

SECTION I: EMPLOYMENT

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination against “qualified individuals with disabilities.” The Hattiesburg Public School District will not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities to the extent provided by law.

ASSIGNMENTS

The Superintendent is empowered to assign and transfer all non-instructional and non-licensed employees and all licensed employees within the District. Staff members with an employment contract are not guaranteed a specific school site, grade level, or subject matter assignment.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The effective operation of schools in the district requires an organizational structure, effective administrative leadership at every level of responsibility, decision-making at the point in the structure where the decision can most effectively be made, the communication between individuals affected by decisions made.

Each employee of the Hattiesburg School District, except the board attorney, shall be responsible to the Board of Trustees through the superintendent. All personnel shall refer matters requiring administrative action to the administrative officer immediately in charge of the area in which the problem arises. Administrative officers shall refer such matters to the next higher authority when necessary. All matters to be submitted to the Board shall first be brought before the superintendent for investigation. If the matters require board action, the superintendent shall present them to the Board (Policy REF: CC & CD).

CHILD ABUSE AND OR NEGLECT REPORTING PROCEDURES

The Hattiesburg Public School District Board of Education recognizes its legal and ethical obligation to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Where there is "reasonable cause" to suspect a child has been abused and/or neglected or threatened with abuse as defined in MS Code §93-21-3 or 97-5-23 school personnel, as mandated reporters, shall act in accordance with the state laws and report incidents to the Mississippi State Department of Human Services or its successors, or other such duly constituted authorities. Reports of child abuse or neglect--including the name and address of the child, family, mandated reporter, or any other identifying information in the report--shall remain confidential and shall not be public information.

Any school employee who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused is required by Mississippi Code of 1972 (§43-21-353) to make an oral report immediately to the school principal/designated supervisor and by telephone or otherwise to the Department of Public Welfare. As provided in MS Code §43-21-355 and §93-21-23, any mandated reporter making a report or participating in judicial proceedings shall be presumed to be acting in good faith, and if found to have acted in good faith shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might be incurred or imposed. The reporting of an abused person shall not constitute a breach of confidentiality.

The Board also believes in a positive and preventative approach toward child abuse and neglect. Therefore, the Board endorses periodic in-service programs for all staff in an effort toward making staff members more sensitive to the issues involved in child abuse and neglect. The superintendent, or designee, is directed to

develop administrative guidelines necessary to implement this policy.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible administrative level, an equitable solution to any grievance.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply in this grievance procedure:

1. A "grievance" is a complaint by an individual based upon an alleged violation of his or her rights under state or federal law or board policy.
2. A "grievant" is a person or persons making the complaint.
3. The term "days" shall mean working school days and shall exclude weekends, holidays, and vacation days.

Certified/Licensed Staff Procedure for Processing Grievances

Grievances for CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

Level One

1. All grievances, as defined above, must be presented orally to the principal or immediate supervisor of the grievant within five (5) days of the act or omission complained of, and the principal or immediate supervisor and grievant will attempt to resolve the matter informally.
2. If the grievant is not satisfied with the action taken or the explanation given by his principal or immediate supervisor, the grievant shall, within five (5) days after meeting with his principal or immediate supervisor, file a written statement with his principal or immediate supervisor setting forth in detail how the grievant claims to have been discriminated against. This written statement shall contain, in addition to the above, the time, place, and nature of the alleged act or omission and the state or federal law or board policy violated. The statement must be signed by the grievant.
3. In the event the grievant does not submit to his principal or immediate supervisor a written statement as required, his failure to do so shall be deemed as an acceptance of the informal decision rendered by his principal or immediate supervisor.
4. Within five (5) days after receiving the grievant's signed statement, the principal or immediate supervisor shall send the superintendent a copy of the grievant's statement, along with a statement from the principal or immediate supervisor setting forth his response to the grievant and/or his decision, as is applicable. At the same time, the principal or immediate supervisor shall also provide a copy of his written statement to the grievant.

Level Two

1. Upon receipt by the superintendent of the written notice that the grievant intends to appeal the decision of his principal or immediate supervisor, the superintendent shall notify the grievant in writing within

five (5) days and shall advise the grievant of the date, time, and place upon which the matter will be considered by the superintendent. The superintendent shall schedule a hearing on the matter no later than ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the grievant's written notice of intention to appeal the written decision of his principal or immediate supervisor.

2. The written statement submitted by the grievant to his principal or immediate supervisor in Level One shall form the basis of the grievance before the superintendent. The grievant shall submit in writing any and all additional information on his behalf which he desires to the superintendent no later than five (5) days prior to the date upon which the matter is scheduled for hearing by the superintendent.
3. In the event the grievant does not personally attend the hearing scheduled by the superintendent, his failure to attend shall be deemed as an acceptance of the written decision rendered by his principal or immediate supervisor at LEVEL ONE.
4. The superintendent shall render a written decision to the grievant within five (5) days of the date upon which the matter was heard.

Level Three

1. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant at LEVEL TWO, or if the superintendent does not render a decision within five (5) days, the grievant may file the grievance with the secretary of the school board.
2. If the grievance is not filed with the secretary of the school board within five (5) days of the hearing at LEVEL TWO, the grievance shall be considered resolved.
3. Within five (5) days after receipt of the grievance, the board secretary, in concert with the board chairman and superintendent, shall schedule a hearing before the school board on the grievance.
4. The Board shall render its decision within seven (7) days of the hearing.

Grievant Complaint form is available online policy GAE-R

Non-Certified/Support Staff Procedure for Processing Grievances

Grievances for **NON-CERTIFIED/SUPPORT STAFF** shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

1. Appeal to immediate administrative supervisor in writing stating the grievance. The appeal is to be received by the immediate administrative supervisor within five (5) school or work days after the grievance occurred.
2. Upon receiving the written appeal, the immediate administrative supervisor will schedule a conference with the person making the appeal within five (5) school or work days after receipt of the appeal. After receipt of a written grievance the copy of the grievance is to be forwarded to the superintendent of the school district.
3. Within five (5) school or work days after the conference was held the immediate supervisor will give the decision in writing as to his/her decision with a copy forwarded to the superintendent. The decision will be hand delivered to the person making the appeal.

4. If the grievance is not solved to the satisfaction of the person appealing, an appeal may be made to the superintendent of the school district by a request in writing within five (5) school or work days after receipt of the decision by the immediate administrative supervisor.
5. Within five (5) school or work days after receipt of appeal the superintendent will schedule a conference with the person making the appeal.
6. After a proper investigation, if necessary and within five (5) school or work days after the conference, the superintendent of the school district will issue his/her decision in writing. The written decision will be hand delivered to the person making the appeal.
7. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is imperative that all matters related to the Hattiesburg Public School District, its students, parents, and employees be kept confidential by all employees.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees of the Hattiesburg Public School District (HPSD) shall not have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties and responsibilities of employment within the District. Employees of the HPSD may not sell products or engage in any fundraising activities without authorization from the building principal. This restriction applies to both certified and non-certified staff.

FINGERPRINTING & CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

In accordance with Senate Bill 2658, an act to amend section 37-9-17, Mississippi Code of 1972, school districts are directed to conduct fingerprinting and criminal background checks for all new employees.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

District employees are hereby notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance, except as authorized by law from the prescription of a physician, in the workplace of this school district are prohibited. School officials will cooperate fully with law enforcement in the prosecution of drug violations occurring in the workplace. Violators will be subject to suspension and/or dismissal.

Pursuant to the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, school employees under federal programs which are funded directly to the school district by a federal agency, as a condition of employment, shall;

1. Abide by the terms of the statement above; and
2. Notify school officials of any criminal drug statute conviction no later than five days after such conviction.

Substance Abuse Policy

The Hattiesburg Public School District prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs and alcohol by students and employees on Hattiesburg Public School District campuses or as part of any of its activities.

The District is drug-free because drug use/abuse limits academic performance hinders maturity, and affects social and emotional development. The District does not tolerate the use or possession of alcoholic beverages, improper use of prescription drugs, marijuana, or other controlled substances. The District encourages the age-appropriate education of all students in the prevention of drug use, the development of community resources in providing drug-free activities, the enforcement of all laws against drug use and possession, and the referral to treatment when necessary.

Range of Sanctions

Sanctions against district employees range from a letter of reprimand to termination of employment. The District may refer employees for the prosecution to the appropriate officials. The District will impose disciplinary sanctions on students and employees consistent with local, state, and federal laws.

SMOKING AND USE OF TOBACCO

Smoking and other uses of tobacco by district employees and visitors in school buildings, on school grounds and property, and on or in district vehicles, including school buses, is prohibited. Employees assigned the responsibility for supervising students at school or at school-sponsored activities, regardless of where the activities are conducted, shall not use tobacco in any form while in attendance or on duty.

Any employee found to be in violation of the policy on smoking and other uses of tobacco shall be subject to disciplinary action ranging up to dismissal.

EMPLOYEE CONTACT INFORMATION

Each staff member must have on file with the building principal/immediate supervisor and the Personnel Office, his/her current phone number, an emergency telephone number, and current home address. Any change must be reported immediately. All notices required by statute, regulation, or policy will be sent to the address on file.

EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

Hattiesburg Public School District's employees are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, integrity, and performance. Discipline should be progressive in nature so that the district imposes the least severe action necessary to improve undesirable behavior and moves to increasingly severe measures only if the problem is not improved. When properly administered, progressive discipline will benefit management and employees.

EMPLOYMENT TRANSFERS AND ASSIGNMENTS

HPSD will provide lists of open positions for current employees who wish to transfer. These openings will be posted on the District website. Any current employee who wishes to request a transfer must send a letter of interest for the specific position in which he/she would like to transfer. Include a resume and, if applicable, a

copy of a current teaching certificate.

The superintendent of this school district shall have the power and authority to make assignments to the various schools in the district of all non-instructional and non-licensed employees and all licensed employees.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

HPSD shall not discriminate in its policies and practices with respect to compensation, terms or conditions of employment because of an individual's race, color, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, height, weight, age, marital status, political beliefs, disability, or handicap which does not impair an individual's ability to perform adequately in that individual's particular position or activity.

The Hattiesburg Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability and complies with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Any qualified person is eligible for any position in the district without regard to race, creed, gender, or physical disability. Every effort shall be made to secure the best-qualified person for each vacancy.

DISCRIMINATION/TITLE IX/504

The Hattiesburg Public School District will not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities to the extent provided by law. Any student or employee of this district who believes he or she has been discriminated against, denied a benefit or excluded from participation in any district education program or activity on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national origin in violation of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, may file a written complaint with Michael Battle, Assistant Superintendent, P. O. Box 1569, Hattiesburg, MS 39403, Phone: (601) 582-2721.

Notification regarding reporting allegations of sexual harassment

Title IX Sexual Harassment

Title IX states “[n]o Person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a).

The Hattiesburg Public School District (District) does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates. To all employees and applicants for employment:

The District’s Title IX Coordinator is:

Michael Battle

301 Mamie Street

Hattiesburg, MS 39401

michael.battle@hattiesburgpsd.com

601-582-5078

The Title IX Coordinator is the person authorized by the school district to coordinate the District's Title IX compliance program. Any person may report sex discrimination, including sex harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination), in person, by mail, by telephone, or e-mail, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Any District employee who knows or learns information concerning conduct related to sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment (student or employee) should immediately notify the Title IX Coordinator. Reports may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the Title IX Coordinator's telephone number or email address, or by mail to the Title IX Coordinator's office address, listed above. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to the District may be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator or to the Assistant Secretary of Education at the United States Department of Education, or both. Please see Policy GBR sexual harassment and the detailed Title IX procedures.

Other types of sexual harassment

The Hattiesburg Public School District recognizes reports of sexual harassment as being extremely serious. Any reports of sexual harassment, both Title IX sexual harassment allegations referenced above and other types of sexual harassment, will be investigated fully, and appropriate disciplinary action, as well as notification of law enforcement, may result from such reports. Sexual harassment of employees and students will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment shall include but not be limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct which interferes with a person's school/work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Other types of sexual harassment may include jokes, stories, pictures, or offensive objects, intended to alarm, annoy, abuse, or demean. Any claims of sexual harassment from students or employees should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator identified above who will determine which process to utilize based on the allegations of sexual harassment.

EMPLOYEE EXIT

All employees are required to complete an exit form upon resignation, termination, or transfer. In addition, all HPSD property shall be returned.

RESIGNATION POLICY

Resignation of employees will be accepted when proper forms for such termination are completed. A two-week notice will be required unless extenuating circumstances exist. The superintendent shall be the only person to rule on extenuating circumstances.

1. When an employee finds it necessary to terminate employment with Hattiesburg Public Schools, he or she will notify the immediate supervisor or director of the department.
2. A two-week notice shall be required of the employee to give sufficient time to find a replacement.
3. At the beginning of the two-week notice period, the employee will complete and sign the termination of employment form stating the exact date of termination.
4. The Superintendent or designee will sign the form at the end of the two-week period to acknowledge the resignation.

5. Should extenuating circumstances exist that the employee leaves his position earlier than two weeks, the immediate supervisor may seek a waiver from the superintendent.
6. The resignation will be a part of the employee's personnel file and placed in the inactive section.
7. Two-week vacation may not be used as the two-week notice required when an employee resigns from a position.

Regulations of the Public Employees' Retirement System preclude the termination of an employee at the end of a school year with the intent to return to work the next school year to withdraw their contributed funds.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Employees of the Hattiesburg Public School District are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect positively on the school district and the community, thus promoting a positive environment for teaching, learning, and student well-being. **All HPSD Employees are subject to the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct. Violations of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct or Hattiesburg Public School District policy may result in disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, suspension and/or termination.**

Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct

Each educator, upon entering the teaching profession, assumes a number of obligations, one of which is to adhere to a set of principles that defines professional conduct. These principles are reflected in the following code of ethics, which sets forth the education profession and the public it serves standards of professional conduct and procedures for implementation.

This code shall apply to all persons licensed according to the rules established by the Mississippi State Board of Education and protects the health, safety, and general welfare of students and educators.

Ethical conduct is any conduct that promotes the health, safety, welfare, discipline, and morals of students and colleagues.

Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the license holder's ability to function in his/her employment position or a pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, discipline, or morals of students and colleagues.

Any educator or administrator license may be revoked or suspended for engaging in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4). Superintendents shall report to the Mississippi Department of Education license holders who engage in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4).

Code of Ethics Standards

Standard 1: Professional Conduct: *An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.*

- 1.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Encouraging and supporting colleagues in developing and maintaining high standards
 2. Respecting fellow educators and participating in the development of a professional teaching environment
 3. Engaging in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to professional development designed to promote student learning
 4. Providing professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner
 5. Maintaining competence regarding skills, knowledge, and dispositions relating to his/her organizational position, subject matter, and pedagogical practices
 6. Maintaining a professional relationship with parents of students and establish appropriate communication related to the welfare of their children
- 1.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Harassment of colleagues
 2. Misuse or mismanagement of tests or test materials
 3. Inappropriate language on school grounds or any school-related activity
 4. Physical altercations
 5. Failure to provide appropriate supervision of students and reasonable disciplinary actions

Standard 2. Trustworthiness: *An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice and does not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.*

- 2.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Properly representing facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression
 2. Advocating for fair and equitable opportunities for all children
 3. Embodying for students the characteristics of honesty, diplomacy, tact, and fairness.
- 2.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting any of the following:
 1. employment history, professional qualifications, criminal history, certification/recertification
 2. information submitted to local, state, federal, and/or other governmental agencies
 3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel
 4. reasons for absences or leave
 5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation
 2. Falsifying records or directing or coercing others to do so

Standard 3. Unlawful Acts: *An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes and local*

school board policies.

3. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or sexual offense. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty or a plea of *nolo contendere*, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought or a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted.

Standard 4. Educator/Student Relationship: *An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.*

- 4.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Fulfilling the roles of mentor and advocate for students in a professional relationship. A professional relationship is one where the educator maintains a position of teacher/student authority while expressing concern, empathy, and encouragement for students
 2. Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and civic potential of all students
 3. Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement
 4. Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students
- 4.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:
 1. Committing any act of child abuse
 2. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment
 3. Committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act
 4. Engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion, or disability
 5. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs
 6. Soliciting, encouraging, participating, or initiating inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, physical or romantic relationship with a student.

Examples of these acts may include but not be limited to:

1. sexual jokes
2. sexual remarks
3. sexual kidding or teasing
4. sexual innuendo
5. pressure for dates or sexual favors
6. inappropriate touching, fondling, kissing, or grabbing
7. rape
8. threats of physical harm
9. sexual assault
10. electronic communication such as texting
11. invitation to social networking
12. remarks about a student's body
13. consensual sex

Standard 5. Educator Collegial Relationships: *An educator should always maintain a professional*

relationship with colleagues, both in and outside the classroom.

- 5.1. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the following:
 1. Revealing confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law
 2. Harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system
 3. Interfering with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities
 4. Discriminating against or coercing a colleague on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability or family status
 5. Using coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions of colleagues

Standard 6. Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use or Possession: *An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during the course of professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs.*

- 6.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Factually representing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use and abuse to students during the course of professional practice
- 6.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Being under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs
 2. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages. A school-related activity includes but is not limited to, any activity that is sponsored by a school or a school system or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum such as club trips, etc. which involve students.
 3. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented using tobacco.

Standard 7. Public Funds and Property: *An educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use funds, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.*

- 7.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Maximizing the positive effect of school funds through judicious use of said funds
 2. Modeling for students and colleagues the responsible use of public property
- 7.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Knowingly misappropriating, diverting or using funds, personnel, property or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain
 2. Failing to account for funds collected from students, parents or any school-related function
 3. Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay
 4. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts
 5. Using school property without the approval of the local Board of education/governing body

Standard 8. Remunerative Conduct: *An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.*

- 8.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Insuring that institutional privileges are not used for personal gain
 2. Insuring that school policies or procedures are not impacted by gifts or gratuities from any person or organization
- 8.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local governing body.
 2. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local school board
 3. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. *(This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service)*

Standard 9. Maintenance of Confidentiality: *An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements.*

- 9.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Keeping in confidence information about students that has been obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a legitimate purpose or is required by law
 2. Maintaining diligently the security of standardized test supplies and resources
- 9.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Sharing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status/income and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law.
 2. Violating confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, and violating local school board or state directions for the use of tests
 3. Violating other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy

Standard 10. Breach of Contract or Abandonment of Employment: *An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local school board or educational agency for the duration of the contract.*

10. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the school board
 2. Refusing to perform the services required by the contract.

HARASSMENT

This school district affirms the employee rights under Title VII and therefore "shall not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee, male or female, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment."

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The policy of the Board of education forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. The Board of education will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees. This policy similarly applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

Sexual harassment of employees and students will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct that interferes with a person's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Other types of sexual harassment may include jokes, stories, pictures, or objects that are offensive, tend to alarm, annoy, abuse, or demean. It is the express policy of the Board of Education to encourage victims of a sexual harassment to come forward with such claims. Claims of sexual harassment should be reported to Michael Battle, Assistant Superintendent.

Any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to sanctions, including, but not limited to warning, suspension, or termination subject to applicable procedural requirements.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF STAFF MEMBERS

The Board recognizes the right of its employees, as citizens, to engage in political activity. The Board also recognizes that school property and school time should not be used for political purposes except as provided for in policies pertaining to the use of school buildings by civic and political organizations. Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as prohibiting employees from conducting appropriate activities which encourage students to become involved in the political processes of the party of the student's choice or as independents, nor does it prohibit the use of political figures as resource persons in the classroom.

"School time" shall be defined as the time employees are required to be on school grounds during the school day and include: (1) the specified time before school begins (2) the specified time after school is dismissed (3) the specified time immediately prior to and after the school-sponsored event and/or (4) the specified time immediately prior to and after extracurricular activities.

EMPLOYEE ARREST

An employee who is arrested or charged with a felony or misdemeanor is required to notify his or her immediate supervisor and the associate superintendent for personnel as soon as possible but no later than within 24 hours. Failure to report such incidents may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

SECTION II: COMPENSATION

COMPULSORY DEDUCTIONS

- Withholding Tax - Federal
- Withholding Tax - State
- Social Security
- Medicare
- State Retirement

Any change in an employee's name, address, or tax information must be reported to the Business Office immediately.

Optional Deductions:

- State of Mississippi Group Health Insurance Plan
- State of Mississippi Group Life Insurance Plan
- Group Dental Insurance Plan
- Group Vision Insurance Plan
- Cancer/Intensive Care/Life Insurance Plan
- Tax Sheltered Annuity Plan
- Short-term Disability
- Tax-Sheltered Medical Spending
- Tax-Sheltered Dependent Care
- Mississippi Deferred Compensation

Before deductions for these plans are withheld, the employee is required to complete and sign the appropriate enrollment forms authorizing the Business Office to make such deductions. New employees who are eligible to participate in these plans must apply for these benefit plans or waive coverage within the first 31 days of employment. Employees who do not elect coverage within this time period will not be allowed to enroll until the next Open Enrollment Period, and the effective date of coverage will be January 1st of the following year, unless the employee experiences a qualifying event for a Special Enrollment Period.

This school district shall process a single monthly payroll for licensed employees and may process a single monthly or semi-monthly payroll for non-licensed employees, at the discretion of the local school board, with the electronic settlement of payroll checks secured through direct deposit of net pay for all school district employees. In December, salaries or wages shall be paid by the last working day.

Absences not covered under paid leave for employees will be deducted from the employee's check in the applicable payroll processing period month in which the absence(s) is reported to the Business Office. If there appears to be an error, contact the Business Office. Corrections and adjustments will be made when appropriate.

Each new employee is required to have verified experience and required certifications in the Personnel office within 45 days of employment. All license upgrades must be on file on or before October 15th each year.

Failure to submit required information may result in monthly paychecks being held until requirements are met.

If an employee's home address or telephone number is changed any time during the school year, the updated information must be furnished to the Business Office immediately.

HOURS WORKED-DUTY TIMES

Because of varying transportation time schedules for the opening of the school day, the principal shall determine, with the superintendent's approval, work hours for certified/licensed staff. Except when carrying out assignments of the principal, certified/licensed staff are expected to remain at school or on duty during the designated hours, including periods when pupils are not assigned to teachers.

Certified/licensed staff whose assignment responsibility is in administration or supervision must assume the duties of their position without regard to a prescribed work schedule. The demands of these positions are varied and often require duty beyond the regular work hours. The principal's regular duty hours are to be determined by the superintendent.

The immediate supervisor(s) will establish the organization of the workday for non-certified/support staff in accordance with the employee's approved classification. Employees are not allowed to schedule their own overtime. If an employee feels that overtime is needed to complete specific work, then the employee is to seek approval from the supervisor before engaging in the work. (Note: The Superintendent or designee must approve all overtime)

MINIMUM WAGE

All employees subject to the FLSA shall be paid not less than the current minimum wage as issued through the US Department of Labor.

OVERTIME PAY

It is the policy of the District that compensation for overtime work will be paid in the form of compensatory time off. Compensatory time shall be awarded on the basis of 1 ½ hours for each hour of overtime worked. An employee will not be permitted to accumulate more than 240 compensatory time hours (160 regular hours). The employee must take the compensatory time when it is agreeable with his/her supervisor. However, the supervisor's consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

In the event the District decides to pay for overtime work in the form of monetary remuneration, the employee shall be paid not less than 1 1/2 times his/her regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in a workweek. Overtime pay due to an employee shall be computed on the basis of hours worked in each work week.

For employees paid on an hourly rate, the overtime will be based on that hourly rate. For employees paid on a salaried basis, the monthly salary will be reduced to its weekly hourly rate, from which overtime compensation will be calculated. Employees shall be paid for each and every hour worked. For those employees working two or more jobs for the District, overtime pay shall be calculated on the basis of a blended hourly rate on all jobs worked calculated by dividing the total amount of remuneration received in a workweek by the total hours worked in that workweek. The employee shall be paid one-half of the blended hourly rate times the number of hours worked over 40 hours.

Section 13(b) (20) of the FLSA provides an overtime exemption to law enforcement or fire protection employees of a public agency that employs less than five employees during the workweek in law enforcement or fire protection activities.

TIME CLOCK PROCEDURES

For employees subject to the FLSA, the work week begins on Saturday at 12:01 a.m. and ends on the following Friday at 12:00 midnight. Each employee subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act shall be paid for all hours worked. Compensable time includes all the time that the employee is required to be on duty.

Weekly leave and time are calculated in fifteen-minute intervals. Leave and time reported from zero to seven minutes for each fifteen-minute interval is calculated as zero time. Leave and time reported from eight to fifteen minutes for each fifteen-minute interval is calculated as fifteen minutes. An annual review is conducted at the end of each fiscal year to evaluate the cumulative leave and time total and address any necessary adjustments if needed.

Employees are expected to work their full schedule each week. Employees are to arrive and depart at the time specified by their supervisor unless requested to work overtime.

If time worked does not equal scheduled hours for the week, the employee can apply for either sick or personal leave if applicable. If all leave has been exhausted, "unpaid" leave will be applied. Employees cannot make up for any time lost by working late or coming to work early unless approved by their supervisor. It is the employee's responsibility to make sure he/she clocks in and out each day. Employees will be paid for their assigned number of hours only. Each principal or supervisor will ensure accurate and true-time records. If an employee fails to use the time clock or follow clock procedures without a written satisfactory reason submitted to the supervisor, the employee may be terminated or disciplined with the following actions:

- First Offense: verbal warning
- Second Offense: written reprimand
- Third Offense: written notice of 1-hour dock in pay
- Fourth Offense: written notice of 1-day suspension without pay
- Fifth Offense: Personnel review with Superintendent or designee with further suspension and/or termination

{Overtime hours must be pre-approved by the superintendent or his designee.}

For each 45 day period in which no incident occurs, an incident from the previous 45 days will be removed from the employee's file/record.

OVERTIME

Employees shall be paid 1 1/2 times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in a workweek. Overtime pay due to an employee shall be computed on the basis of hours worked each workweek. For employees working two or more jobs for the District, overtime pay shall be calculated on the basis of a blended hourly rate for all jobs worked.

No overtime shall be worked without prior written permission by the employee's immediate supervisor. If overtime is worked without approval, employees will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Supervisors may adjust schedules within a workweek to prevent the necessity of an employee working more than 40 hours in that workweek.

WORK WEEK

For employees subject to the FLSA, the work week begins on Saturday at 12:01 a.m. and ends on the following Friday at 12:00 midnight. Employees are expected to begin the workday and end the workday at or about the time specified by the employee's supervisor (established such that no more than 40 hours of work will be expected during the workweek) unless requested to work overtime by the supervisor. Employees must obtain prior approval before requesting or receiving overtime payment.

SECTION III: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS *(Employees Benefits are subject to change)*

EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE

All full-time employees and bus drivers may participate in the insurance program for school employees funded by the state of Mississippi. For this purpose, full-time is considered 20 or more hours per week.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

All district employees are covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance.

It is the goal of the HPSD to provide a safe working environment for all staff. Employees should comply with all occupational safety, health policies and standards. However, should an accident resulting in an on-the-job injury occur, the first report of injury must be completed as soon as possible following any necessary medical treatment. (Failure to report an accident or injury may jeopardize an employee's eligibility for Workers' Compensation benefits.) The Principal/Supervisor must then report the incident to the Workers' Compensation Coordinator.

No compensation will be allowed for an injury, illness or death due to willful misconduct, intentional self-inflicted injury, intoxication, or willful failure or refusal to use prescribed safety devices or failure to comply with prescribed safety procedures. Payment of benefits, medical bills, and compensation will be made in accordance with applicable Workers' Compensation laws of the state of Mississippi.

If an employee suffers an occupational injury or illness, the following steps should be taken:

- Any necessary first-aid treatment should be administered;
- When physically able, the employee should immediately report the injury or illness to the Supervisor/Principal;
- Both the employee and the Supervisor/Principal must complete a "Report of Accident/Injury" within 24 hours of the incident;
- The HPSD requires that all employees sustaining injury or illness due to an on-the-job accident obtain a post-accident drug screen.

GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

The Hattiesburg Public School District carries general liability insurance coverage for the protection of its employees in the responsible performance of their assigned professional duties.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Effective July 1, 2012, SB2761 requires all employees to receive a single monthly paycheck and that the employee's net pay will be sent electronically through direct deposit. This requires all employees to enroll in direct deposit. It is not optional. Everyone who receives a paycheck (substitutes, student workers, bus drivers, etc.) will receive their pay through direct deposit.

HATTIESBURG SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CLINIC

Healthcare services are available for students, parents, staff, and the local community through a partnership

with Southeast Mississippi Rural Health Initiative (SEMRHI). SEMRHI is a not-for-profit, fully-accredited healthcare facility, providing primary medical (and dental) care to underserved populations at ten sites throughout south Mississippi.

There will be a sliding fee scale for HPSD staff and community members. Staff wishing to use the clinics during work hours should use established work site procedures for checking in and out. Services subject to change without notice.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Hattiesburg Public Schools provides employees help with personal issues that may interfere with job performance or the quality of their lives. EAP offers a wide variety of confidential services to employees and their families including free assessments, referrals, counseling, and educational information to assist in resolving personal problems. These services are contracted through a 3rd party provider. Services available through EAP include (subject to change):

- Adult counseling
- Family counseling
- Marital counseling
- Child & adolescent counseling
- Stress management
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Divorce
- Parent/child conflict
- Protracted grief

SECTION IV: PAID LEAVE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Leave must be approved by the supervisor. Leave for school employees must be approved by the principal. Professional leave must directly support the school/system objectives. Any leave except sick leave is to be requested and approved two weeks prior to the date(s) requested. Leave requested after the leave has been taken may not be approved. All professional leave must be documented and approved by the superintendent or his/her designee prior to the date of the professional leave.

The absent employee must furnish the certificate of a physician or dentist or other medical practitioner as to the illness of the absent employee, where the absence is for four (4) or more consecutive school days, or for two (2) consecutive school days immediately preceding or following a non-school day. If it is determined that any employee of the Hattiesburg Public School District has excessive absences, the principal or supervisor at their discretion may require official documentation in the form of a physician's statement, jury summons, or other pertinent documentation related to the nature of the absence.

- Any false statement by an employee may result in disciplinary action to include, but not limited to, full deduction in pay, suspension, and/or termination.
- If the absence of the employee is caused by optional dental or medical treatment which could, without medical risk, have been provided, furnished, or performed at a time when school was not in session, it may result in forfeiture of accumulated or future sick leave.
- All requests for leave should be made through the immediate supervisor. Leave requests may be denied based on the educational need(s) of the school/district. All leave requests are to be forwarded to the personnel office for final authorization.
- The employee shall notify the supervisor, director, or principal as soon as possible in the event of being absent from work; whenever possible, the notification should be made the day before the absence.

Certified/Licensed Professional Staff (Exempt Employees)

Sick Leave

Definition and Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sickness includes illness or disability to the employee, the employee’s child or the employee’s spouse. ● For all absences of four or more consecutive days, written certification from a medical practitioner is required. ● Sick leave becomes effective after one day of work. ● Absences due to optionally scheduled dental or medical treatment may result in forfeiture of future or accumulated sick leave. ● Sick leave taken during state testing, at an employee’s school site, must be verified through documentation by Hattiesburg Public School District Staff Support Department within 48 hours of the employee’s return to work.
Days Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Maximum Days Allowed*</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>First and second consecutive year in the system - 9 days</i> ○ <i>Third through the tenth consecutive year in the system - 15 days</i> ○ <i>Over ten consecutive years in the system - 20 days</i> <p>*Unused days from previous years are accumulated without limit. Accumulated days will be credited toward retirement.</p>
Additional Benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 10 additional days (illness or physical disability) with substitute teacher cost charged to the absent teacher. 2. For continuous, extended illness, the superintendent is authorized to grant a maximum of 20 days with substitute teacher cost to the teacher (written certification of the illness required). 3. Requests must be submitted in writing and are subject to approval.
Emergency Leave Days	
Definition and Regulations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Covers accidents or sudden illness of immediate family members (spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, child or stepchild) or other approved emergencies. 2. Emergency days do not accumulate from one year to the next. When used, they are subtracted from sick leave days.
Days Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>First and second consecutive year in the system - 3 days</i> ● <i>Third through the tenth consecutive year in the system - 4 days</i> ● <i>Over ten consecutive years in the system - 6 days</i>
Process	A written process is required as follows:

	<p>a. Employee submits a written request to the supervisor for approval.</p> <p>b. If approved, the principal forwards to the Personnel Office for final approval.</p> <p>c. Employee is notified.</p> <p>Advance request is required, if possible. A maximum of two emergency days may be added to the days allowed with extreme situations.</p> <p>In cases of death, the immediate family includes spouse, child, father, mother, sister, brother, grandparents; and spouse's father, mother, and grandparents.</p>
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Personal Leave

Definition and Regulations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No salary deductions are made. 2. No accumulated days from other leaves are subtracted. 3. A written request is required as followed with Emergency Leave. 4. A maximum of 5 percent of a school faculty may be granted Personal Leave on a given day. 5. Personal leave may not be granted on or before the first day of classes, on or after the last day of classes, or the day preceding or following a holiday. 6. Requests may not be approved if such absences on that day would disrupt the operation of the department/site. 7. No Personal leave during state testing, at an employee’s school site unless approved by the Superintendent or designee as an extenuating circumstance.
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Days Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Maximum Days Allowed*</i> <i>All teachers in the system - 2 days</i> <p><i>*Unused personal leave days accumulated from year to year up to five days. Unused personal days beyond five days are added to sick leave balances.</i></p>
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Sabbatical Leave

Sabbatical leaves up to one year after six years of continuous employment may be granted, at no salary on approval of the superintendent. Return to the same position would not be guaranteed, but an effort for a similar assignment would be made. Employees on sabbatical leave will return to the salary schedule according to their training and experience and will be eligible to proceed to the next step. At no time shall more than 1 percent of the total faculty and staff be on sabbatical leave.

Special Leave

Definition and Regulations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Covers special needs of the employee not covered by other adopted leave policies. 2. Special leave days do not accumulate from one year to the next. 3. Substitute costs are deducted per day of leave taken. 4. Special leave days shall be deducted from accumulated sick leave when taken. 5. A written request is required as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The employee submits a written request to the principal for approval. b. If approved, the supervisor forwards to the Personnel Office for final approval. c. The employee is notified. 6. Criteria considered by the Personnel Office: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supervisor's recommendation b. Frequency of requests c. Substitute availability d. Purpose of leave e. Duration of Request f. Absentee record of the current year
Days Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maximum Days Allowed- All licensed/certified in the system - 4 days

Professional Leave

Absences for professional leaves or meetings must take into consideration the good of the students and school. The number of professional leaves at any one time will be limited to the above statement and the availability of qualified substitutes. Absences for professional purposes must be cleared through the principal, then by written request to the superintendent or designee. Requests should be arranged as far in advance as possible and will generally be limited to in-state activities. Limited professional leave may be granted for officers to attend regular and called meetings of the organization. Attendance at other professional meetings will be contingent upon such factors as numbers involved, the expense to the district, and the amount of time away from school. Substitutes must be available before any professional leave is taken. Professional leave should be granted only when it will have a positive effect on the school system.

Maternity Leave

An employee must notify the superintendent at first knowledge of pregnancy. Following notification of the superintendent, an employee who becomes pregnant may continue to work as long as health permits and as long as she is satisfactorily performing the duties of her job. The superintendent shall have the authority to require a letter of record from the employee's doctor verifying her health status at any time during the pregnancy.

The date for the employee's return to work shall be set with the superintendent. At the option of the employee and prior to the expected delivery date, a leave of absence without pay to terminate June 30 of the year of delivery may be granted; upon request prior to the termination date, an extended leave without pay to terminate June 30 of the following year may be granted.

Family & Medical Leave

The district complies with the terms of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 that allows up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons. The employee will be required to provide 30 days of advance leave notice when the leave is foreseeable and medical certification. (See Also policy GBRIA)

Jury Duty

School district personnel can expect to be called for jury duty. The district shall excuse such absences, which shall not affect or influence absentee, sick, or professional leave benefits. The following procedures shall apply:

1. The employee must inform his/her supervisor immediately upon receiving a summons.
2. The employee's salary from the district will be paid as normal.

Vacation

Employees employed on a 12-month basis are entitled to ten (10) days of paid vacation after one year of continuous employment. Employees who are employed on a 12-month basis, but have less than 12-months of continuous employment on July 1st, will receive prorated vacation days depending on the date of hire (see below). All vacation leave will be credited on July 1st. Vacation time shall be scheduled with the principal, supervisor, or director.

Date Hired	Proration of Vacation Days
July 1- 31	10
August 1 - 31	9
September 1- 30	8
October 1- 31	7
November 1 - 30	6
Dec 1 - 31	5
January 1- 31	4
Feb 1 - 28	3
Mar 1 - 31	2
April 1 - 30	1
May 1- June 30	0

Classified/Non-Licensed/Support Staff (Non-Exempt Employees)

Sick Leave

Definition and Regulations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sickness includes illness or disability to the employee, the employee’s child or the employee’s spouse. 2. For all absences of four or more consecutive days, written certification from a medical practitioner is required. 3. Sick leave becomes effective after one day of work. 4. Absences due to optionally scheduled dental or medical treatment may result in forfeiture of future or accumulated sick leave. 5. Sick leave taken during state testing, at an employee’s school site, must be verified through the documentation by Hattiesburg Public School District Staff Support Department within 48 hours of the employee’s return to work. 6. Unused days from previous years are accumulated without limit. Accumulated days may be credited toward retirement.
Days Allowed	<p>Classified personnel employed on a ten-month basis during each fiscal year shall be granted five (5) days of sick leave. Classified personnel employed on a twelve-month basis shall be granted seven (7) days of sick leave.</p> <p>Sick Leave Policy For Assistant Teachers Assistant teachers shall be granted seven days of sick leave per school year.</p> <p>Sick Leave Policy For Maintenance And Custodial Employees Maintenance and custodial personnel employed on a nine-month basis during each fiscal year shall be granted five (5) days of sick leave. Maintenance and custodial personnel employed on a (12) twelve-month basis shall be granted seven (7) days of sick leave.</p>

Personal and Bereavement Leave

Definition and Regulations	<p>Personal leave may be taken for legitimate personal business, which cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. Unused personal leave shall roll over as sick leave and accumulate as such.</p> <p>Up to two days of bereavement leave may be granted for a death in the immediate family. The immediate family is defined as spouse, child, mother, father, sister, brother, grandchildren, grandparents, spouse’s mother, father, and grandparents.</p> <p>Violation of the policy shall be grounds for termination.</p>
Days Allowed	<p>All classified employees receive two (2) days of personal leave beginning the day after the employee completes one day of work. Two (2) days of bereavement leave may be granted for</p>

	a death in the immediate family. Bereavement leave will be deducted from available leave.
Days Allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum Days Allowed- All employees in the system - 4 days
Professional Leave	
<p>Absences for professional leaves or meetings must take into consideration the good of the students and school. The number of professional leaves at any one time will be limited to the above statement and the availability of qualified substitutes. Absences for professional purposes must be cleared through the principal, then by written request to the superintendent or designee. Requests should be arranged as far in advance as possible and will generally be limited to in-state activities. Limited professional leave may be granted for officers to attend regular and called meetings of the organization. Attendance at other professional meetings will be contingent upon such factors as numbers involved, the expense to the district, and the amount of time away from school. Substitutes must be available before any professional leave is taken. Professional leave should be granted only when it will have a positive effect on the school system.</p>	
Maternity Leave	
<p>An employee must notify the superintendent at first knowledge of pregnancy. Following notification of the superintendent, an employee who becomes pregnant may continue to work as long as health permits and as long as she is satisfactorily performing the duties of her job. The superintendent shall have the authority to require a letter of record from the employee's doctor verifying her health status at any time during the pregnancy. The date for the employee's return to work shall be set with the superintendent. At the option of the employee and prior to the expected delivery date, a leave of absence without pay to terminate June 30 of the year of delivery may be granted; upon request prior to the termination date, an extended leave without pay to terminate June 30 of the following year may be granted.</p>	
Family & Medical Leave	
<p>The district complies with the terms of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 that allows up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons. The employee will be required to provide 30 days of advance leave notice when the leave is foreseeable and medical certification. (See Also policy GBRIA)</p>	
Jury Duty	
<p>School district personnel can expect to be called for jury duty. The district shall excuse such absences, which shall not affect or influence absentee, sick, or professional leave benefits. The following procedures shall apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The employee must inform the principal immediately upon receiving a summons. 	

2. The employee's salary from the district will be paid as normal.

Vacation

Employees employed on a 12-month basis are entitled to ten (10) days of paid vacation after one year of continuous employment. Employees who are employed on a 12-month basis, but have less than 12-months of continuous employment on July 1st, will receive prorated vacation days depending on the date of hire (see below). All vacation leave will be credited on July 1st. Vacation time shall be scheduled with the principal, supervisor, or director.

Date Hired	Proration of Vacation Days
July 1- 31	10
August 1 - 31	9
September 1- 30	8
October 1- 31	7
November 1 - 30	6
Dec 1 - 31	5
January 1- 31	4
Feb 1 - 28	3
Mar 1 - 31	2
April 1 - 30	1
May 1- June 30	0

SECTION V: ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

All employees' job performance will be assessed using the district's evaluation instruments. The school board of this district directs the superintendent to formulate and implement a formal annual performance appraisal system based on job descriptions and on-the-job performance of every professional employee.

CELL PHONES

Personal cell phones must remain off during instructional time, staff meetings, parent conferences, or staff development sessions. Staff members are to restrict personal calls to times when they are not responsible for students.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL DRESS

Hattiesburg Public School's Standards for Professional Dress Code is designed to provide a consistent professional appearance to colleagues, students, parents, and the community. Employees should exemplify the highest standards of professional appearance. The guidance below is not intended to be all-inclusive or all-exclusive. The administration may restrict any attire deemed inappropriate to the learning environment.

Acceptable

- Clothing should be clean, pressed, wrinkle-free, and free of rips.
- All attire should fit appropriately (not excessively tight or loose).
 - *Tops*: Blouses, collared shirts, polo shirts, sweaters, and cardigans.
 - *Bottoms*: Dress pants/skirts/dresses, khakis, slacks, professional capri pants/chinos.
 - *Footwear*: Closed/Peep-toe or Open-toe with supportive backing.
 - Appropriate tennis shoes are acceptable, provided they are clean and in good condition, maintaining a professional look.
- Piercings and Jewelry:
 - Conservative jewelry, such as small earrings, rings, and necklaces.
 - Visible tattoos should be covered where possible and not distracting to the learning environment.
 - Nostril piercings are permitted with the following guidelines:
 - Only small, discreet studs.
 - Nose piercings should be sized and designed so as not to draw undue attention or cause distraction.
- Hair: Neatly styled hair that is clean and well-maintained.

Unacceptable

- Clothing that is excessively casual, revealing, or inappropriate for a school setting.
- Items with offensive, political, or controversial messages or images.
 - *Tops*: T-shirts, tank tops, crop tops, spaghetti straps, strapless tops, tops with low-cut necklines or overly sheer fabrics.

- *Bottoms:* Jeans with holes, shorts, or dresses/skirts higher than 3 inches above the knee, leggings or yoga pants (unless worn under an appropriate dress or skirt), or sweatpants.
- *Footwear:* Flip-flops, shower shoes, house shoes
- *Hair:* Avoid extreme hairstyles or unnatural hair colors that may be distracting.
- **Piercings and Jewelry:**
 - Visible tattoos should be covered where possible and not distracting to the learning environment.
 - Facial piercings located other than the nostril are not allowed.
 - **Large or flashy nose studs** that draw significant attention.
 - **Visible piercings with designs or colors** deemed distracting or inappropriate for the professional setting.
 - **Multiple nose piercings** are not allowed.

Special Considerations

- **Religious Exemptions:** Such requests will be considered case-by-case, with accommodations made where reasonable and appropriate.
- **Physical Education Teachers:** May wear athletic attire appropriate for physical activities, including athletic shoes, shorts of appropriate length, and active wear tops.
- **Casual Fridays:** Employees may wear jeans and more casual tops on designated casual days, provided they are still neat and professional.
- **Support Staff (i.e., child nutrition, custodial, maintenance, transportation, and technology)** will dress in accordance with departmental guidelines. All staff members must dress professionally while keeping safety and functionality in mind.

Enforcement:

- Supervisors are responsible for monitoring compliance with the dress code.
- Employees found in violation will be given a warning and expected to correct their attire.
- Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.

Reward Days/Special Event Days (set by supervisor): A school spirit T-shirt must be worn with jeans of appropriate length, fit and style.

The Maintenance, Child Nutrition and Transportation Departments will have their own dress standards.

If a staff member is unable to comply due to medical reasons, a doctor's note must be provided to the staff member's supervisor.

Current school identification badges must be worn by all employees.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Personnel who have first been authorized by the superintendent or a designated agent to travel in the performance of their duties shall be reimbursed their expenses by the school district.

Employees will be reimbursed for miles actually and necessarily traveled in the employee's automobile or other private motor vehicle at the rate established by the State of Mississippi and HPSD. Whenever practical, employees are expected to carpool where two or more employees travel to the same destination. In that event, only one travel expense reimbursement at the authorized rate per mile shall be allowed.

When travel is done by means of a public carrier or other means not involving a private motor vehicle, the employee shall receive as travel expense the actual fare or other expenses incurred. **Employees will be required to reimburse the district for any unauthorized and/or unfilled travel expenses.**

SOCIAL NETWORKING

All employees, faculty, and staff who participate in social networking websites shall not post any data, documents, photos, or inappropriate information on any website that might result in a disruption of classroom activity. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Posting negative comments or photos about the school district, employees, students or parents. This includes school-sponsored events, clubs, and organizations.
- Posting content that may violate the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.
- All employees must adhere to the HPS Social Media Guidelines (Please See HPS SOP for more details).

STUDENT SUPERVISION

In accordance with the HPSD Board Policy, to the extent reasonably possible, all students should be supervised at all times throughout the school day from arrival on campus till departure at the end of the day. However, nothing herein removes the discretion allowed to principals, teachers, resource officers and administrators to implement this policy.

- Staff will be on duty during the school day to see all students as they arrive and leave campus, either from (a) bus (b) parent drop off (c) car rider (d) walker. If you are assigned a duty post and cannot be there, you must notify your immediate supervisor in advance so a replacement can be assigned to cover your duty post.
- Staff will be on duty in the hallways, and teachers will be standing at the doorway of their classroom; observing the students as they enter the classroom.
- Students will only be allowed out of class for emergency/valid reasons. Usually, only one (1) student shall be allowed to leave the class at a time. All students will carry a hall pass when they are given permission to leave for an emergency/valid reason. Exception, elementary campuses may routinely allow students to leave in pairs, but students must carry a note with them from the teacher.
- During class periods, staff will be assigned to be in the hallways, checking to ensure that all students not in class have hall passes and are going where they are supposed to be. Students who are caught without a pass shall be escorted back to their class and reported to a school administrator.
- Students will not be allowed to utilize the classroom phones except as approved by a school administrator in a crisis or early dismissal event.
- Playground duty – all staff will be posted so as they are able to supervise the entire playground area.
- At dismissal, when the bell rings, staff will be on their assigned duty posts to supervise a safe and orderly departure from the building, the grounds, bus loading area, parent pickup area and the student

driver parking lot.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Hattiesburg Public School District recognizes the value of computers and other electronic resources to improve student learning and to enhance the administration and operation of its schools. To this end, Hattiesburg Public School District encourages the responsible use of computers and computer networks, which include Internet usage, email, web applications and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of Hattiesburg Public Schools.

The HPSD provides technology, network and Internet services for the specific and limited purpose of achieving the district's goals and accomplishing its educational and organizational purposes. HPSD technology, network and Internet services remain the property of the district. Users must comply with HPSD Board policies, approved Technology Plan and its supporting administrative regulations.

The use of district technology, network and Internet services does not create any expectation of privacy. The district reserves the right to search and/or monitor any information created, accessed, sent, received and/or stored in any format by any district user on the district equipment or equipment connected to the district network. Passwords, which allow access to network data and hardware, need to be protected at all times. Users are not to disclose confidential information such as student information or district information to unauthorized individuals.

All HPSD employees that access technology, network and/or Internet services must abide by the Board-approved Network Acceptable Use Policy and the Internet Safety Policy (Policy REF: EI, IJ-R, IJB, IJDB, & MS Educator Code of Conduct). All policies are available on the district website and available upon request from the Technology Department.

Technology Related Purchases

Prior to any major technology-related purchases, the Technology Director must be consulted. This includes any software (web-based and computer-based) and hardware (computers, interactive boards, network equipment/connections, etc.). Purchases will be monitored to ensure compliance.

WORK ORDERS

All requests for maintenance or technology assistance must be submitted via the Helpdesk. Tickets will be assigned to the appropriate technician and prioritized.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Hattiesburg Public School District desires to maintain a work environment which is safe and secure in nature. Threats, threatening behavior, or any acts of violence against employees, students or other individuals on the premises will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination and/or criminal prosecution.

Any person engaging in violent behavior, such as making substantial threats, intentionally hitting, kicking or striking a person or property on HPSD premises, may be removed from the premises as quickly as possible and may be required to remain away from HPSD premises pending investigation of an incident.

All individuals who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order that lists school sites as being protected areas must provide to the principal or supervisor a copy of the petition and declarations used to seek the order, a copy of any temporary protective or restraining order that is granted and a copy of any protective or restraining order that is made permanent.

STANDARD OF CARE AND LIABILITY FOR LOST/STOLEN/MISSING PROPERTY

All employees shall exercise reasonable care to ensure that the fixed assets of the district are properly accounted for. While it is recognized that public employees are not insurers of school property, any employee guilty of negligence or misconduct that results in the destruction, theft, or other loss of property of the district will be responsible for providing replacement of such property or adequate compensation for such loss, as may be determined by the Board of Trustees.

Enforcement

- Employees will be financially responsible for all district equipment, furniture, or other fixed assets assigned to their custody.
- Principals will be financially responsible for all district equipment, furniture, fixtures, or other fixed assets assigned to their school.
- Administrative heads/directors will be financially responsible for all district equipment, furniture, fixtures or other fixed assets assigned to their department or designated under their control.
- Lost, missing, and/or stolen property shall be immediately reported to the principal or immediate supervisor. Employees are to adhere to the Fixed Asset Property procedures for additional steps. Every principal and department head/director shall forward the appropriate fixed asset forms to the business office.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Each student and employee is responsible for contributing to energy efficiency as an energy saver. The wise use of energy systems is the responsibility of everyone; therefore, accountability for energy usage is part of the evaluation process. Conservation and management begin with turning off all unnecessary lights, the complete shutdown of facilities when not in use, the development of an energy management curriculum for staff and students, and the development of long and short-term strategies for energy conservation.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency school cancellations will be aired over local media outlets. These announcements will be released as soon as decisions can be made and may come as late as 6:30 a.m. If no announcement is broadcast, it may be assumed that the school is open. Other guidance will come directly from the employee's immediate supervisor. Each district site shall develop emergency procedures specific to the individual site in accordance with approved emergency management procedures.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The asbestos management plan for Hattiesburg Public Schools is available for review by any interested

person. This documentation includes any changes to asbestos-containing material (ACM) in schools and buildings. To provide continuing management of asbestos in schools and buildings, ACMs are inspected every six months by an engineering firm. Changes are recorded in a report as part of the management plan. Copies of the report and plan are located in each principal's office. Copies of all plans are maintained at the Maintenance Department, 244 Dauphine St., Hattiesburg, MS

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

All administrators, school principals, department managers/supervisors, etc., are responsible for ensuring that hazard-specific safety measures and programs are consistent with the requirements of the Mississippi Department of Education. Each supervisor is responsible for ensuring that each site has a current crisis management plan. Each site must conduct regular safety drills in the event of an emergency situation related to weapons, weather, or major loss of power.

USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLE ON DISTRICT BUSINESS

The Hattiesburg Public School District recognizes that employees may have to use their personal vehicle on District business. The District's policy for driving District-owned vehicles also applies to the use of your personal vehicle while conducting District business. You must:

- Possess a valid driver's license in the state of Mississippi
- Have current liability insurance that meets or exceeds the minimal State requirement limits
- Operate your vehicle in accordance with State and Municipal traffic laws and
- Not transport students unless authorized by the superintendent or his designee

SECTION VI: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES

DISCIPLINE FORMS

Fill in the discipline form and return the entire form to the principal of the school. The principal will complete the bottom portion with his/her action and return a copy to the Transportation Director. Be as specific as possible concerning the offense. This will help the principal decide the level of punishment.

EQUIPMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Each driver is responsible for the First Aid Kit, Fire Extinguisher, and Warning Devices assigned to each bus. If a loss occurs due to the driver's negligence, the driver will be required to pay for the replacement.

ROUTE CHANGES

Under no circumstances will routes or bus stops be changed without approval of the Transportation Director. Routes must be driven as assigned. No stops will be made other than designated stops.

TORT LIABILITY

The driver of a school bus may be held personally liable for injuries growing out of his own negligence. Any exposure of persons to unreasonable risks constitutes negligence. Negligence may result from carelessness, failure to take reasonable precautions, or incompetency. It is strongly recommended that all drivers add to their personal auto liability insurance policy an addition known as **"use of non-owner automobile."** This will add additional protection to cover any Tort Liability charge while driving a school bus. The district carries liability insurance on each school bus.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Bus evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice during the school year for each busload of students. Procedures for the drills, including the dates and times of each, will be provided to the drivers by the Transportation Supervisor.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR ON BUSES

The principal can take the privilege of riding a school bus away from the student(s). Drivers are expected to keep order and discipline on the bus, but their major responsibility has to be driving the bus. Therefore, students are expected to adhere to the behavior regulations.

DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS

1. The school bus is an extension of the school from which students are transported. Therefore, the principal is responsible for the discipline of all students on buses.
2. All fights and disturbances must be reported in writing to the Principal and Transportation Supervisor. If a fight occurs en route to the school, upon arrival at the school, the driver shall make a brief verbal report of the fight to the principal. If a fight occurs enroute to the student's home, upon returning the bus to the Transportation office, the driver shall make a brief verbal report of the fight to the Transportation Director and complete the discipline form to be turned in the next day (a. m.). The Director will notify the principal by phone at that time.

3. If there is a fight on a bus heading home, the driver should pull his/her bus off the road. He/She then stops the fight and proceeds on his/her route. The students who were fighting must be taken home; they cannot be put off the bus. The principal will call the students into his/her office as soon as possible and determine punishment.
4. A student may be suspended from the bus and/or school because of behavior problems on the bus.

COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

A Commercial Driver's License is required for all school bus drivers. The school system will reimburse the drivers for the initial cost of a Commercial Driver's License provided the driver remains in employment for one year from the date the Commercial Driver's License was issued. The school system will provide preparatory training.

DRUG TESTING

The implementation date for the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act began January 1, 1995. All school bus drivers will be drug tested under the law. Random drug testing will be conducted quarterly. The Department of Transportation specifies alcohol and the following five drugs that must be tested:

- Amphetamines
- Cocaine
- Marijuana
- Opiates
- Phencyclidine (PCP)

Tests Are Required For The Following:

1. Pre-Employment
2. Reasonable Cause
3. Random Testing
4. Post-Accident

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ONLINE RESOURCES

MDE Pupil Transportation

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/OSOS/PT>

School Bus Emergency Provisions and Plans

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/OSOS/PT/school-bus-emergency-provisions-and-plans>