



**WATAUGA COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

***WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA***  
***September 8, 2025***

- |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                              |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 4:30 p.m. | <b>1. CALL TO ORDER</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Dr. Gary Childers                            |
| 4:33 p.m. | <b>2. CLOSED SESSION</b><br>A. Approval of the Minutes for 8/11/2025<br>B. Reportable Offenses – N.C.G.S.115C-288(g)<br>C. Student Records - N.C.G.S.143-318.11(a)(1)<br>D. Personnel – N.C.G.S.143-318.11(a)(6)<br>E. Attorney-Client - N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) | Dr. Gary Childers                            |
| 6:00 p.m. | <b>3. OPEN SESSION CALL TO ORDER/<br/>WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                | Dr. Gary Childers                            |
| 6:03 p.m. | <b>4. DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Dr. Gary Childers                            |
| 6:05 p.m. | <b>5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Dr. Leslie Alexander                         |
| 6:08 p.m. | <b>6. VALLE CRUCIS SCHOOL UPDATE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Dr. Leslie Alexander                         |
| 6:12 p.m. | <b>7. STUDENTS' REPORT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Ms. Athena Elliott<br>Ms. Rosalyn Rabinowitz |
| 6:16 p.m. | <b>8. SPECIAL RECOGNITION</b><br>★ NCCTM Outstanding Secondary Mathematics Teacher<br>★ Other                                                                                                                                                                      | Mr. Phil Norman<br>Dr. Chris Blanton         |
| 6:22 p.m. | <b>9. PUBLIC COMMENT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Dr. Gary Childers                            |

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>6:28 p.m.</b> | <b>10. CONSENT AGENDA</b><br>A. Approval of the Minutes for 8/11/2025<br>B. Field Trip Request<br>C. Declaration of Surplus<br>D. Personnel Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Dr. Gary Childers |
| <b>6:30 p.m.</b> | <b>11. WCS DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Dr. Wayne Eberle  |
| <b>6:50 p.m.</b> | <b>12. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND READ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1442: Voting Methods</li> <li>• 4200/7270: School Safety</li> <li>• 4329/7311: Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited</li> <li>• 4023/7233: Pregnant and Parenting Students and Employees</li> <li>• 4240/7312: Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety</li> <li>• 8325: Daily Deposits</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      | Dr. Wayne Eberle  |
| <b>6:55 p.m.</b> | <b>13. POLICY TO RESCIND</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7232: Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Dr. Wayne Eberle  |
| <b>6:58 p.m.</b> | <b>14. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3320: School Trips</li> <li>• 3620: Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations</li> <li>• 4002: Parent Involvement</li> <li>• 4020/7230: Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law</li> <li>• 1720/4030/7235: Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex</li> <li>• 4035/7236: Title IX Sexual Harassment - Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process</li> <li>• 7130: Licensure</li> <li>• 4040/7310: Staff-Student Relations</li> </ul> | Dr. Wayne Eberle  |
| <b>7:10 p.m.</b> | <b>15. BOARD OPERATIONS &amp; COMMENTS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Dr. Gary Childers |
| <b>7:15 p.m.</b> | <b>16. ADJOURNMENT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Dr. Gary Childers |



## WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

### WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

**DATE:** August 11, 2025

**TIME:** 6:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Margaret E. Gragg Education Center

**PRESENT:**

- Gary Childers, Alison Idol, Jay Fenwick, Adam Hege, Charlotte Lloyd, *BOE Members*
- Dr. Leslie Alexander, *Superintendent*
- Mr. John Henning, *Board Attorney*

#### CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Board Chair Dr. Gary Childers called the open session meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He welcomed those in attendance and then requested to observe a moment of silence.

Dr. Childers commented on the success of the “Back to School Festival,” and he wished everyone a wonderful start to the new school year.

#### DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA

- The LEA-Based Calendar Waiver Request was added to the Consent Agenda.
- The following policies substantive for first read were removed: 1402 (Remote Participation in Board Meetings), 4002 (Parental Involvement), and 3620 (Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations).
- Valle Crucis Return-to-School Plan was added to the agenda as #8 after Public Comment.

#### SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

- New Employee Orientation took place from August 5th-7th, and it was great to welcome the new hires to our district!
- The “Back-2-School Festival” on August 9th served 1796 students.
- *Convocation* will be August 12th at 9:00 at WHS for all district employees.
- Each school will be holding various “Meet and Greets” and Open Houses, so families should check their school’s website for more information.

- The first day of school will be Monday, August 18th, and we look forward to seeing and serving our students this year!
- Schools will be closed for the Labor Day Holiday on Monday, September 1st.
- WCS is excited to welcome Dr. Katie Barbee as the Director of K-8 Curriculum. She has 23 years of experience in education and a vast amount of curriculum knowledge. Dr. Barbee has been an Exceptional Children's teacher, and she has taught 1st and 4th grades. She has been in administration for ten years, serving as both an elementary and middle school principal.

Dr. Alexander publicly recognized Dr. Barbee who introduced herself to the Board members and audience.

### **VALLE CRUCIS SCHOOL UPDATE**

Not all inspections were passed when key inspections were conducted on August 6th, so Valle Crucis School does not have the Certificate of Occupancy needed to move staff and students to the new school. The most critical items to be accomplished are testing results for the water tank system, and results from the test and balance report. Some additional sidewalk and railing work must also occur to pass life safety requirements and inspections from the fire and health departments.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Two citizens made public comments.

- ➔ Joyce Alexander: Down Home NC is a state organization with a chapter in Watauga County, and they are an advocacy group focused on making sure that everyone is treated with justice. Ms. Alexander gave greetings on behalf of the group.
- ➔ Jenna Stone: Ms. Stone is a Valle Crucis parent who expressed concerns about the spacing with Plan B, and she wondered what improvements would be made from last year in prioritizing students and communicating with parents.

### **VALLE CRUCIS RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PLAN**

Valle Crucis does not yet have a Certificate of Occupancy since all inspections have not been passed, so Dr. Alexander made the recommendation to go to Plan B. This entails that students and staff will begin school on August 18th at alternative location sites: K-5th graders at Valle Crucis Conference Center and Holy Cross Episcopal Church, 6th-8th graders at CCC&TI (6-8th graders), and Pre-K students at Cove Creek School. Board Attorney John Henning spoke about some of the legal aspects of what has to happen before the school can be occupied.

Alison Idol made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to proceed with Plan B. Dr. Jay Fenwick seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

Dr. Alexander highly commended the amazing staff at Valle Crucis for their flexibility, desire to meet the needs of students, and positive attitude. Dr. Childers expressed that the Board is very disappointed the school is not ready, but that every effort will be made for the transition to be as smooth as possible.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of the Minutes for 7/8/2025 and 7/14/2025
- B. Field Trip Request
- C. Declaration of Surplus
- D. LEA-Based Calendar Waiver Request for Weather-Related Causes
- E. Personnel Report

Charlotte Lloyd made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Dr. Adam Hege seconded the motion, and it was approved by all Board members.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INCLEMENT WEATHER WORKING GROUPS**

Three working groups were created in the spring to focus on different aspects during inclement weather, and the facilitators of each of those groups presented updates and recommendations.

### **Length of Instructional Day**

Chief Academic Officer Mr. Phil Norman shared that the purpose of the group was to determine the feasibility of adding time to the current instructional day to allow flexibility in the use of Optional Workdays and remote learning in the event of inclement weather. They found that WCS has the shortest instructional day K-8 in the region (6.5 hours), while typical K-12 public schools are in session for a 7-hour school day. Adding 15 minutes to the instructional time would take pressure off of excessive remote learning days, but it must be done in an intentional way for teaching and learning to benefit student outcomes.

#### **➤ Recommendations:**

- Allow the work group and the Calendar Committee to investigate adding time to the instructional day for the 2026-27 school year;
- Gather stakeholder feedback to determine perceptions and implications;
- Bring a final recommendation to the Board.

### **Remote Learning**

Director of Elementary Curriculum Dr. Brian Bettis discussed that the following has worked well with remote learning: communication and support, student engagement and adaptability, technology access, and instructional strategies. Aspects that can be improved are instructional quality and use of time, staff utilization and support, consistency and structure, and communication and policy. The main areas of focus are the need for consistency with scheduling and expectations, communication with stakeholders, and support for educators.

#### **➤ Recommendations:**

- Instructional delivery ~ synchronous instruction via Google Meet;
- Emphasis on student attendance that is more consistent with in-person expectations;
- Additional supports for families (best practices, Parent Hub);
- Additional support for educators with best practices;
- Consistent scheduling that spans the entire instructional day (with principals creating a schedule that provides time for core instruction/tiered support/exploratory classes, and teachers intentionally planning practice time and breaks to aid with student engagement while maximizing instructional time).

### Transportation

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Chris Blanton stated that the goals of this group are to:

- Identify the feasibility of Limited B bus route options and identify stops to be used in inclement weather;
- Improve communication to stakeholders regarding the times that buses leave schools on a regular schedule and on delay schedules;
- Work with a subcommittee of drivers to revise Limited A routes.

The next step is for Limited A revisions to be completed.

### **CELL PHONES IN SCHOOLS (Session Law 2025-38/House Bill 959)**

Dr. Alexander shared North Carolina's Session Law and House Bill that states that the "Board of Education must establish a wireless community policy to govern cell phones, tablets, laptops, pagers, two-way radios, and gaming devices by 1/1/2026." The policy must prohibit students from using, displaying, or having a wireless communication device turned on during instructional time unless: authorized by the teacher for educational purposes or an emergency, per IEP or 504 Plan, or medically necessary per a documented medical condition. Another part of the law requires instruction by 2026-27 on social media and its effects on social, emotional, and physical health.

Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, the plan for Watauga County Schools is:

- ★ K-8: Will implement "away for the day" processes
- ★ WHS/WIA: Will implement "away for the period" processes (with cell phone lockers being used in classrooms)

Each school will communicate with students/parents the specific cellphone expectations, as well as consequences for violating the expectations.

### **POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND READ**

- 3225/4312/7320: Technology Responsible Use
- 3400: Evaluation of Student Progress
- 3420: Student Promotion and Accountability
- 6220: Operation of School Nutrition Services
- 6330: Insurance for Student Transportation Services

Charlotte Lloyd made a motion to approve the policies, Dr. Adam Hege seconded, and all Board members approved.

### **POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ**

- 1402: Remote Participation in Board Meetings
- 1442: Voting Methods
- 4002: Parental Involvement
- 4200/7270: School Safety
- 4329/7311: Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited
- 3620: Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
- 4023/7233: Pregnant and Parenting Students and Employees
- 4240/7312: Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety
- 8325: Daily Deposits

Dr. Wayne Eberle presented the policies that will be brought back for second read at the September BOE meeting.

### **BOARD OPERATIONS**

- If there are minor grammatical issues in policies to point out, let Dr. Eberle or Dr. Alexander know about them prior to the Board meeting.
- If Board members have anything they want added to a Board agenda ~ or if there is anything under Consent Agenda that they would like to have listed as a separate item for discussion ~ let Dr. Alexander, Dr. Childers, and/or Alison Idol know.
- The October BOE meeting will be on October 6th.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Dr. Childers commented that the County Manager and County Commissioners have been very aligned with Dr. Alexander and the BOE regarding Valle Crucis School.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Charlotte Lloyd made a motion to adjourn, Dr. Jay Fenwick seconded, and it was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Dr. Gary L. Childers, *Board of Education Chair*

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Dr. Leslie Alexander, *Superintendent*

## WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

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

Day and overnight trips must be submitted to the principal 15 days before the trip. Overnight and out of state field trips require the prior approval of the principal, transportation director, superintendent, and Board of Education. All trips utilizing rental or charter vehicles require the prior approval of the transportation director. No employee will transport students in a personal vehicle and no employee or volunteer driver will transport students in a 12-15 passenger van. No more than five students will be transported by a school system employee or volunteer in any one vehicle other than a school bus or activity bus. The superintendent has the discretion to approve field trips on an emergency basis when the timing is between regular Board of Education meetings. The superintendent shall notify the board at the next regularly scheduled meeting of any trips approved on an emergency basis and the rationale.

Sponsoring teacher: (Print) Olivia Tarnowski School: WHS

Cell phone number: 828-962-0178 Grade(s): 10-12 Number of students: 20

Departure date: Jan. 27, 2020 Return date: Jan. 31, 2020

Departure time: late afternoon Return time: mid-morning

### Educational purpose:

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

Orlando, FL: Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort (USSO Adventure Way  
Orlando, FL 32819) & Universal Orlando Theme Parks

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: DECA Sports & Entertainment Marketing Conference:

This trip offers committed DECA students the opportunity to learn from  
industry professionals in Orlando (sponsors, sports, entertainment, hospitality,  
ad, events, etc.). Students hear from 8+ different guest speakers and get  
to network with each of them. Students learn about careers and  
experience what they learn/hear about in Orlando's theme parks.

### Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: Olivia Tarnowski

Names of all non-school chaperones: Chris Tarnowski

All chaperones have a background check completed: ☒ Sponsoring teacher initials: OT  
Are all site(s) accessible to students with disabilities? ☒ yes ☐ no How will students with disabilities be  
accommodated for site access and transportation? All sites meet ADA Requirements.

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

**Transportation plan:**

Mode of transportation: ☐ Yellow bus with wheelchair lift ☐ Yellow bus without wheelchair lift  
☐ Activity bus with wheelchair lift ☐ Activity bus without wheelchair lift ☐ Rental car/minivan  
☒ Charter bus ☒ Other (Please explain) PLANE (CLT to MCO & return)

Name of charter bus company (if checked above) Total Transportation Solutions in Orlando  
(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

Driver/s: \_\_\_\_\_ Round trip mileage: \_\_\_\_\_ # of buses needed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Total cost per student \$ 1000 Source of funds: Personal

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

**Approval/Signatures:**

Sponsoring teacher signature: Olivia Tarnowski Date: 8 / 14 / 25  
Principal approval: [Signature] Date: 8 / 15 / 25

**Required signatures if applicable:**

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: 8 / 19 / 25  
Superintendent approval: [Signature] Date: 8 / 19 / 25  
Board of Education approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

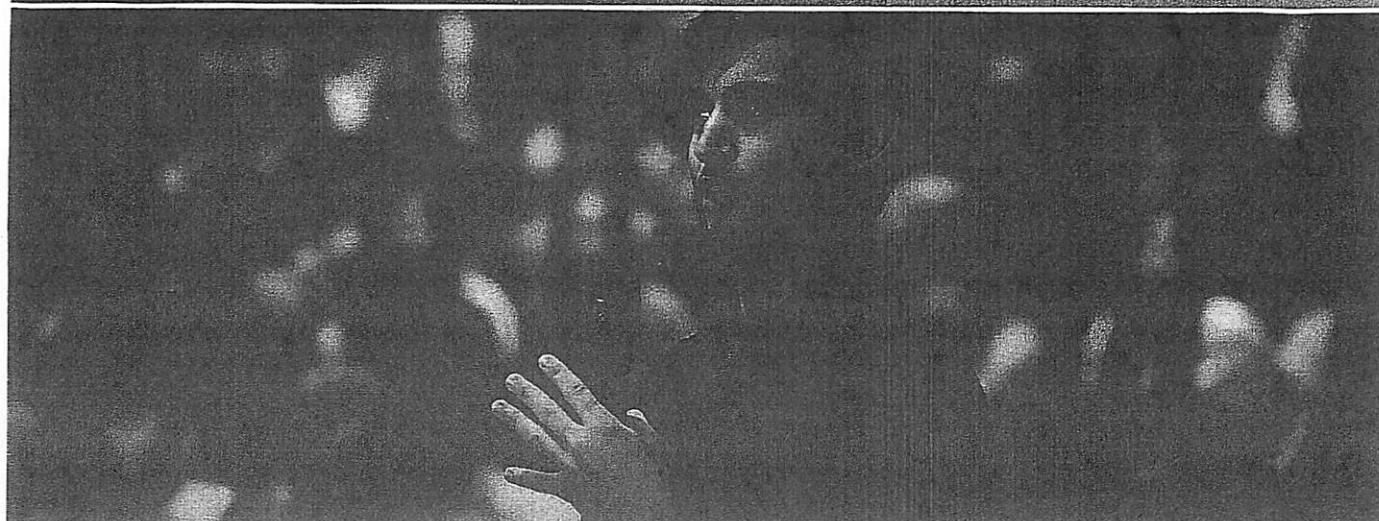
## Safety Plan for Hotel Pool: DECA Sports and Entertainment Marketing Conference

Students will follow the "buddy system" at all times and will be in groups of at least three students at all times when leaving their hotel room. The pool at Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort has lifeguards on duty during operating hours. During students' free time at the hotel, I will be circulating around the popular areas students may visit including the dining area and the lobby. **The other chaperone will be stationed at the Lazy River Courtyard, which includes one pool and one lazy river, during students' free time at the hotel to monitor and supervise.**

If students choose to go to the Lazy River Courtyard, they will follow the guidelines below:

1. Students are only allowed to visit the Lazy River Courtyard which includes one pool and one lazy river
2. Students will follow the directions posted around the Lazy River Courtyard to ensure their safety
3. Students will be respectful of the lifeguard on duty and will follow their directives
4. Students must adhere to Lazy River Courtyard pool and lazy river operating hours and our set curfew timelines
5. Lifejackets will be available for students who choose to wear one (the deepest point of the Lazy River Courtyard pool and lazy river is 5 feet)

This safety plan will be included in the contract that students and parents / guardians sign prior to departing for this trip.



## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Universal Orlando marketing executives pull out all stops to show DECA members the behind-the-scenes activities that it takes to be a leading theme park and resort. Not to be outdone, Florida sports and entertainment executives show their efforts to make Florida a leader in their industries. It's a perfect blend to complement the classroom.

### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Registration

### THURSDAY JANUARY 29

9:15 AM Sports & Entertainment Marketing presentations by Universal Orlando executives and featured guest speakers.

12:30 PM Experience Universal Orlando + Marketing Goosechase in the parks (on your own)

### FRIDAY JANUARY 30

9:15 AM Sports & Entertainment Marketing presentations by Universal Orlando executives and featured guest speakers

12:30 PM Experience Universal Orlando + Marketing Goosechase in the parks (on your own)

### SATURDAY JANUARY 31

8:00 AM Experience Universal Orlando or Disney + Marketing Goosechase in the parks (on your own)  
(Disney shuttles depart at 8:00 AM, return between 7:30 - 11:00 PM)

### SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1

Morning Departure



Visit [decadirect.org](http://decadirect.org) for previews and highlights.

Schedule subject to change. Check [deca.org/sem](http://deca.org/sem) for the latest schedule.

# Declaration of Surplus Items - September 2025

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bethel**

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u>            | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| NONE           | 1               | TABLE- SCIENCE                | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 13              | DESKS- COMBO                  | 13            |                 |
| NONE           | 9               | DESKS- ARM COMBO              | 9             |                 |
| NONE           | 27              | CHAIRS- STUDENT               | 27            |                 |
| NONE           | 4               | BINS- RECYCLING               | 4             |                 |
| NONE           | 12              | HURDLES- TRACK                | 12            |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | DESK- EXTENTION               | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 12              | DESK- DEVIDERS ( POYGLASS)    | 12            |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | KITCHEN PLAY SET- 6 PIECE     | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | PEG BOARD- ROLLING            |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 2               | EASELS- TCHR- ROLLING         | 2             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | SHELF- WOODEN BINS            | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 4               | CHAIRS- TEACHER               | 4             |                 |
| NONE           | 2               | DESKS- ROLLING COMPUTER       | 2             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | PROJECTOR- OPAQUE             | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | RACK- PAPER- ROLLING          | 1             |                 |
| 51631          | 1               | Lenovo N23 Yoga               |               | 1               |
| 51630          | 1               | Lenovo N23 Yoga               |               | 1               |
| 33424          | 1               | Lenovo 300e                   |               | 1               |
| 33426          | 1               | Lenovo 300e                   |               | 1               |
| 33421          | 1               | Lenovo 300e                   |               | 1               |
| 52173          | 1               | Lenovo 300e G2 MTK            |               | 1               |
| 52177          | 1               | Lenovo 300e G2 MTK            |               | 1               |
| 52086          | 1               | Lenovo 300e G2 MTK            |               | 1               |
| 52175          | 1               | Lenovo 300e G2 MTK            |               | 1               |
| 34444          | 1               | Lenovo 300e G2 MTK            |               | 1               |
| 33999          | 1               | Lenovo 100e G2 MTK            |               | 1               |
| 33077          | 1               | Lenovo 100e                   |               | 1               |
| 33073          | 1               | Lenovo 100e                   |               | 1               |
| 33081          | 1               | Lenovo 100e                   |               | 1               |
| 33080          | 1               | Lenovo 100e                   |               | 1               |
| 33082          | 1               | Lenovo 100e                   |               | 1               |
| 80558          | 1               | CART- CHARGING- BLACK BOX     | 1             |                 |
| 100159         | 1               | CART- CHARGING FOR 24 DEVICES | 1             |                 |
| 28530          | 1               | DOC CAMERA- IPEVO-ZIGGI       |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 4               | TABLES-SCIENCE                | 4             |                 |

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## Blowing Rock

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u>                         | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| NONE           | 6               | Wooden Chairs                              | 6             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Folding chair w/ blue fabric               | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 2               | Floral chairs                              | 2             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Desk- L shaped                             | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | White wire rack w/ storage bins            | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Small, tan cart on wheels                  | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Small fish tank                            | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Brown cart on wheels w/ outlets            | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 2               | Small black carts on wheels                | 2             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Black swivel stool                         | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Blue swivel stool                          | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Gray cart                                  | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 2               | Desks                                      | 2             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Whiteboard                                 | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 2               | Wooden book shelves (one black, one brown) | 2             |                 |
| NONE           | 6               | Filing cabinets                            | 6             |                 |
| NONE           | 20              | student chairs                             | 20            |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Large blue mat                             | 1             |                 |
| 35627          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- LENOVO 100e                    |               | 1               |
| 33262          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- LENOVO 100e                    |               | 1               |
| 34301          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- LENOVO 100e                    |               | 1               |

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| 51 | 3 |
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## Cove Creek

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u>            | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 800984         | 1               | CART- LAPTOP CHRNG- NO WHEELS | 1             |                 |
| 36602          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- HP 11MK           |               | 1               |

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## Green Valley

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 400034         | 1               | DOC CAMERA         |               | 1               |
| 400005         | 1               | DOC CAMERA         |               | 1               |
| 28414          | 1               | DOC CAMERA         |               | 1               |
| 400038         | 1               | DOC CAMERA         |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 3               | SCOREBOARD         |               | 3               |
| <div></div>    |                 |                    | <div></div>   | <div></div>     |
| 7              |                 |                    | 0             | 7               |

## Hardin Park

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u>       | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 500365         | 1               | DOC CAMERA- ELMO         |               | 1               |
| 500142         | 1               | PROJECTOR- NEC NP400     |               | 1               |
| 500707         | 1               | DOC CAMERA- IPEVO        |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | DRY ERASE BOARD- LARGE   | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 2               | FILE CAB- STEEL 5 DRAWER | 2             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | DESK- METAL              | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | CHAIR- ROLLING DESK      | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Plywood shelf            |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | Pegboard with stand      |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | Bookshelf                |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | Fan on stand             |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 7               | chairs- student          |               | 7               |
| NONE           | 1               | Small Trampoline         |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | 4'X8' Corkboard          |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | Outdoor Steel Bench      |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | Paper Shredder           |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 10              | Air Purifiers            |               | 10              |
| 500813         | 1               | AC- MOBILE UNIT          |               | 1               |
| 52900          | 1               | AC- MOBILE UNIT          |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 3               | TABLES- TRAPEZOID        | 3             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | TABLE- RECTANGLE 30X60   | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | TABLE- RECTANGLE 36X72   | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 2               | TABLE- RECTANGLE 24X60   | 2             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Shelf/Cubby              | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | Small Rolling Cabinet    | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 33              | DESK- STUDENT            | 33            |                 |
| NONE           | 21              | CHAIRS- STUDENT          | 21            |                 |
| NONE           | 5               | CHAIRS- ROLLING DESK     | 5             |                 |

|        |                                 |   |
|--------|---------------------------------|---|
| NONE   | 3 DESK- METAL TEACHER           | 3 |
| NONE   | 2 DESK- WOODEN TEACHER          | 2 |
| NONE   | 1 FILE CAB- 4 DRAWER            | 1 |
| NONE   | 2 WHITEBOARDS- 4X8              | 2 |
| NONE   | 1 WHITEBOARD- 3X4               | 1 |
| NONE   | 1 WHITEBOARD- 5X7               | 1 |
| NONE   | 5 CABINETS- STORAGE ROLLING     | 5 |
| NONE   | 2 CABINETS WITH DRAWERS ROLLING | 2 |
| NONE   | 1 Varidesk Adjustable Desk      | 1 |
| NONE   | 1 Wooden Kitchen Playset        | 1 |
| 501300 | 1 STORAGE CABINET / TRY         | 1 |
| 501299 | 1 CUTTING MACHINE               | 1 |

124

94

30

## Mabel

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u>      | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 601215         | 1               | SCRUBBER- FLOOR MACHINE | 1             |                 |
| 600608         | 1               | VACUUM- UPRIGHT         |               | 1               |
| 600863         | 1               | VACUUM- UPRIGHT         |               | 1               |
| 29885          | 1               | PROJECTOR- EPSON        |               | 1               |

4

1

3

## Parkway

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 700857         | 1               | A/C- WINDOW UNIT   |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | FILE- CABINET      | 1             |                 |
| NONE           | 1               | FILE- CABINET      |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | CHAIR- STUDENT     |               | 1               |
| 200021         | 1               | CAMERA- VIDEO FLIP | 1             |                 |
| 200022         | 1               | CAMERA- VIDEO FLIP | 1             |                 |
| 200023         | 1               | CAMERA- VIDEO FLIP | 1             |                 |
| 200024         | 1               | CAMERA- VIDEO FLIP | 1             |                 |
| 200025         | 1               | CAMERA- VIDEO FLIP | 1             |                 |

9

6

3

## Valle Crucis

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 36982          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- HP     |               | 1               |
| 35544          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- 100e   |               | 1               |
| 36851          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- HP     |               | 1               |
| 36989          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- HP     |               | 1               |
| <div></div>    |                 |                    | <div></div>   | <div></div>     |
| 4              |                 |                    | 0             | 4               |

## Watauga High School

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u>               | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| NONE           | 1               | COMPRESSOR- WELDING              |               | 1               |
| 39147          | 1               | CHROMEBOOK- HP                   |               | 1               |
| 80391          | 1               | HP Z240 Desktop Computer         |               | 1               |
| 903074         | 1               | Nobilis I490 Desktop Computer    |               | 1               |
| 905678         | 1               | HP Z230 Desktop Computer         |               | 1               |
| 80225          | 1               | HP Z230 Desktop Computer         |               | 1               |
| 904101         | 1               | Samsung DVD-V9800 VHS/DVD player |               | 1               |
| 28418          | 1               | Epson Powerlite 570 Projector    |               | 1               |
| NONE           | 1               | Elmo TT02-RX Document Camera     |               | 1               |
| 33674          | 1               | Epson Powerlite 680 Projector    |               | 1               |
| <div></div>    |                 |                                  | <div></div>   | <div></div>     |
| 10             |                 |                                  | 0             | 10              |

## Central Office

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| NONE           | 1               | DESK- EXECUTIVE    | 1             |                 |
| <div></div>    |                 |                    | <div></div>   | <div></div>     |
| 1              |                 |                    | 1             | 0               |

## Technology Department

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 37577          | 1               | DOC CAMERIA- IPEVO |               | 1               |
| <div></div>    |                 |                    | <div></div>   | <div></div>     |

1

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
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1

## Transportation Department

| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 51346          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51325          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51703          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51361          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51348          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51390          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51333          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51383          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51370          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51334          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51384          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51345          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51355          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51376          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51386          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51377          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51326          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51342          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51379          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51353          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51344          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51351          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51349          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51698          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51385          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51388          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51339          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51626          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51375          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51371          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51358          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51336          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51381          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51368          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51322          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51332          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |
| 51357          | 1               | BUS RADIO          |               | 1               |

|       |             |   |
|-------|-------------|---|
| 51321 | 1 BUS RADIO | 1 |
| 51328 | 1 BUS RADIO | 1 |
| 51364 | 1 BUS RADIO | 1 |
| 51347 | 1 BUS RADIO | 1 |
| 51366 | 1 BUS RADIO | 1 |
| 51324 | 1 BUS RADIO | 1 |

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

43

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

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## Maintenance Department

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

## Child Nutrition

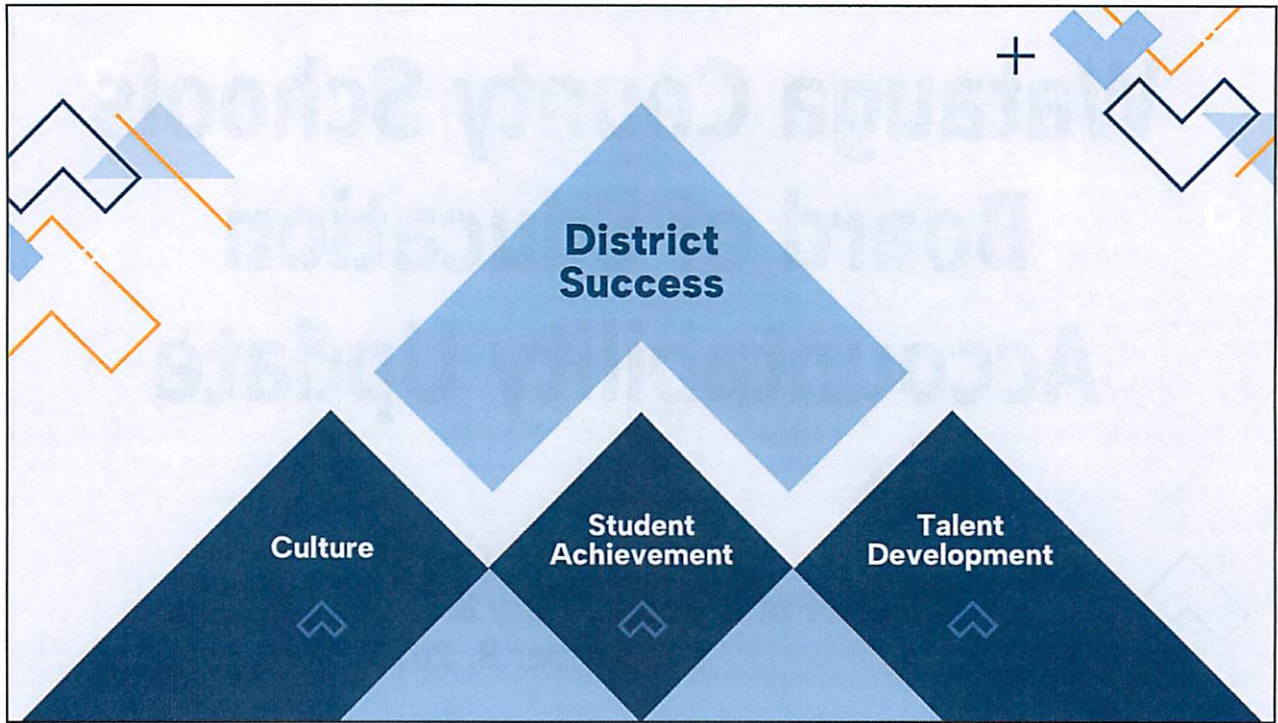
| <u>Asset #</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Usable</u> | <u>Unusable</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
|                |                 |                    |               |                 |
|                | 0    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

# Watauga County Schools Board of Education Accountability Update



Dr. Wayne M. Eberle, II  
Director of Accountability & Federal Programs  
September 8, 2025

| Watauga County Schools Strategic Plan                                                        |                                                                                               |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                |                                                      |                                                                 |                                                                                      |                                                                                 |                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Vision: Watauga County Schools will be the best place to learn and work in North Carolina.   |                                                                                               |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                |                                                      |                                                                 |                                                                                      |                                                                                 |                                                         |
| Goal 1                                                                                       |                                                                                               |                                                                                                            | Goal 2                                                                                         |                                                      |                                                                 | Goal 3                                                                               |                                                                                 |                                                         |
| All WCS graduates <i>prepared</i> for further education, a career, & productive citizenship. |                                                                                               |                                                                                                            | WCS provides students the best possible education offered by the <i>highest quality</i> staff. |                                                      |                                                                 | WCS provides its students with <i>high quality</i> learning environments.            |                                                                                 |                                                         |
| Strategies                                                                                   |                                                                                               |                                                                                                            | Strategies                                                                                     |                                                      |                                                                 | Strategies                                                                           |                                                                                 |                                                         |
| 1.1 Foster positive school culture aligned to student success                                | 1.2 Engage student interests through rigorous, relevant and diverse educational opportunities | 1.3 Model integrity, leadership, equity, service and responsibility throughout the entire school community | 2.1 Create structures for powerful collaborative planning                                      | 2.2 Recruit and retain highest quality professionals | 2.3 Provide relevant, current, ongoing professional development | 3.1 Develop sustained communication and partnerships with all community stakeholders | 3.2 Secure adequate long-range funding for all district programs and facilities | 3.3 Promote and provide for student wellness and health |



## EOC Proficiency Comparison SY 19-20 to Present Pre-COVID Fall 2019 to Fall 2024

Using GLP Standards - at or above Level III

| EOC Subject | WHS Fall '19 (Pre-COVID) | WHS Fall '20 (2x3 Flex) | WHS Fall '21 | WHS Fall '22 | WHS Fall '23 | WHS Fall '24 |
|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bio         | 75.6%                    | 59.7%                   | 71.7%        | 70.9%        | 72.2%        | 52.5%        |
| Eng II      | 68.3%                    | 76.3%                   | 73.5%        | 62.1%        | 69.4%        | 76.8%        |
| Math I      | 80.4%                    | 34.2%                   | 80.0%        | 79.2%        | 66.3%        | 56.6%        |
| Math III    | 70.8%                    | 62.8%                   | 73.3%        | 84.1%        | 78.9%        | 84.1%        |

| EOC Subject | WIA Fall '19 (Pre-COVID) | WIA Fall '20 (2X3 Flex) | WIA Fall '21 | WIA Fall '22 | WIA Fall '23 | WIA Fall '24 |
|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bio         | 57.1%                    | 58.3%                   | 69.2%        | 46.2%        | 79.3%        | 33.3%        |
| Eng II      | 53.3%                    | 60.0%                   | 69.2%        | 52.4%        | 61.0%        | 62.7%        |
| Math I      | 76.2%                    | 41.7%                   | 64.7%        | 77.3%        | 57.1%        | 42.1%        |
| Math III    | 55.6%                    | 51.4%                   | 60.0%        | 78.1%        | 72.5%        | 63.6%        |

## EOC Proficiency Comparison SY 19-20 to Present Pre-COVID Fall 2019 to Fall 2024

Using GLP Standards - at or above Level III

| EOC Subject | Combined Fall '19 (Pre-COVID) | Combined Fall '20 (2X3 Flex) | Combined Fall '21 | Combined Fall '22 | Combined Fall '23 | Combined Fall '24 |
|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Bio         | 72.9%                         | 59.5%                        | 71.2%             | 67.1%             | 73.3%             | 47.3%             |
| Eng II      | 65.1%                         | 73.6%                        | 72.6%             | 60.2%             | 67.9%             | 73.7%             |
| Math I      | 79.7%                         | 35.6%                        | 78.2%             | 78.8%             | 64.1%             | 53.7%             |
| Math III    | 68.2%                         | 60.1%                        | 70.5%             | 82.8%             | 77.6%             | 80.8%             |

## EOC Proficiency Comparison SY 19-20 to Present Pre-COVID Spring 2020 to Spring 2025

Using GLP Standards- at or above Level III

| EOC Subject | WHS Spring '20 (COVID-19) | WHS Spring '21 (2X3 Flex) | WHS Spring '22 | WHS Spring '23 | WHS Spring '24 | WHS Spring '25 |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Bio         | No Data                   | 65.0%                     | 70.2%          | 71.7%          | 65.8%          | 53.8%          |
| Eng II      | No Data                   | 69.4%                     | 72.5%          | 77.8%          | 76.5%          | 75.5%          |
| Math I      | No Data                   | 48.8%                     | 41.7%          | 61.1%          | 58.1%          | 56.9%          |
| Math III    | No Data                   | 69.7%                     | 74.2%          | 88.6%          | 73.5%          | 90.6%          |

| EOC Subject | WIA Spring '20 (COVID-19) | WIA Spring '21 (2x3 Flex) | WIA Spring '22 | WIA Spring '23 | WIA Spring '24 | WIA Spring '25 |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Bio         | No Data                   | 54.2%                     | 60.6%          | 53.9%          | 59.5%          | 39.1%          |
| Eng II      | No Data                   | 55.9%                     | 64.7%          | 53.6%          | 63.3%          | 53.2%          |
| Math I      | No Data                   | 48.3%                     | 48.7%          | 50.0%          | 53.2%          | 53.8%          |
| Math III    | No Data                   | 50.0%                     | 63.3%          | 83.8%          | 64.7%          | 83.3%          |

## EOC Proficiency Comparison SY 19-20 to Present Pre-COVID Spring 2020 to Spring 2025

Using GLP Standards- at or above Level III

| EOC Subject | Combined Spring '20 (COVID-19) | Combined Spring '21 (2X3 Flex) | Combined Spring '22 | Combined Spring '23 | Combined Spring '24 | Combined Spring '25 |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Bio         | No Data                        | 62.7%                          | 68.2%               | 68.6%               | 64.7%               | 50.9%               |
| Eng II      | No Data                        | 66.7%                          | 71.1%               | 74.0%               | 74.5%               | 70.0%               |
| Math I      | No Data                        | 48.7%                          | 43.4%               | 59.5%               | 56.9%               | 56.3%               |
| Math III    | No Data                        | 66.5%                          | 72.4%               | 87.7%               | 71.8%               | 89.2%               |

## EOG ELA Proficiency Comparison Pre-COVID Spring 2019 to Spring 2025

Using GLP Standards- at or above Level III

| District<br>ELA<br>EOG | Spring '19<br>(Pre-COVID)<br>First Admin | Spring '19<br>(Pre-COVID)<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring '20<br>(COVID-19) | Spring '21<br>(2x3 Flex)<br>*No 2nd<br>Admin/<br>Standard<br>Setting Yr | Spring<br>'22<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'22<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring<br>'23<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'23<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring<br>'24<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'24<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring<br>'25<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'25<br>Second<br>Admin |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| G3                     | 67.1%                                    |                                              | No Data                  | 57.1%                                                                   | 57.1%                           |                                  | 59.2%                           |                                  | 59.0%                           |                                  | 51.7%                           |                                  |
| G4                     | 66.8%                                    | 70.3%                                        | No Data                  | 60.8%                                                                   | 61.9%                           | 62.5%                            | 65.8%                           | 67.6%                            | 64.1%                           | 65.0%                            | 63.6%                           | 66.0%                            |
| G5                     | 64.0%                                    | 66.8%                                        | No Data                  | 50.6%                                                                   | 60.3%                           | 61.8%                            | 59.2%                           | 60.7%                            | 58.0%                           | 60.8%                            | 58.9%                           | 62.6%                            |
| G6                     | 67.3%                                    | 68.7%                                        | No Data                  | 55.8%                                                                   | 58.3%                           | 60.1%                            | 65.5%                           | 66.6%                            | 61.5%                           | 63.6%                            | 64.0%                           | 67.8%                            |
| G7                     | 74.7%                                    | 75.9%                                        | No Data                  | 58.3%                                                                   | 61.4%                           | 62.4%                            | 61.1%                           | 63.2%                            | 62.4%                           | 65.5%                            | 63.9%                           | 65.1%                            |
| G8                     | 70.8%                                    | 71.4%                                        | No Data                  | 57.8%                                                                   | 63.5%                           | 64.5%                            | 64.4%                           | 65.4%                            | 66.0%                           | 67.4%                            | 71.1%                           | 73.3%                            |

## EOG Math Proficiency Comparison Pre-COVID Spring 2019 to Spring 2025

Using GLP Standards- at or above Level III

| District<br>Math<br>EOG | Spring '19<br>(Pre-<br>COVID)*No<br>2nd Admin/<br>Standard<br>Setting Year | Spring '20<br>(COVID-19) | Spring<br>'21<br>(2x3 Flex)<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'21<br>(2x3 Flex)<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring<br>'22<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'22<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring<br>'23<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'23<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring<br>'24<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'24<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring<br>'25<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'25<br>Second<br>Admin |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| G3                      | 72.8%                                                                      | No Data                  | 52.3%                                         | 52.9%                                          | 69.0%                           | 69.6%                            | 67.0%                           | 67.6%                            | 68.9%                           | 70.1%                            | 61.8%                           | 65.2%                            |
| G4                      | 72.4%                                                                      | No Data                  | 49.4%                                         | 51.0%                                          | 67.1%                           | 67.3%                            | 65.2%                           | 66.4%                            | 70.4%                           | 71.0%                            | 66.0%                           | 68.5%                            |
| G5                      | 69.2%                                                                      | No Data                  | 43.1%                                         | 44.6%                                          | 60.3%                           | 61.2%                            | 65.2%                           | 66.5%                            | 64.0%                           | 66.5%                            | 60.4%                           | 62.0%                            |
| G6                      | 70.4%                                                                      | No Data                  | 51.5%                                         | 51.8%                                          | 63.3%                           | 65.6%                            | 66.5%                           | 66.8%                            | 68.7%                           | 70.8%                            | 69.6%                           | 73.1%                            |
| G7                      | 70.2%                                                                      | No Data                  | 50.4%                                         | 50.7%                                          | 58.8%                           | 59.8%                            | 61.1%                           | 62.8%                            | 65.8%                           | 66.9%                            | 70.5%                           | 73.2%                            |
| G8                      | 55.0%                                                                      | No Data                  | 32.3%                                         | 33.1%                                          | 47.9%                           | 48.3%                            | 45.3%                           | 46.0%                            | 37.0%                           | 38.3%                            | 46.4%                           | 48.4%                            |

## EOG Science Proficiency Comparison Pre-COVID Spring 2019 to Spring 2025

Using GLP Standards- at or above Level III

| District<br>Science<br>EOG | Spring '19<br>(Pre-COVID)<br>First Admin | Spring '19<br>(Pre-COVID)<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring '20<br>(COVID-19) | Spring '21<br>(2x3 Flex)<br>First Admin | Spring<br>'21<br>(2x3 Flex)<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring<br>'22<br>First<br>Admin | Spring<br>'22<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring '23<br>First<br>Admin | Spring '23<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring '24<br>First Admin | Spring '24<br>Second<br>Admin | Spring '25<br>*No 2nd<br>Admin/<br>Standard<br>Setting Yr |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| G5                         | 75.0%                                    | 76.6%                                        | No Data                  | 64.7%                                   |                                                | 74.7%                           |                                  | 69.5%                        | 70.1%                         | 67.8%                     | 68.1%                         | 71.0%                                                     |
| G8                         | 89.5%                                    | 90.3%                                        | No Data                  | 83.8%                                   | 84.1%                                          | 85.5%                           | 85.8%                            | 82.3%                        | 82.6%                         | 82.8%                     | 83.4%                         | 79.4%                                                     |



### School Performance Grades

| SCHOOL                        | SY 18 | SY 19 | SY 20/ 21 | SY 22 | SY 23 | SY 24 | SY 25 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bethel                        | C     | C     | NO SPG    | C     | C     | D     | C     |
| Blowing Rock                  | B     | B     | NO SPG    | B     | B     | B     | B     |
| Cove Creek                    | C     | B     | NO SPG    | C     | C     | B     | C     |
| Green Valley                  | B     | B     | NO SPG    | C     | C     | D     | C     |
| Hardin Park                   | B     | B     | NO SPG    | B     | B     | B     | B     |
| Mabel                         | C     | C     | NO SPG    | C     | D     | C     | C     |
| Parkway                       | B     | B     | NO SPG    | B     | B     | B     | B     |
| Valle Crucis                  | C     | B     | NO SPG    | C     | B     | B     | C     |
| Watauga Virtual<br>Academy    | -     | -     | NO SPG    | C     | C     | C     | C     |
| Watauga High School           | B     | B     | NO SPG    | B     | B     | B     | B     |
| Watauga Innovation<br>Academy | B     | B     | NO SPG    | B     | B     | B     | C     |

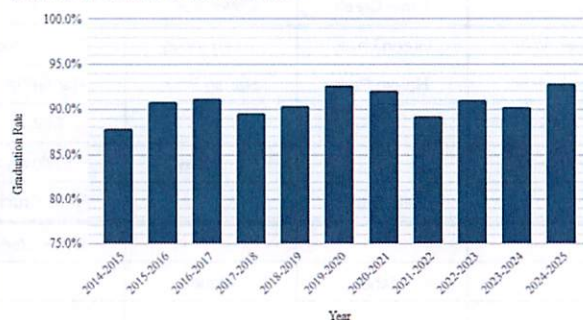
## School Growth SY 2025

| SCHOOL                     | Met Growth                          | Exceeded Growth                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bethel                     |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Blowing Rock               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| Cove Creek                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| Green Valley               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| Hardin Park                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| Mabel                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| Parkway                    |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Valle Crucis               |                                     |                                     |
| Watauga Virtual Academy    | Not enough participation            | Not enough participation            |
| Watauga High School        |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Watauga Innovation Academy |                                     |                                     |

## Cohort Graduation Rate

WCS Cohort  
Graduation Rate  
**92.9%**

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate



| READING K-3 (2025 mClass Data)       |              |              |              |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                      | K            | G1           | G2           | G3           |
| General Priority<br>GLP 80% - 100%   | Bethel       |              |              | Bethel       |
|                                      | Blowing Rock |              | Blowing Rock |              |
|                                      |              |              | Cove Creek   |              |
|                                      | Mabel        |              |              |              |
|                                      | Parkway      |              |              |              |
| Targeted Priority<br>GLP 79.9% - 66% |              | Bethel       | Bethel       |              |
|                                      |              | Blowing Rock |              | Blowing Rock |
|                                      | Cove Creek   | Cove Creek   |              |              |
|                                      | Green Valley |              |              | Green Valley |
|                                      |              |              | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  |
|                                      |              | Parkway      | Parkway      | Parkway      |
|                                      |              | Valle Crucis |              |              |
| Intensive Priority<br>GLP 65.9% - 0% |              |              |              | Cove Creek   |
|                                      |              | Green Valley | Green Valley |              |
|                                      | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  |              |              |
|                                      |              | Mabel        | Mabel        | Mabel        |
|                                      | Valle Crucis |              | Valle Crucis | Valle Crucis |

| READING G3-8 (2025 EOG Data)         |              |              |              |              |              |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                      | G3           | G4           | G5           | G6           | G7           | G8           |
| General Priority<br>GLP 75% - 100%   |              | Blowing Rock |              |              | Blowing Rock | Blowing Rock |
|                                      |              |              |              |              |              | Hardin Park  |
|                                      |              |              | Parkway      |              |              |              |
|                                      |              | Valle Crucis |              | Valle Crucis |              |              |
| Targeted Priority<br>GLP 74.9% - 50% | Bethel       | Bethel       | Bethel       | Bethel       | Bethel       | Bethel       |
|                                      | Blowing Rock |              | Blowing Rock | Blowing Rock |              |              |
|                                      |              | Cove Creek   | Cove Creek   | Cove Creek   |              | Cove Creek   |
|                                      | Green Valley | Green Valley | Green Valley | Green Valley | Green Valley | Green Valley |
|                                      | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  |              |
|                                      |              | Mabel        |              |              | Mabel        | Mabel        |
|                                      |              | Parkway      |              | Parkway      | Parkway      | Parkway      |
|                                      | Valle Crucis |              | Valle Crucis |              | Valle Crucis | Valle Crucis |
| Intensive Priority<br>GLP 49.9% - 0% | Cove Creek   |              |              |              | Cove Creek   |              |
|                                      | Mabel        |              | Mabel        | Mabel        |              |              |
|                                      | Parkway      |              |              |              |              |              |

| MATH G3-8 (2025 EOG Data)            |              |              |              |              |              |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
|                                      | G3           | G4           | G5           | G6           | G7           | G8<br>(does not include Math 1) |
| General Priority<br>GLP 75% - 100%   |              |              |              | Bethel       |              |                                 |
|                                      | Blowing Rock | Blowing Rock | Blowing Rock | Blowing Rock | Blowing Rock |                                 |
|                                      |              | Cove Creek   |              | Cove Creek   |              |                                 |
|                                      |              |              | Parkway      | Parkway      |              |                                 |
|                                      |              |              |              | Valle Crucis | Valle Crucis |                                 |
| Targeted Priority<br>GLP 74.9% - 50% |              |              | Bethel       |              | Bethel       |                                 |
|                                      |              |              |              |              |              | Blowing Rock                    |
|                                      | Cove Creek   |              | Cove Creek   |              | Cove Creek   |                                 |
|                                      | Green Valley |              |              | Green Valley | Green Valley | Green Valley                    |
|                                      | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park  | Hardin Park                     |
|                                      | Mabel        | Mabel        | Mabel        | Mabel        | Mabel        |                                 |
|                                      | Parkway      | Parkway      |              |              | Parkway      | Parkway                         |
|                                      | Valle Crucis | Valle Crucis |              |              |              |                                 |
| Intensive Priority<br>GLP 49.9% - 0% | Bethel       | Bethel       |              |              |              | Bethel                          |
|                                      |              |              |              |              |              | Cove Creek                      |
|                                      |              | Green Valley | Green Valley |              |              |                                 |
|                                      |              |              |              |              |              | Mabel                           |
|                                      |              |              | Valle Crucis |              |              | Valle Crucis                    |

| WHS/ WIA (2025 EOC/ ACT WorkKeys data) |                                            |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| General Priority<br>GLP 75% - 100%     | WHS/ WIA ACT WorkKeys<br>WHS/ WIA Math III |
| Targeted Priority<br>GLP 74.9% - 50%   | WHS/ WIA Math I                            |
|                                        | WHS/ WIA English II                        |
| Intensive Priority<br>GLP 49.9% - 0%   |                                            |

## LEA Ranking Data Using GLP Calculations

Among the 115 LEAs in the State of NC, WCS ranked...

- 13th in EOG G5 and EOG Rdg G3
- 12th in EOG Math G4
- 11th in EOG G4, EOG Rdg G4 and EOG Sci G5
- 7th in All EOC, English II, EOG Math G8 and EOG Rdg G5
- 6th in EOG Math G3-8
- 5th in Math I and EOG Math G6
- 4th in ALL EOG/ EOC (state ranking), Math III, EOG G6, and Sci G5&8
- 3rd in ALL EOG, EOG G8, EOG Math G7 and EOG Rdg G3-8
- 2nd in EOG G7, EOG Rdg G6 and EOG Sci G8
- 1st in EOG Rdg G7 and EOG Rdg G8

In summary, of the 30 identified accountability files, WCS performed...

- in the top 10 in 20 areas and
- in the top 5 in 19 areas
- even in 2 areas and up in 13 compared to last year

WCS also recorded its highest 4 year Cohort Graduation Rate to date of 92.9%

+ Yet another reason why Watauga County Schools the best place to learn and work in North Carolina!

# QUESTIONS?

## VOTING METHODS

Policy Code:

1442

Voting will normally be by show of hands on all matters coming before the Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") for action. For remote meetings held during a state-declared emergency, however, all votes will be taken by roll call. Regardless of the method of voting, the minutes will reflect the vote of each member voting and the abstention of any member present but not voting, unless the vote is unanimous.

A board member must vote on all issues unless the member has a conflict of interest or is unable to remain impartial in a judicial matter before the board. If a board member recuses himself or herself from a vote, the member will state the reason before the vote is taken and the reason will be recorded in the minutes. A failure to vote by a member who is present and has not been excused as set forth herein shall be recorded as an affirmative vote. A vote to abstain is also an affirmative vote.

No secret ballots are permitted. If the board decides, by majority vote, to vote by written ballot, each member must sign his or her ballot, and the ballots must be available for public inspection in the superintendent's office immediately following the meeting and until the minutes are approved. The minutes of the meeting must specify the vote of each member's written ballot. The ballots may be destroyed after the minutes of the meeting have been approved. Written ballots may not be used for remote meetings held during a state-declared emergency.

Legal References: G.S. 143-318.13; 166A-19.24; *Crump v. Board of Education*, 93 N.C. App. 168, *aff'd*, 326 N.C. 603 (1990); N.C. Attorney General Advisory Opinion, 54 Op. Att'y. Gen. 86 (1985)

Cross References: Board Member Conflict of Interest (policy 1321), Remote Participation in Board Meetings (policy 2302)

Adopted: November 9, 2015

Replaces: Board policy 1.04, Procedures for Board Meetings (in part)

Revised: DATE

## **SCHOOL SAFETY**

*Policy Code:* **4200/7270**

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Safe schools are critical to creating a learning environment in which students can succeed. Staff and students share the responsibility for taking reasonable precautions and following established safety measures to create and maintain safe schools. The following safety measures must be implemented at each school.

### **A. SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS**

Students must be reasonably supervised while in the care and custody of the school system. This supervision must occur throughout school hours, including during class, between classes, on the playground, and during recess or lunch periods; during authorized school field trips; and on school buses. Reasonable precautions should be taken to protect the safety of students on school grounds and on buses before, during and after school.

Students who are subject to policy 4260, Student Sex Offenders, and are receiving educational services on school property must be supervised by school personnel at all times.

### **B. SUPERVISION OF VISITORS**

School administrators shall strictly enforce policies 5015, School Volunteers, and 5020, Visitors to the Schools.

### **C. SAFETY OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

The board recognizes its duty to provide each of its employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

The superintendent and each building principal shall comply with all duties set out for their respective positions in G.S. 115C-288(d) and G.S. 115C-525 to minimize fire hazards. As required by law, the principal is required to must inspect school buildings, playgrounds, and equipment for health, fire, and safety hazards on a regular basis, as required by law, and to notify the superintendent immediately of unsanitary conditions or repairs needed to meet safety standards.

Any employee who observes any potential hazards must notify the principal or the employee's supervisor immediately. The principal or supervisor must notify the superintendent immediately of unsanitary conditions or repairs needed to meet safety standards

All warning systems must meet building and equipment codes required by law and must be properly maintained. When necessary, proper signs indicating potential hazards or recommended safety precautions must be posted.

### **D. ESTABLISHING PROCESSES TO ADDRESS POTENTIAL SAFETY CONCERNS AND**

## EMERGENCIES

### 1. Responding to Student Altercations and Other Threats to Safety

All school system employees have a duty to be alert at all times to situations that may pose a threat to the safety of students, employees, or visitors on school property, at school events, or in other situations in which the students are under the authority of school employees. Even an employee who does not have responsibility for supervising students is expected to make an immediate report if the employee observes or has reason to suspect that a situation poses a threat to safety and no administrator, teacher, or other supervisory employee is present and aware of the potential threat.

Teachers, teacher assistants, coaches, and other employees with responsibility for supervising students will use appropriate student behavior management techniques to maintain order and discipline on school property, at school events, and anywhere that students are under the employees' authority. Such employees must enforce the Code of Student Conduct and address student behavior in accordance with the school plan for management of student behavior (see policy 4302, School Plan for Management of Student Behavior).

When employees with responsibility for supervising students have personal knowledge or actual notice of a student altercation or other situation that poses an immediate threat to safety, they shall use their professional judgment to determine how best to address the situation to protect the safety of everyone in the vicinity. Emergency procedures identified in a student's Behavior Intervention Plan shall be followed to the maximum extent possible under the circumstances. For minor threats or altercations or altercations involving young children, the employee shall intervene directly to end the fight or address the safety threat if the employee can do so safely. An employee who encounters a situation that cannot be managed safely and effectively by that employee immediately shall request assistance from other employees or administrative staff and shall take steps to remove bystanders from the area. Only the degree of force or physical control reasonably necessary shall be used to re-establish a safe environment.

Employees should take further action as appropriate in accordance with any response protocols established by the principal or superintendent. All employees are responsible for knowing and following such protocols to the fullest extent reasonable under the circumstances at the time.

### 2. School Rules

The principal or designee shall develop rules to help prevent accidents in school buildings, on school buses, and on school grounds.

### 3. Training for Staff and Students

Staff training must include detailed instruction on how to respond to a variety of emergency situations. Staff should also be able to recognize and respond to behavior, information, and related indicators that warn of impending problems. In addition, middle and high school employees must receive adequate training on the operation of the school's anonymous safety tip line.

School personnel must teach and review with students (1) safety procedures, including fire safety procedures; (2) precautions for handling chemicals or potentially dangerous equipment; and (3) appropriate responses to threats to school safety. Middle and high school students must also be informed of the anonymous safety tip line and its purpose and function.

Training must be provided annually for all school system stakeholders (including staff, students, parents, coaches, volunteers, and community members) on how to recognize, and how and when to report, threats to the school population or community.

4. Safety Equipment

School employees shall provide students and visitors with safety equipment as required by law and shall enforce school rules pertaining to wearing safety equipment. School employees shall wear and use appropriate safety equipment as required for the safe performance of their specific job assignments.

5. Planning for Emergencies and Conducting Fire Drills and Other Emergency Drills

The board, in coordination with local law enforcement and emergency management agencies, will adopt a school risk management plan relating to incidents of school violence for each school in the school system. The superintendent must provide the Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management (Division) with emergency response information it requests for the school risk management plan and updated emergency response information when such updates are made. The superintendent must also provide the Division and local law enforcement with schematic diagrams, including digital schematic diagrams, of all school facilities and updates of the schematic diagrams when the school system makes substantial facility modifications, such as the addition of new facilities or modifications to doors or windows. Schematic diagrams must meet any standards established by the Center for Safer Schools~~Department of Public Instruction~~ for the preparation and content of the diagrams. In addition, the superintendent shall provide local law enforcement with (1) either keys to the main entrance of all school buildings or emergency access to key storage devices for all school buildings and (2) updated access to school buildings when changes are made to the locks of the main entrances or to the key storage devices.

At least one school-wide tabletop exercise and drill that meets the requirements of

state law and is based on the procedures documented in the school risk management plan will be held annually at each school. Principals shall also conduct fire drills as required by law.

6. Reporting Risks to the School Population

Students should notify any staff member of any acts of violence, harassment, or bullying or any other unusual or suspicious behavior that may endanger safety. Middle and high school students may also use the anonymous safety tip line to report any risks to the school population or buildings. Ongoing student education efforts will aim at minimizing any fear, peer pressure, embarrassment, or other impediments to students reporting potential problems.

Maintaining a safe school environment that is conducive to learning requires staff to be proactive in dealing with violence, harassment, and bullying. Staff members must report immediately to the principal any information regarding unusual or suspicious behavior or acts of violence, harassment, or bullying.

School officials shall investigate and act upon any report of such behavior, including, when appropriate, referring reports to the school threat assessment team and reporting criminal activities to law enforcement, the State Board, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the superintendent or designee (see policies 4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, 4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, 4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations, 4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, 1735/4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited, 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited, and 4335, Criminal Behavior, and 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace).

7. Potential Threats of Registered Sex Offenders

The principal of each school shall register with the North Carolina Sex Offender and Public Protection Registry to receive e-mail notification when a registered sex offender moves within a one-mile radius of the school.

8. Student Behavior Standards

Students are expected to meet behavior standards set forth in Watauga County Board of Education policies.

**E. THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS**

In accordance with G.S. 115C-105.65, the superintendent shall establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team for each school within the school system to identify, assess, and manage behavior of students or others who may pose a risk of violence

or harm to self or others. The threat assessment teams will include, but are not limited to, individuals with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement. When practicable, at least one school psychologist, one staff member knowledgeable about and experienced in working with students with special needs, and one staff member knowledgeable about and experienced in working with students with disabilities will be assigned to each threat assessment team. If a school psychologist is not available, a licensed mental health professional may be assigned instead. A member of each threat assessment team will operate as team leader with the responsibility to ensure adherence to the threat assessment process, ensure proper documentation of reports of threats and threat assessment activities, and facilitate collaborative team discussions to ensure various perspectives are considered.

The superintendent shall designate a school system administrator to oversee the school system's threat assessment program and to serve as liaison between the school system and the North Carolina Center for Safer Schools (CSS). The superintendent or designee shall also establish a committee composed of individuals with expertise in human resources, education, school administration, mental health, and law enforcement that will coordinate and monitor the threat assessment teams operating within the school system.

### 1. Training

All team members will receive behavioral threat assessment and management training annually prior to the start of the school year. Individuals who join the team in the middle of the school year must receive training within 60 calendar days of joining the team.

### 2. Assessment and Intervention

Unless the superintendent establishes a different classification system in the threat assessment protocols developed pursuant to subsection E.4 of this policy, threat assessment teams will use the levels of concern table listed in the behavioral threat assessment and management guidance issued by CSS in assessing the level of threat posed and forming a response to threats.

Upon determining that a student poses a threat, the threat assessment team will develop a written student support, intervention, and monitoring management plan that establishes interventions and specifies required monitoring times of the student based on the level of concern the student presents. To effectively manage and mitigate potential risk, interventions must focus on building resilience and protective factors for the student while also addressing safety concerns.

### 3. Information Sharing

Parents of a student or minor will be notified as soon as practicable that a threat assessment will be or is being conducted on their child. The threat assessment team will contact the parents and provide them the opportunity to participate in the threat

assessment. The team is not required to extend the invitation to participate if the student or minor discloses abuse or neglect from the parent. Once a threat assessment is completed, the team will provide its findings and conclusions to the parents, including any interventions the team is recommending be put in place for the well-being of their child and the school community and any school system or community resources that may be useful for the parents in seeking help for their child.

When the threat assessment team learns that an individual has threatened specific harm to an identifiable potential victim, the team will provide notice of the threat to the potential victim and, if the potential victim is a student or minor, provide notice to the parents.

Any information sharing by, with, or between members of the threat assessment teams will be done in accordance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any other applicable state or federal law. (See policy 2125/7315, Confidential Information). Members of a threat assessment team who are not school system employees must sign a written agreement to adhere to the responsibilities and requirements of FERPA before having access to student records.

#### 4. Threat Assessment Protocols

In consultation with CSS guidance and with established threat assessment teams within the school system, the superintendent shall develop, implement, and update threat assessment protocols and procedures that comply with the requirements of G.S. 115C-105.65. At a minimum, these protocols and procedures will delineate the roles and duties to be performed by designated threat assessment team members, the expertise and training of professionals who will serve on threat assessment teams, the steps to be followed in the threat assessment process, including the implementation of interventions, supports, and community services, the timeframe required to responsibly act upon reported concerns, and the engagement of school resource officers and/or law enforcement in the threat assessment process, and the process of documenting reports of threats and threat assessment activities. The protocols and procedures will differentiate between assessment and intervention at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, as appropriate.

The superintendent or designee shall send a copy of this policy and the threat assessment protocols and procedures to CSS when approved or revised. In addition, the superintendent shall ensure that quantitative data on the activities of all threat assessment teams is reported to CSS as required by G.S. 115C-105.65(g) and CSS guidance.

Legal References: 29 C.F.R. part 1904; G.S. 14-208.18; 95-129(1); 115C-36, -47, -105.49, -105.51, -105.53, -105.54, -105.65, -166, -167, -288, -289.1, -307, -390.3, -391.1, -521, -524, -525; § 13 N.C.A.C. 7A .0301; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0107; State Board of Education Policy SCFC-005

Cross References: Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 1735/4329/7311), Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 4020/7230), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process\_ (policy 4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 4036/7237), Confidential Information (policy 2125/7315), School Improvement Plan (policy 3430), Staff -Student Relations (policy 4040/7310), Student Sex Offenders (policy 4260), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), School Volunteers (policy 5015), Visitors to the Schools (policy 5020), Registered Sex Offenders (policy 5022), Weapons and Explosives Prohibited (policy 5027/7275), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Relationship with Law Enforcement (policy 5120), Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace (policy 7232), Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Science Laboratories (policy 7265), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Security of Facilities (policy 9220)

Other Resources: *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*, U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (January 2007), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/crisisplanning.html>  
<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>;  
*Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management: Best Practice Guidance for North Carolina Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Teams for Harm Prevention*, N.C. Department of Public Instruction Center for Safer Schools (March 2024), available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/best-practice-guidance-north-carolina-behavioral-threat-assessment-and-management-teams-harm>

Adopted: February 9, 2015

Replaces: Policy 5.05.60, Fire Drills and 5.07.80, Threat Against the General Population

Revised: January 28, 2016; August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); February 12, 2018; April 8, 2019; August 9, 2021; {DATE}

## **BULLYING AND HARASSING BEHAVIOR PROHIBITED**

*Policy Code:*     **4329/7311**

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The board is committed to providing a safe, inviting, and civil educational environment for all students, employees, and other members of the school community. The board expects all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors to behave in a manner consistent with that goal. The board recognizes that bullying and harassing behavior creates an atmosphere of intimidation and fear, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious misconduct or to violence. Accordingly, the board prohibits all forms of bullying and harassing behavior, including encouragement of such behavior, by students, employees, volunteers, and visitors. "Visitors" includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school system.

This policy prohibits bullying and harassing behavior, or the encouragement of bullying or harassing behavior, that takes place (1) in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours; (2) on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity; (3) at any bus stop; (4) during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity; (5) through the use of school system technological resources; (6) at any time or place when the student, employee, or other person is subject to the authority of school personnel; or (7) at any time or place when the bullying has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, social, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the educational environment.

### **A.     RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES**

This policy applies to bullying and harassing behavior that is not otherwise prohibited by the following board policies that address discriminatory harassment in violation of federal law:

- Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, policy 1710/4020/7230 (prohibiting harassment based on federally protected characteristics, such as race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age (40 or older), religion, military affiliation, or genetic information)
- Title IX Sexual Harassment—Discrimination – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Grievance Procedures, policy 1725/4035/7236 (prohibiting sexual-based harassment)

Individuals who wish to report bullying or harassing behavior that is based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, or other personal characteristic addressed by the policies above should refer to and follow the reporting processes provided in those policies.

Conduct that may constitute discriminatory harassment under federal law must be addressed first in accordance with the requirements of the applicable policy(ies) listed above. If subsequently, the conduct is determined not to rise to the level of discriminatory harassment prohibited by those policies, the conduct may be addressed under this policy. Conduct that does not rise to the level of bullying or harassing behavior as defined and prohibited in this policy may nevertheless violate other board policies or school rules.

**B. CONDUCT THAT IS CONSIDERED BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR**

1. Bullying is deliberate conduct intended to harm another person or group of persons. It is characterized by repeated unwanted aggressive behavior that typically involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, such as a difference in physical size, strength, social standing, intellectual ability, or authority. It may consist of either physical, verbal, or nonverbal behavior. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that is carried out using electronic communication media, such as words, action, or conduct conveyed through email, instant messages, text messages, tweets, blogs, photo or video sharing, chat rooms, or websites, and may exist in the absence of a power imbalance typical of other forms of bullying.
2. Harassing behavior is conduct that is intimidating, hostile, or abusive, or is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Harassing behavior may violate this policy even if no harm is intended to the target and no power imbalance is evident.
3. Bullying or harassing behavior includes conduct that is, or reasonably appears to be, motivated by actual or perceived differentiating personal characteristics, or by a person's association with someone who has or is perceived to have a differentiating personal characteristic. Differentiating personal characteristics include, but are not limited to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability. Bullying and harassing behavior can violate this policy regardless of a student's motivation.
4. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassing behavior are repeated acts of disrespect, intimidation, or threats, such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory or lewd comments, spreading rumors, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, offensive touching, physical interference with normal work or movement, visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons, and sharing intimate photos or video of a person or sharing photos or videos that may subject a person to ridicule or insult.
5. Other behaviors that may constitute bullying or harassing behavior under this policy are deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature, pressure for sexual activity, offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, verbal remarks about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual, or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials.

6. These examples are not exhaustive but are intended to illustrate the wide range of behavior that may constitute bullying and harassing behavior.
7. Conduct such as the following is not considered bullying or harassing behavior: legitimate pedagogical techniques, the exercise of legitimate authority, and academic or work performance monitoring and evaluation.

**C. WHEN BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR VIOLATES THIS POLICY**

Not all conduct that may be described as bullying or harassing behavior violates this policy. Bullying or harassing behavior violates this policy when any pattern of repeated gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or threatening communication:

1. places a student, an employee, or other person in actual and reasonable fear of harm to their person or property; or
2. creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

"Hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

The definition of bullying and harassing behavior in this section is intended to be no less inclusive than the definition of bullying and harassing behavior in G.S. 115C-407.15.

Bullying or harassing behavior based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age (40 or older), military affiliation, or genetic information may also constitute discriminatory harassment in violation of federal law and other board policies as described in Section A, above.

**D. REPORTING BULLYING AND HARASSING BEHAVIOR**

1. Reports by Students and/or Parents and Guardians
  - a. The board encourages students or parents/guardians of students who have been the victim of or who have witnessed bullying or harassing behavior in violation of this policy to immediately report such incidents to a teacher, counselor, coach, assistant principal, or the principal.
  - b. Reports may be made orally or in writing and may be made anonymously.
  - c. All reports of serious violations and complaints made under this policy will

be investigated expeditiously. Anonymous reports will be investigated to the extent reasonably possible under the circumstances.

- d. If, at any time, school officials determine that the alleged bullying or harassing behavior appears to be based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age (40 or older), military affiliation, or genetic information, the matter will be investigated in accordance with the applicable policy listed in Section A above.

2. **Mandatory Reporting by School Employees**

An employee who witnesses or who has reliable information that a student or other individual has been bullied or harassed in violation of this policy must report the incident to his or her supervisor or to the building principal immediately. If sex-based harassment is suspected, the employee also must report the incident to the Title IX coordinator. An employee who does not promptly report possible bullying or harassing behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.

3. **Reporting by Other Third Parties**

Other members of the school community may report incidents of bullying or harassment to the school principal or the superintendent or designee.

4. **Reporting False Allegations**

It is a violation of board policy to knowingly report false allegations of bullying or harassing behavior. A student or employee found to knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to disciplinary action.

**E. REPORTS OF BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR BASED ON A FEDERALLY PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC**

Bullying or harassing behavior that is based on a federally protected characteristic, such as sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age (40 or older), military affiliation, or genetic information, may constitute discriminatory harassment that is a violation of the individual's civil rights. A school employee who receives a report of bullying or harassing behavior that may constitute sex-based harassment must immediately contact the Title IX coordinator. If the reported behavior appears to be based on any other federally protected characteristic, the employee must immediately notify the appropriate civil rights coordinator designated in policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law. Uncertainty as to whether alleged bullying or harassing behavior is based on a federally protected characteristic should be resolved by notifying the Title IX Coordinator.

**F. RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR**

1. Reports of bullying and harassing behavior or the encouragement of such behavior under this policy will be investigated promptly by the principal or designee or site supervisor and addressed in accordance with this policy and policy 4340, School-Level Investigations, when appropriate. If the principal or site supervisor is the alleged perpetrator, the superintendent will designate an appropriate investigator.
2. If at any time before, during, or after the investigation under this policy, the investigator determines or suspects that the alleged bullying or harassing behavior is based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, or religion, the investigator shall notify the appropriate civil rights coordinator and proceed in accordance with the applicable board policy as described in Section A, above. However, referral to the civil rights coordinator will not preclude appropriate disciplinary consequences for a violation of this policy if, following the designated investigation and resolution process under the appropriate board policy, the behavior is determined not to constitute discriminatory harassment in violation of federal law.
3. No reprisals or retaliation of any kind are permitted as a result of good faith reports of bullying or harassing behavior. An employee who engages in reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. A student who does so is subject to disciplinary consequences as provided in Section G, below.

#### **G. CONSEQUENCES**

##### **1. Students**

The disciplinary consequences for violations of this policy should take into consideration the frequency of incidents, the developmental age of the student involved, and the severity of the conduct and must be consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for violations of this policy.

A student who is convicted under G.S. 14-458.2 of cyberbullying a school employee will be transferred to another school. If there is no other appropriate school within the school system, the student will be transferred to a different class or assigned to a teacher who was not involved as a victim of the cyberbullying. The superintendent may modify the required transfer of an individual student on a case-by-case basis and shall provide a written statement of this modification in the student's record.

##### **2. Employees**

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### 3. Others

Volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement, as appropriate, in accordance with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools. A third party under the supervision and control of the school system will be subject to termination of contracts/agreements, restricted from school property, and/or subject to other consequences, as appropriate.

## H. OTHER INTERVENTIONS

Interventions designed to remediate the impact of a violation of this policy and to restore a positive school climate will be provided as determined necessary by school officials.

## I. NOTICE

This policy must be provided to employees, students, and parents, guardians, and caregivers at the beginning of each school year. Notice of this policy must be included in the Code of Student Conduct and in all student and employee handbooks. Principals are encouraged to post a copy or summary of this policy in each classroom and in a prominent location within the school building and to make an age-appropriate summary of the policy available to elementary students. Information about this policy must also be incorporated into employee training programs.

## J. RECORDS

The superintendent or designee shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of bullying or harassing behavior under this policy. The records must identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The superintendent also shall maintain records of any remedial interventions or other steps taken by the school system to provide an environment free of bullying.

Legal References: G.S. 14-458.2; 115C-105.51, -366.4, -407.15 through -407.18

Cross References: Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 1710/4020/7230), Title IX Sexual Harassment-Discrimination – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process/Grievance Procedures (policy 1725/4035/7236), School-Level Investigations (policy 4340), Visitors to the Schools (policy 5020)

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: November 8, 2021; February 10, 2025; DATE

## **PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES**

*Policy Code:* 4023/7233

### **A. STUDENTS**

#### **1. Nondiscrimination**

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) will provide all pregnant and parenting students with the same educational instruction as other students or its equivalent. ~~Pregnant and parenting s~~Students will not be discriminated against or excluded from school or from any program, class, or extracurricular activity based on the students’ current, potential, or past pregnancy or related conditions or because they are pregnant or parenting students. For purposes of this policy, “pregnancy or related conditions” means pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or lactation; medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or lactation; or recovery from pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions.

#### **2. General Requirements**

School administrators shall provide assistance and support to encourage pregnant and parenting students to remain enrolled in school and graduate. In accordance with state law, school system officials shall use, as needed, supplemental funds from the At-Risk Student Services allotment to support programs for pregnant and parenting students. Students who are pregnant or parenting will be given excused absences from school for pregnancy and related conditions for the length of time the students’ physicians find medically necessary and for absences due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the custodial parent. Homework and make-up work will be made available to pregnant and parenting students to ensure that they have the opportunity to keep current with assignments and avoid losing course credit because of their absence from school. To the extent necessary, a homebound teacher will be assigned.

#### **3. Providing Title IX Coordinator Contact and Other Information**

When a student or student’s parent or guardian informs any school system employee of the student’s pregnancy or related conditions, the employee shall promptly provide that person with the Title IX coordinator’s contact information and inform that person that the Title IX coordinator can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure the student’s equal access to the school system’s education program or activity. The employee does not need to provide such information if the employee reasonably believes that the Title IX coordinator has already been notified of the student’s pregnancy or related conditions.

#### 4. Specific Actions to Prevent Discrimination and Ensure Equal Access

Once a student or student's parent or guardian notifies the Title IX coordinator of the student's pregnancy or related conditions, the Title IX coordinator must coordinate the following specific actions designed to promptly and effectively prevent sex discrimination and ensure access to the school system's education program or activity:

- a. inform the student (and, if applicable, the student's parent or guardian) of the school system's Title IX obligations under 34 C.F.R. 106.40(b)(1) through (5) and 34 C.F.R. 106.44(i) and provide the student (and, if applicable, the student's parent or guardian) the school system's notice of nondiscrimination on the basis of sex (see policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex);
- b. consult with the student in order to offer, based on the student's individualized needs, reasonable modifications to school system policies, practices, or procedures, as necessary, and implement each reasonable modification offered by the school system and accepted by the student;
- c. allow the student to voluntarily access any separate and comparable portion of the school system's education program or activity provided that the separate portion is comparable to that offered to students who are not pregnant and who do not have related conditions;
- d. allow the student to voluntarily take a leave of absence from the school system education program or activity to cover, at a minimum, the period of time deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider and when the student returns following the voluntary absence, reinstate the student to the academic status and, as practicable, to the extracurricular status that the student held when the absence began; and
- e. ensure that the student can access, as needed, a lactation space, other than a bathroom, that is clean, shielded from view, free from intrusion by others, and may be used for expressing breast milk or breastfeeding.

Supporting documentation or certifications will not be required unless necessary, reasonable, and legally permissible.~~except as permitted by law.~~

#### B. EMPLOYEES

The board prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of current, potential, or past pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Pregnancy or related conditions will be treated as any other temporary medical conditions for all job-related purposes. (See also policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace.) Pregnant and

~~nursing employees will be provided accommodations as required by law.~~

1. Reasonable Accommodations for Pregnancy-Related Limitations

In accordance with the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, qualifying applicants and employees with known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions will be provided reasonable accommodations, unless the accommodation demonstrably would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the school system. No adverse action will be taken against an applicant or employee for requesting or using a reasonable accommodation.

The superintendent shall ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to implement this requirement.

2. Break Time to Express Milk

~~For one year a~~After the birth of an employee's child, the employee will be provided reasonable break times to express breast milk for the child or breastfeed as needed for at least one year after the child's birth~~each time the employee has need to express milk~~. The principal at each school and the site supervisor at other school system buildings and facilities will designate a place, other than a bathroom, that the employee may use to express milk or breastfeed. Any designated place must be functional as a space for expressing milk or breastfeeding, shielded from view, and free from intrusion from others.

Legal References: Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. 117-328, div. II - Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, 29 C.F.R. pt. 1636; Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 201, *et seq.*; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e *et seq.*, 29 C.F.R. pt. 1604; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; G.S. 115C-375.5

Cross References: Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Equal Educational Opportunities (policy 4001), Attendance (policy 4400), ~~Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace (policy 7232)~~

Adopted: July 14, 2014, replaces policy 5.05.55

Revised: January 11, 2021 (Legal references only); June 19, 2023; {DATE}

## **CHILD ABUSE AND RELATED THREATS TO CHILD SAFETY**

*Policy Code:* **4240/7312**

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The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) is concerned with the health, safety, and welfare of all children and recognizes the legal and ethical obligations that school employees, contractors, and volunteers have to report known or suspected maltreatment of children. North Carolina has two separate systems that mandate reports to state authorities of suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency, or maltreatment and a third system for mandated reporting of certain crimes against juveniles to local law enforcement.

When a parent or other caretaker is suspected to have caused a child to be abused, neglected, or dependent, this information must be reported to the county child welfare agency. Suspected human trafficking, involuntary servitude, and sexual servitude of a child and death of a child as a result of maltreatment are special forms of child abuse under law and must be reported to the county child welfare agency, regardless of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. By contrast, suspected child maltreatment by a caregiver in a child care facility, including in a licensed preschool classroom or other licensed classroom or program operated by the school system, must be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). When the source of the harm or threat of harm to the child is uncertain, a report should be made to both the county child welfare agency and DCDEE.

In addition, state law mandates reports to local law enforcement when a child is a victim of certain violent offenses, sexual offenses, or misdemeanor child abuse. An adult who knows or reasonably should have known of any of these offenses inflicted upon a child must report that information immediately.

The board supports all employees who in good faith make a report under North Carolina’s mandated reporting laws.

The superintendent shall develop any necessary procedures for making a report or otherwise implementing this policy.

### **A. DUTY TO REPORT CERTAIN CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT**

A school employee, contractor, or volunteer is legally required to report to local law enforcement when the employee or volunteer knows or reasonably should know that a child has been a victim of any of the following crimes:

1. a sexual offense (which for purposes of this policy, the board interprets to mean any offense that relates to inappropriate sexual conduct with or involving a child);
2. an offense that inflicts serious bodily injury or serious physical injury upon the child by nonaccidental means;

3. an attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit either offense described above, or aiding and abetting either offense; or
4. misdemeanor child abuse, which occurs when a parent or any other person providing care or supervision to a child who is under the age of sixteen (1) inflicts or allows to be inflicted physical injury to the child by nonaccidental means or (2) creates or allows a substantial risk of physical injury to the child by nonaccidental means.

Compliance with this reporting requirement does not relieve the employee or volunteer from his or her duty to report pursuant to Sections B and C of this policy. The employee, contractor, or volunteer also shall immediately report the case to the principal.

A school employee, contractor, or volunteer is immune by statute from any state civil and/or criminal liability when making a report in good faith under this Section. An employee who fails to report or who prevents another person from making a report is subject to disciplinary action by the school system and civil and criminal action under the law. A volunteer or contractor who fails to report or prevents another person from making a report may be restricted from school property or lose the privilege of volunteering for or contracting with the school system and is subject to civil and criminal action under the law.

**B. DUTY TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, DEPENDENCY, OR DEATH AS A RESULT OF MALTREATMENT TO THE COUNTY CHILD WELFARE AGENCY**

A school employee, contractor, or volunteer who knows or has cause to suspect that (1) a parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker of a child has caused the child to be abused, neglected, or dependent, or (2) that a child has died as a result of maltreatment or been a victim of human trafficking, involuntary servitude, or sexual servitude by any person is legally required to report the case to the director of social services. The employee, contractor, or volunteer also shall immediately report the case to the principal. Any doubt about reporting a suspected situation must be resolved in favor of reporting, and the report must be made immediately.

A school employee, contractor, or volunteer is immune by statute from any civil and/or criminal liability when making a report in good faith under this Section. An employee who fails to report or who prevents another person from making a report is subject to disciplinary action by the school system and civil and criminal action under the law. A volunteer or contractor who fails to report or prevents another person from making a report may be restricted from school property or lose the privilege of volunteering for or contracting with the school system and is subject to civil and criminal action under the law.

**C. DUTY TO REPORT CHILD MALTREATMENT IN A CHILD CARE FACILITY TO THE DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY EDUCATION**

A school employee, contractor, or volunteer who has cause to suspect that a child in a child care facility has been maltreated by a caregiver or has died as a result of maltreatment occurring in a child care facility is legally required to report the case to DCDEE.

A "child care facility" includes any DHHS-licensed classroom or program operated by the school system, including for example, licensed pre-school or Title I classrooms, licensed afterschool programs, and licensed developmental day programs.

Any doubt about reporting a suspected situation or uncertainty whether the child's care is being provided in a child care facility must be resolved in favor of reporting, and the report should be made immediately.

An employee making a report to DCDEE also shall immediately report the case to the principal. If the suspected maltreatment occurred in a licensed preschool classroom or other licensed classroom or program operated by board, the principal shall immediately notify the superintendent of the suspected maltreatment. No reprisals of any kind may be taken against an employee who makes a good faith report of child maltreatment occurring in any licensed preschool classroom or other licensed classroom or program operated by the board.

An employee who fails to make a report as required by law and this policy may be subject to disciplinary action by the school system. In addition, if the employee works in a licensed preschool classroom or other licensed classroom or program operated by the board, failure to report maltreatment of a child in the program or classroom may itself constitute child maltreatment and result in the employee being placed on the state child maltreatment registry. A volunteer or contractor who fails to report or prevents another person from making a report may be restricted from school property or lose the privilege of volunteering for or contracting with the school system.

**D. DUTY TO REPORT LICENSED EMPLOYEES TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

In addition to the other reporting requirements of this policy, administrators shall report to the State Board of Education certain misconduct by licensed employees involving a child and resulting in termination of employment, nonrenewal of an employment contract, dismissal, suspension without pay, -disciplinary action, or resignation in accordance with Section F of policy 7130, Licensure.

**E. COOPERATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES**

1. The principal may establish a contact person in the school to act as a liaison with state and local agencies charged with investigating reports made pursuant to this policy.

2. Employees shall cooperate fully with agency personnel conducting an investigation.
3. In a case under the jurisdiction of local law enforcement in which the child's parent, guardian, or custodian is suspected of wrongdoing, employees shall permit the child to be interviewed by local law enforcement on school campuses during school hours. Otherwise, permission from the parent, guardian, or custodian must be obtained before the child may be interviewed by local law enforcement on school campus during school hours.
4. In a case under the jurisdiction of social services, employees shall permit the child to be interviewed by social services on school campuses during school hours.
5. In a case under the jurisdiction of DCDEE concerning suspected child maltreatment by a caregiver in a child care facility, permission from the parent must be obtained before the child may be interviewed on school campus during school hours.
6. Employees shall provide confidential information to agency personnel, so long as the disclosure does not violate state or federal law.
7. Any confidential information disclosed by the investigating agency to employees must remain confidential and may be redisclosed only for purposes directly connected with carrying out the responsibilities of the school system or the employee.

**F. SHARING INFORMATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

Upon request and to the extent permitted by law, school system officials shall share with other agencies designated in G.S. 7B-3100(a) information that is relevant to (1) any assessment by the department of social services of a report of child abuse, neglect, dependency or death as a result of maltreatment; (2) the provision or arrangement of protective services in a child abuse, neglect, or dependency case by the department of social services; or (3) any case in which a petition is filed alleging that a juvenile is abused, neglected, dependent, undisciplined, or delinquent. School system officials and the designated agencies must continue to share such information until the protective services case is closed by the department of social services or, if a petition is filed, until the juvenile is no longer subject to the jurisdiction of juvenile court.

**G. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEX TRAFFICKING TRAINING PROGRAM**

In even numbered years, the school system will provide a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking education and awareness training program for teachers, instructional support personnel, principals, and assistant principals. The program will include at least two hours of training related to best practices from the field of prevention, the grooming process of sexual predators, the warning signs of sexual abuse and sex trafficking, how to intervene when sexual abuse or sex trafficking is suspected or disclosed, legal responsibilities for

reporting sexual abuse or sex trafficking, and available resources for assistance. Designated school personnel shall participate in such training as required by law and board policy.

#### **H. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

In accordance with G.S. 115C-47(65) and State Board of Education Policy SHLT-003, the school system will provide information on child abuse and neglect, including age-appropriate information on sexual abuse, to students in grades 6 through 12. Such information will be provided in the form of (1) a document given to all students in grades 6 through 12 at the beginning of each school year, (2) a display posted in visible, high-traffic areas throughout each secondary school, and (3) a video produced by the Center for Safer Schools shown to all students in grades 6 through 12 no more than five days after the first day of the school year.

Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 7B-101, -301, -302, -309, -3100; 8-53.4; 14-208.6, -318.2, -318.4, -318.6; 110-90.2, -105.3, -105.4, -105.5; 115C-12(47), 47(65), -270.35(b), -326.20, -375.20, -400, -402; 126-5; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C.0608; 16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0403; State Board of Education Policy SHLT-003

Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 7800), Staff-Student Relations (policy 4040/7310), Student Records (policy 4700), Licensure (policy 7130)

Adopted: July 14, 2014

Revised: July 9, 2018; September 9, 2019; January 13, 2020; March 12, 2020; August 9, 2021; May 8, 2023; April 16, 2024; July 11, 2024; DATE

Except as otherwise provided by law, all monies collected or received by an officer, employee or agent of the school system or an individual school must be deposited in accordance with this policy. Each officer, employee and agent of the school system or individual school whose duty it is to collect or receive any taxes or other monies shall ensure such collections and receipts are deposited daily. However, if the amount on hand is less than ~~\$250.00~~ ~~\$1500.00~~, daily deposits are encouraged but are not required. On any day when the deposit exceeds ~~\$250.00~~ ~~\$1500.00~~, the deposit shall be made on that day. Regardless of the amount on hand, all funds must be deposited at the end of each school week and on the last business day of each month. All deposits must be made with the finance officer or designee or in an official depository. Deposits in an official depository must be reported immediately to the finance officer or individual school treasurer by means of a duplicate deposit ticket.

Unless not feasible in a particular circumstance, the finance officer shall provide for sufficient segregation of duties to ensure that the individual making a deposit is not the same individual who collects, prepares, and/or records the deposit. All moneys collected, but not promptly deposited shall be kept in a secured drawer, cabinet, or safe with access limited to an authorized officer, employee, or agent. Authorized individuals shall be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve adequate internal controls and segregation of duties as determined appropriate by the finance officer.

The finance officer may at any time audit the accounts of any officer, employee or agent who collects or receives any taxes or other monies and may prescribe the form and detail of these accounts. The accounts of such an officer, employee or agent must be audited at least annually.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-445

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Replaces: Policy 6.04, Management of Funds (in part)

Revised: September 10, 2018;

## **RESCIND DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

*Policy Code:*

**7232**

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

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

### **A. DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED**

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

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

### **B. HARASSMENT PROHIBITED**

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

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

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

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

~~with work performance.~~

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

### **~~C. SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROHIBITED~~**

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

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

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

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

### **~~D. REPORTING DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT~~**

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

**E. RETALIATION PROHIBITED**

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

~~Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 110; Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e *et seq.*, 29 C.F.R. pt. 1604; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. 4301 *et seq.*; *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 590 U.S. \_\_\_, 140 S. Ct. 1731 (2020); G.S. 9-32; 50B-5.5; 95-28.1, 28.2, 241; 110-136.8; 127A-201 *et seq.*; 130A-148; 143-422.2; 143B-1033~~

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

~~Adopted: August 12, 2020~~

~~Revised: April 12, 2021; July 26, 2021; December 11, 2023 (Legal references only)~~

~~Rescinded: DATE~~

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

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

**A. AUTHORIZATION OF SCHOOL TRIPS**

A school trip occurs when a student or group of students leaves a school campus under the sponsorship of the school and under the supervision of school employees to extend the educational experiences of that student or group. This includes such trips taken by extracurricular groups but does not include trips by athletic teams to participate in athletic events or competitions that are part of the team's regular season or playoffs. The principal must approve all school trips in advance. School trips that involve travel out of state and/or an overnight stay must also receive prior approval from the superintendent or designee. School trips that require travel outside of the continental United States are prohibited. The superintendent shall develop procedures for the request and approval of school trips.

**B. PARENTAL NOTICE AND CONSENT**

All students who participate in a school trip must provide signed parental consent forms to participate, unless a student is officially emancipated, in which case the student can consent on his or her own behalf. A student who fails to provide a signed consent form may be denied participation in the trip. No student's grade may be lowered or raised based on parental consent to participate in the school trip. The superintendent shall develop procedures to ensure parents are given proper notice of trip details and that parents provide signed authorization and consent regarding their child's participation and care during the trip.

Students are prohibited from sharing sleeping quarters with anyone of the other biological sex as defined in G.S. 12-3.3 during a school trip unless (1) the member of the other biological sex is the student's immediate family member (i.e., a parent, sibling, or grandparent, including step or half relationships) or (2) the parents of all students sharing the sleeping quarters have provided written permission to the school.

**C. COSTS**

Students must not be charged a fee for any trip that is an extension of the curriculum. The board may impose fees for other school trips. Pursuant to policy 4600, Student Fees, and any corresponding fee waiver or reduction procedures, any fees imposed for school trips will be waived or reduced for students who demonstrate real economic hardship.

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**D. STUDENT SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE**

Policy 1510/4200/7270, School Safety, applies to all students, school employees, and volunteers while they are taking part in school trips. Students are also subject to the student behavior policies in the 4300 series, the Code of Student Conduct, and all school rules while participating in a school trip. The superintendent shall develop any additional regulations necessary to ensure student safety, provide adequate supervision, and clarify student behavior standards.

**E. TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS**

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

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

The superintendent shall develop any necessary additional regulations governing transportation on school trips.

**F. CHAPERONES AND VOLUNTEERS**

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

**G. NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED TRIPS**

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

Non-school sponsored trips may be promoted or advertised in the schools only in accordance with policy 5240, Advertising in the Schools. Promotional materials may be displayed or distributed in the schools only in accordance with policy 5210, Distribution and Display of Non-School Material. All promotional materials for non-school sponsored trips must prominently state that the trip is not sponsored or endorsed by the school or school system. Moreover, any employee who sponsors or recruits students for a non-school sponsored trip shall notify the students and their parents or guardians that the trip is not sponsored or endorsed by the school or school system and shall obtain a signed

acknowledgement from each parent that the trip is not school-sponsored.

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

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

Students will not be required to participate in any non-school sponsored trip. Students are discouraged from participating in non-school sponsored trips that conflict with instructional school days or are scheduled fewer than 10 school days prior to final exams or other state-mandated assessments. Absences for non-school sponsored trips will be designated as excused or unexcused in accordance with policy 4400, Attendance.

Legal References: G.S. 12-3.3; 115C-47, -76.110, -288, -307, State Board of Education Policy TRAN-009

Cross References: School Safety (policy 1510/4200/7270), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Attendance (policy 4400), Student Fees (policy 4600), School Volunteers (policy 5015), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030), Distribution and Display of Non-School Material (policy 5210), Advertising in the Schools (policy 5240), Drivers (policy 6315), Use of Student Transportation Services (policy 6320), Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts (policy 6340), Contracts with the Board (policy 6420)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Revised: August 14, 2017; April 16, 2024

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

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

*Policy Code:*

**3620**

The board recognizes the value of interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities in promoting leadership and team skills, practicing democratic principles, and encouraging the lifelong learning process. Students are encouraged to participate in opportunities available at the school, including interscholastic athletics and student organizations. All activities are open to all students attending that school unless a restriction is justified and has been approved by the principal. The principal shall ensure that students and parents are notified of the various opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities and shall establish rules, as necessary, to govern such activities.

### **A. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Participation in extracurricular activities, including student organizations and interscholastic athletics, is a privilege, not a right, and may be reserved for students in good academic standing who meet behavior standards established by the board, the superintendent, or the school. Participation in extracurricular activities may be restricted if a student (1) is not performing at grade level as provided in policy 3400, Evaluation of Student Progress; (2) has failed to meet any applicable attendance requirements; (3) has violated the student conduct standards found in the 4300 series of policies; or (4) has violated school rules for conduct. School administrators choosing to exercise this authority to restrict participation shall provide this policy and any additional rules, including attendance requirements, developed by the superintendent or the principal to all parents, guardians, and students.

### **B. ADDITIONAL RULES FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**

#### **1. Interscholastic Athletics**

##### **a. General Rules**

In addition to meeting the general requirements listed above, to be eligible for interscholastic athletics participation, students must meet all applicable eligibility standards of law and the State Board of Education as well as any locally established requirements for interscholastic athletics participation.

##### **b. Participation by Sixth Graders**

Students in the sixth grade are eligible to participate in all interscholastic athletics except tackle football.

##### **c. Students Who Transfer Schools Within the School System**

It is the policy of the board that a student who transfers from one school in

the school system to another school in the school system will be immediately eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at the new school, if otherwise permitted under the rules of the State Board of Education.

d. Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) Agreements

A student participating in interscholastic athletics may enter an agreement to use the student's name, image, or likeness subject to the requirements of 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0211.

e. Home School Students

Any home school student whose primary residence (as defined in 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0207) is in the school system and who is dually enrolled in accordance with the school system's enrollment and assignment policies and procedures is eligible to participate in high school interscholastic athletics if the student complies with the requirements of this subsection and meets all applicable eligibility standards of law and the State Board of Education as well as any applicable locally established requirements for interscholastic athletics participation.

The student must present a home school card from the Division of Non-Public Education for the previous and current years as well as a transcript, attendance record, and immunization records. Prior to the first date of practice, the student must provide the results of a nationally standardized achievement test, taken within the last year, that indicates the student was on grade level at the time the test was taken. The student must also present proof of catastrophic accident insurance coverage unless the student is covered under the board's catastrophic athletic accident insurance policy.

The student must have been enrolled in a registered home school for 365 days prior to participation in athletics. Once dually enrolled and deemed eligible to participate in athletics, the student must maintain continuous dual enrollment. Failure to maintain continuous dual enrollment would render the student ineligible for athletic participation for 365 days.

The student must participate in a class schedule at the assigned school that is at least one half of the assigned school's instructional day. At least one class must be taken on campus each semester. The student must pass all classes in which the student is enrolled at the assigned school in order to maintain athletic eligibility.

The student must notify the principal of the assigned school in writing of the student's intent to try out for an athletic team at least 10 days prior to the first practice date of each sport season in which the student wishes to

participate. Failure to comply with this requirement renders the student ineligible for that sport season.

## 2. Student-Initiated, Noncurriculum-Related Student Groups at the Secondary Level

Student-initiated, noncurriculum-related, secondary school student groups will be permitted to conduct voluntary meetings on school grounds during noninstructional time, regardless of the size of the group or the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at the meetings, provided that the meetings do not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational activities of the school. The principal shall establish viewpoint neutral rules governing such meetings, including restrictions on when and where meetings may occur.

School employees may not promote, lead, or participate in student-initiated meetings but may be present at meetings to maintain order and discipline, to protect the well-being of the students and faculty, and to assure that attendance of students at the meetings is voluntary. School employees may not influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity or require any person to participate in prayer or other religious activity. In addition, non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend the activities of the groups.

No public funds will be expended on behalf of the student-initiated, noncurriculum-related student groups except for the incidental cost of providing space for the group meetings.

Student-initiated, noncurriculum-related groups will have the same access to communication channels for publicizing their meetings as is allowed to all other noncurriculum-related student groups. However, school officials may indicate in such communications that the meetings are not sponsored by the school.

For purposes of this subsection, a noncurriculum-related student group is one that is not directly related to the curriculum. A student group will be considered curriculum-related only if (1) the group's subject matter is taught in a regularly offered course or relates to the curriculum as a whole; (2) participation in the group is required as part of a course; or (3) participation in the group results in course credit.

## 3. Overnight Trips

Students are prohibited from sharing sleeping quarters with anyone of the other biological sex as defined in G.S. 12-3.3 during any activity or event authorized by the school unless (1) the member of the other biological sex is the student's immediate family member (i.e., a parent, sibling, or grandparent, including step or

half relationships) or (2) the parents of all students sharing the sleeping quarters have provided written permission to the school.

### C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

#### 1. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities must be accorded the legal rights required by federal and state law.

#### 2. Children of Military Families

School administrators shall facilitate the inclusion and participation in extracurricular activities of children of military families, as defined in policy 4050, Children of Military Families, transferring into the school, to the extent they are otherwise qualified, by:

- a. providing information about extracurricular activities to incoming children of military families; and
- b. waiving application deadlines.

### D. APPEALS PROCESS

The grievance procedure provided in policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure, may be utilized by parents or students who believe that a student has been aggrieved by a decision made pursuant to this policy.

Legal References: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12132, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 4071-4074; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 300; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; G.S. 12-3.3; 115C art. 9, 115C-12(23), -47(4), -76.110, -390.2, -407.5, -407.55, -407.59, -407.60, -407.65, -407.70, -407.75; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0207, .0208, .0211; State Board of Education Policy ATHL-001; *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000; N.C. High School Athletic Association Handbook, available at <https://www.nchsaa.org/handbook>; Middle/Junior High School Athletic Manual (NCDPI), available at <http://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/programs-and-initiatives/nc-healthy-schools/athletics>

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Evaluation of Student Progress (policy 3400), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), School Improvement Plan (policy 3430), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy 4120), Homeless Students (policy 4125), School Assignment (policy 4150), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy 4250/5075/7316), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Attendance (policy 4400), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030)

Adopted: March 21, 2016

Revised: June 13, 2016; September 11, 2017; November 9, 2020; March 8, 2021; August 9, 2021; March 13, 2023; July 11, 2024; November 12, 2024;

The board recognizes the critical role of parents in the education of their children and in the schools. The board directs school administrators to develop programs that will promote and support parental involvement in student learning and achievement at school and at home and encourage successful progress toward graduation. Each parent is encouraged to learn about the educational program, the educational goals and objectives of the school system, and his or her own child's progress. The board also encourages parents to participate in their children's education and in activities designed by school personnel to involve them, such as parent conferences, in order to foster effective teacher and parent communication. Parents are responsible for cooperating with school employees to facilitate their children's compliance with board policies concerning homework, school attendance, and behavior.

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

**A. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PLANS**

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

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

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

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2. Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plan

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

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

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

**B. PARENT COMMUNICATION, PARTICIPATION, AND CONFERENCES**

1. Communication with Parents

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

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

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

The principal or designee shall strive, through oral or written communication or

other means, to include the parents of students identified as at-risk in the implementation and review of academic and/or behavioral interventions for their children, in accordance with policy 3405, Students at Risk of Academic Failure.

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

2. Parent Participation at Schools

The board encourages parents to engage in activities in their children's schools. Parents are welcome to visit schools in accordance with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools, and, if interested, are urged to participate in school volunteer programs as described in policy 5015, School Volunteers. In addition, opportunities exist for parents to participate on school advisory councils, such as the school health advisory council (see policy 6140, Student Wellness), school improvement teams (see policy 3430, School Improvement Plan), school media and technology advisory committees (see policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials), and the business advisory council (see policy 2670, Business Advisory Council).

3. Conferences

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

**C. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

1. Title I Notifications

Each principal or designee of a Title I school shall effectively notify parents of all parental rights and other required information regarding Title I schools and programs, in accordance with federal law. Parents of students in Title I schools shall receive a copy of the system-wide Title I parent and family engagement policy (policy 1320/3560) and the school-wide parent involvement plan.

2. Parent Guide for Student Achievement

Each year, the superintendent or designee shall create a parent guide for student achievement that meets the requirements of state law and the State Board of Education. All parents will receive a written copy of the guide, and information in

the guide will be discussed at the beginning of each school year in meetings of students, parents, and teachers.

At a minimum the guide will include the following:

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

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(Part 2A of Article 39 of Chapter 115C) and for personal education student accounts for students with disabilities (Article 41 of Chapter 115C);

- g. rights of students who have been identified as students with disabilities, as provided in Article 9 of Chapter 115C;
- h. contact information for school and unit offices;
- i. resources for information on the importance of student health and other available resources for parents, including the following information on available immunizations and vaccinations: (1) a recommended immunization schedule in accordance with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations; and (2) information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza, including the causes, symptoms, and vaccines, how the diseases are spread, and places where parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children as required by G.S. 115C-375.4; and
- j. this policy (policy 1310/4002, Parental Involvement); policy 1320/3560, Title I Parent and Family Engagement; policy 2670, Business Advisory Council; policy 3210, Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials; policy 3430, School Improvement Plan; policy 3540, Comprehensive Health Education Program; policy 4400, Attendance; policy 5015, School Volunteers; policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools; and policy 6140, Student Wellness.

3. Additional Annual Notifications

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

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

- e. student behavior policies, the Code of Student Conduct, and school standards and rules (see policies in the 4300 series);
- f. the permissible use of seclusion and restraint in the schools (see regulation 4302-R, Rules for Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools);
- g. policy 1735/4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited;
- h. policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure;
- i. the dates of the system-wide and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year, how the results from the tests will be used, and whether each test is required by the State Board of Education or by the local board;
- j. grading practices that will be followed at the school and, for parents of high school students, the method of computing the grade point averages that will be used for determining class rank (see policies 3400, Evaluation of Student Progress, and 3450, Class Rankings);
- k. available opportunities and the enrollment process for students to take advanced courses and information explaining the value of taking advanced courses;
- l. if applicable, that their child will be provided advanced learning opportunities in mathematics or will be placed in an advanced mathematics course;
- m. when a student initially creates a career development plan, that the plan has been created and information on how to access the plan;
- n. a clear and concise explanation of the North Carolina testing and accountability system that includes all information required by federal law;
- o. a report containing information about the school system and each school, including, but not limited to:
  - i. the following information both in the aggregate and disaggregated by category: student achievement, graduation rates, performance on other school quality and/or student success indicators, the progress of students toward meeting long-term goals established by the state, student performance on measures of school climate and safety, and, as available, the rate of enrollment in post-secondary education;
  - ii. the performance of the school system on academic assessments as

compared to the state as a whole and the performance of each school on academic assessments as compared to the state and school system as a whole;

- iii. the percentage and number of students who are:
  - 1. assessed,
  - 2. assessed using alternate assessments,
  - 3. involved in preschool and accelerated coursework programs, and
  - 4. English learners achieving proficiency;
- iv. the per pupil expenditures of federal, state, and local funds; and
- v. teacher qualifications;
- p. the grade earned by the school on the most recent annual report card issued for it by the State Board of Education if the grade was a D or F;
- q. if the school and/or the school system is identified by the State Board of Education as low-performing, the notifications required by G.S. 115C-105.37(b) and/or G.S. 115C-105.39A(c);
- r. supportive services available to students, including health services;
- s. for parents of students in grades 5 through 12, information about cervical cancer, cervical dysplasia, and human papillomavirus, including the causes and symptoms of these diseases, how they are transmitted, how they may be prevented by vaccination, including the benefits and possible side effects of vaccination, and places parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children;
- t. how to reach school officials in emergency situations during non-school hours;
- u. information about and an application form for free and reduced price meals and/or free milk (see policy 6225, Free and Reduced Price Meal Services);
- v. information about the school breakfast program;
- w. information about the availability and location of free summer food service program meals for students when school is not in session;
- x. for parents of children with disabilities, procedural safeguards (see also policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities);
- y. information on the availability of the asbestos management plan and

planned or in-progress inspections, re-inspections, response actions, and post-response actions, including periodic re-inspection and surveillance activities;

- z. education rights of homeless students (see policy 4125, Homeless Students);
- aa. the content and implementation of the local school wellness policy (see policy 6140, Student Wellness);
- bb. their right to take four hours of unpaid leave from their jobs every year in order to volunteer in their child's school as stated in G.S. 95-28.3 (see policy 5015, School Volunteers);
- cc. that the school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age, and the school system's processes for resolving discrimination and harassment complaints (see policies 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, and 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities);
- dd. that the school system provides equal access to its facilities, programs, and activities to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups (see policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law); and
- ee. the availability of and the process for requesting a waiver or reduction of student fees (see policy 4600, Student Fees).

4. Opportunities to Withhold Consent/Opt Out Notifications

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

- a. release of student directory information about their child for school purposes or to outside organizations (see policy 4700, Student Records);
- b. release of their child's name, address, and telephone listing to military recruiters or institutions of higher education (see policy 4700, Student Records);
- c. their child's participation in curricula related to (a) prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; (b) avoidance of out-of-wedlock

pregnancy; or (c) reproductive health and safety education, as provided in policy 3540, Comprehensive Health Education Program. A copy of the materials that will be used in these curricula will be available in the school media center during the school year and at other times that the media center is available to the public. To meet any review periods required by law, materials also may be made available for review in the central office;

- d. their child's participation in academic or career guidance or personal or social counseling services of a generic nature offered to groups of students (e.g., peer relations strategies offered to all sixth graders). However, parents do not have the right to opt out of: (a) short-duration academic, career, personal, or social guidance and counseling and crisis intervention that is needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment; (b) student-initiated individual or group counseling targeted at a student's specific concerns or needs; and (c) counseling if child abuse or neglect is suspected (see policies 3610, Counseling Program, and 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety);
- e. their child's participation in any protected information survey given as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System or National Youth Tobacco Survey or the North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
- f. their child's participation in any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is: (a) required as a condition of attendance; (b) administered and scheduled in advance by the school administration; and (c) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students;
- g. the collection, disclosure, or use of their child's personal information for marketing purposes (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students); and
- h. release of their child's free and reduced-price meal information to State Medicaid or State children's health insurance program (SCHIP).

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

#### **D. PARENTAL PERMISSION REQUIRED**

Written parental permission is required prior to the following activities:

- 1. the administration of medications to students by employees of the school system

(see policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students);

2. the release of student records that are not considered directory information, unless the release is allowed or required by law (see policy 4700, Student Records);
3. off-campus trips;
4. students' participation in high-impact or high-risk sports or extracurricular activities, such as football or mountain climbing (see policy 4220, Student Insurance Program);
5. all decisions or actions as required by the IDEA with regard to providing special education or related services to students with disabilities (see policy 3520, Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities);
6. certain health services, as required by law;
7. participation in a mental health assessment or mental health services under circumstances prescribed by federal law;
8. students' participation in programs or services that provide information about where to obtain contraceptives or abortion referral services;
9. students' participation in any protected information survey other than those given as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System or National Youth Tobacco Survey or the North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
10. disclosure of students' free and reduced price lunch eligibility information or eligibility status; ~~and~~
11. students' access to school system technological resources, including the Internet, as described in policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use; ~~and~~
12. students sharing sleeping quarters with a member of the other biological sex during any activity or event authorized by the school, unless the member of the other biological sex is the student's immediate family member (see policies 3320, School Trips, and 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations).

#### **E. PROCEDURES FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT HEALTH**

1. Parent Notifications Regarding Student Physical and Mental Health

At the beginning of each school year, the principal or designee shall notify parents of (1) each health care service offered at their children's schools and the means for parents to provide consent for any specific services; (2) acknowledgement that

consenting to a health care service does not waive the parents' right to access their children's educational records or health records or to be notified of changes in their children's services or monitoring; and (3) the procedures to exercise the parental remedies for concerns related to student health provided by G.S. 115C-76.60 and described below in subsection E.6.

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

The principal or designee shall notify parents of changes in services or monitoring related to their children's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for their children prior to or contemporaneously with the changes being made. In addition, the principal or designee shall notify parents before any changes are made to the names or pronouns used for their children in school records or by school personnel.

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

## 2. Discussions Related to Student Well-Being

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

## 3. Parent Access to Student Records

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

## 4. Student Support Services Training

Student support services training developed or provided by the school system to

school personnel will adhere to student services guidelines, standards, and frameworks established by the Department of Public Instruction.

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

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

6. Remedies for Parental Concerns Related to Student Health

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

If the concern has not been resolved within 15 days after the parent initially submitted the concern, the superintendent or designee shall schedule a board hearing to be conducted pursuant to policy 2500, Hearings Before the Board, to occur within the next 15 days. If the concern is not resolved 30 days after the parent initially submitted the concern, the board will provide a statement of the reasons for not resolving the concern.

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

**F. PARENT REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

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

If the principal (1) denies or fails to respond to the request for information within 10

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

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

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

#### **G. COMMUNITY SERVICES AVAILABLE**

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

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

#### **H. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

By September 15 of each year, the superintendent or designee shall report to the State Board of Education parental involvement information as required by State Board of Education Policy PRNT-002 and G.S. 115C-76.70.

Legal References: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, 15 U.S.C. 2641, *et seq.*; Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 7905, 34 C.F.R. 108.9; Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 6301 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 200; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, 34 C.F.R. pt. 99; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400, *et seq.*; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, *et seq.*; National School Lunch Program, 42 U.S.C. 1751 *et seq.*, 7 C.F.R. 210.12, 7 C.F.R. pt. 245; Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. 1232h, 34 C.F.R. pt. 98; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 100; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; 20 U.S.C. 7908; G.S. 90-21.1, -21.10B; 95-28.3; 114A-10; 115C-47(47), -47(51), -47(54), -47(58), -76.1, -76.20, -76.25, -76.30, -76.35, -76.40, -76.45, -76.50, -76.55, -76.60, -76.65, -76.70, -76.110, -81.25, -81.30, -81.36, -105.37(b), -105.39A(c), -105.41, -109.1, -158.10, -174.26(d), -307(c), -375.4, -390.2, -391.1, -402.15, -407.16; 16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0307, 6G .0701; State Board of Education Policies KNEC-002, PRNT-000 and -002, TEST-001

Cross References: Title I Parent and Family Engagement (policy 1320/3560), Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 1710/4020/7230), Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 1725/4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 1726/4036/7237), Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 1730/4022/7231), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 1735/4329/7311), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Hearings Before the Board (policy 2500), Business Advisory Council (policy 2670), Selection of Instructional Materials (policy 3200), Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials (policy 3210), Technology Responsible Use (policy 3225/4312/7320), School Trips (policy 3320), Evaluation of Student Progress (policy 3400), Students at Risk of Academic Failure (policy 3405), School Improvement Plan, (policy 3430), Class Rankings (policy 3450), Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities (policy 3520), Comprehensive Health Education Program (policy 3540), Counseling Program (policy 3610), Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Homeless Students (policy 4125), Student Insurance Program (policy 4220), Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety (policy 4240/7312), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Rules for Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools (regulation 4302-R), Parental Involvement in Student Behavior Issues (policy 4341), Attendance (policy 4400), Student Fees (policy 4600), Student Records (policy 4700), Surveys of Students (policy 4720), School Volunteers (policy 5015), Visitors to the Schools (policy 5020), Registered Sex Offenders (policy 5022), Student Health Services (policy 6120), Administering Medicines to Students (policy 6125), Student Wellness (policy 6140), Free and Reduced Price Meal Services (policy 6225), Pest Management (policy 9205)

Adopted: July 14, 2014

Replaces: Policy 2.04.60, Parental Involvement (in part)

Revised: January 11, 2016; February 13, 2017; February 12, 2018, November 13, 2018; February 10, 2020; August 12, 2020, January 11, 2021, December 13, 2021(Legal references only); November 6, 2023; January 16, 2024; July 11, 2024; December 9, 2024;

## DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW

Policy Code:

4020/7230

The board acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The board prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, disability, or age (over 40 or older), in its education program, which includes all operations, services, and activities of the school system, and will provide equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by law. In the context of employment, the board prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, disability, age (40 or older), military affiliation, genetic information, or other unlawful grounds.

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

~~for Discrimination and sexual harassment on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. Such discrimination and harassment, which is addressed separately in policies 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, and 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment Discrimination Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, and 4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process Grievance Procedures. Allegations of discrimination or harassment in violation of Title IX will be addressed using the processes established in policy 1725/4035/7236.~~

- ~~Discrimination and harassment in employment is addressed in policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace.~~

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

- ~~Complaints of sexual harassment will be brought in accordance with the processes established in policies 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, and 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process.~~
- ~~Employee allegations of discrimination or harassment will be addressed using the process established in policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace.~~

Though claims of discrimination or harassment on the basis of disability, as specified in policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, are subject to this policy, Allegations regarding or related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or free appropriate public education of a student under Section 504 or the IDEA may be raised through the system of procedural safeguards established under policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination

on the Basis of Disabilities, (for Section 504 complaints) or in accordance with the procedures described in *Parents Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education*, published by the NC Department of Public Instruction (for IDEA complaints).

The board encourages all individuals who believe that they have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy or who have reliable information that another person has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy to report such conduct as soon as possible through the process provided in Section B below. The board takes seriously all reports of unlawful discrimination and harassment and directs school officials to take prompt action to investigate and remedy violations of this policy. The superintendent is responsible for providing effective notice of this policy to students, parents, and employees, and applicants for admission or employment.

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

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

#### A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

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

##### 1. Discrimination

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

## 2. Harassment

~~Prohibited h~~Harassment is deliberate unwelcome conduct directed at another person or group of persons based on ~~their membership in a one or more of the~~ legally protected characteristics class listed in the first paragraph of this policy that creates a hostile environment or adversely affects a school system employee's employment. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be motivated by animus, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. Harassment creates a hostile environment when (1) the conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by the school system or (2) the conduct is so severe or pervasive that an employee finds his or her working conditions to be abusive and a reasonable person in the employee's position would conclude that the working conditions were abusive.

Examples of behavior that may constitute harassment include, but are not limited to, acts of disrespect, intimidation, or threats, such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, ~~epithets~~, derogatory epithets, comments, or slurs, imitating a person's disability-based limitations, mocking a person's accent, making fun of a person's religious garments, jewelry, or displays, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching, or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as hate symbols or derogatory posters or cartoons. Harassment may occur through electronic means, such as through the Internet, email, ~~or~~ text message, or video calls.

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

## 3. Application of the Policy

This policy applies to behavior that takes place: (1) in any school building or on any school premises before, during, or after school hours; (2) on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity; (3) at any bus stop; (4) during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity; (5) through the use of school system technological resources; (6) at any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel; or ~~(67)~~ at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools or has consequences in the workplace contributing to a hostile work environment.

This policy will not be construed to allow school officials to punish student

expression or speech based on undifferentiated fear or apprehension of a disturbance or out of a desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that may accompany an unpopular viewpoint.

## **B. REPORTING DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT**

### **1. Reporting Suspected Discrimination or Harassment**

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

### **1.2. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees**

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

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

### **2.3. Preliminary Inquiry**

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

## **C. COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

### **1. Making a Complaint of Discrimination or Harassment**

Any person ~~student, visitor, or other non-employee individual~~ who believes he or she is the victim of ~~unlawful~~ discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy, or any person who has witnessed or who has reliable information that another person has been subject to ~~unlawful~~ discrimination or harassment under in violation of this policy, may request that school officials investigate and redress

any such unlawful conduct by making~~make~~ a formal written complaint to any of the following persons:

- a. the principal or assistant principal of the school at which either the alleged victim or alleged perpetrator attends or is employed;
- b. the principal, assistant principal, or site supervisor at the location where either the alleged victim or alleged perpetrator is employed;
- c. the senior human resources official (or if the senior human resources official is the alleged perpetrator, the superintendent) if the alleged victim or alleged perpetrator is an employee or applicant for employment;
- a.d. the Section 504 coordinator or the ADA coordinator for claims of discrimination on the basis of a disability; or
- e. the Title IX coordinator, as established in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, for claims of discrimination on the basis of sex; or
- b-f. for claims of other forms of prohibited discrimination, the applicable civil rights coordinator as established in Section I of this policy.

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

## 2. Addressing Complaints

A written complaint alleging that a student, employee, or applicant for employment has been discriminated against or harassed will be addressed in accordance with this policy.

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

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

### 1-3. Time Period for Making a Complaint

Alleged discrimination or harassment should be reported as soon as possible but no

later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30-day period may be investigated; however, individuals should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

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

**1. Investigation**

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

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

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

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

perpetrator an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

The investigator shall consider all the evidence collected, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, the age and maturity of the parties, and any other relevant circumstances; and, in consultation with the board attorney as appropriate, shall determine whether the alleged act(s) constitutes a violation of this policy, policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, and/or any other board policy or expected standard of student or employee behavior.

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

## 2. Investigator's Findings

- a. If the investigator finds that discrimination occurred, the investigator shall take or recommend steps to address the discrimination.

- b.

- e.a. ~~If the investigator finds that harassment occurred and created a hostile environment, the investigator shall assign or recommend appropriate disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator and/or take or recommend other reasonable measures to eliminate the any hostile environment the discrimination or harassment, rectify any wrongful impacts, change in employment and prevent its recurrence of harassment.~~

- d.b. If the investigator finds that the conduct did not violate this policy but violated policy 1735/4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited, or another board policy or expected standard of conduct, the investigator shall assign or recommend discipline or other action appropriate to the violation.

- e.c. The investigator shall make a record of the evidence and findings of the investigation and the assigned or recommended discipline and/or other remedial action and provide a copy to the appropriate civil rights coordinator. If the investigator recommends a disciplinary consequence or remedial action that is beyond his or her authority, the investigator shall provide a copy of the record to the superintendent for further action.

- f.d. The investigator shall inform the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator of the outcome of the investigation.

## 3. Steps to Reasonably End Discrimination or Harassment

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

## E. APPEALS

### 1. Appeals to the Superintendent

~~If the~~ The alleged victim ~~is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she~~ may appeal the investigator's decision to the superintendent (unless the alleged perpetrator is the superintendent, in which case the alleged victim may appeal directly to the board in accordance with the next subsection~~paragraph~~). The appeal must be submitted in writing within three ~~school~~-business days of receiving the notice of the outcome of the investigation. The superintendent may review the documents, conduct any further investigation necessary, or take any other steps the superintendent determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. The superintendent shall provide a written response within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, unless further investigation is needed.

## 2. Appeals to the Board

Student victims or their parents may appeal the superintendent's decision to the board in accordance with subsection E.5.a of policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure. Victims who are ~~E~~mployees or applicants for employment may appeal the superintendent's decision to the board in accordance with subsection E.4.a of policy ~~1750~~/7220, Grievance Procedure for Employees.

## 3. Discipline Rights Provided by Law

Any student or employee subject to discipline for violating this policy will be accorded all rights provided by law.

### **F. RETALIATION PROHIBITED**

The board prohibits retaliation against any person for making a report or complaint of a violation of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or participating in the investigation of a reported violation of this policy. No reprisals will be taken by the board against a complaining party or other individual who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment. Any person who is found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance processes established in policies 4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure, and 7220, Grievance Procedure for Employees. Acts of retaliation may also be subject to policy 7280, Prohibition Against Retaliation.

### **G. TRAINING AND PROGRAMS**

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

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

## H. RECORDS

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

## I. CONTACTS FOR INQUIRIES

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

The contact information for the Title IX coordinator can be found in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex. The contact information for the other designated civil rights coordinators is as follows.

- a. The Section 504 Coordinator is: Dr. Tierra Stark  
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607  
Email Address: starkt@wataugaschools.org  
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190
- b. The ADA Coordinator is: Ms. Jana Dobbins  
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607  
Email Address: dobbinsj@wataugaschools.org  
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190
- c. The Age Discrimination Coordinator is: Dr. Tierra Stark  
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607  
Email Address: starkt@wataugaschools.org  
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190
- d. The Coordinator for Other Non-discrimination Laws is: Dr. Tierra Stark  
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607  
Email Address: starkt@wataugaschools.org  
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190

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

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

Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 110; Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 7905, 34 C.F.R. pt. 108; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 100; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e *et seq.*, 29 C.F.R. pt. 1604; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. 4301 *et seq.*; Racial Incidents and Harassment Against Students at Educational Institutions; Investigative Guidance, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (1994), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/race394.html>; Notice of Non-Discrimination, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010); Dear Colleague Letter (Harassment and Bullying), U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>; Enforcement Guidance on Harassment in the Workplace, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (April 2024), available at [https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-harassment-workplace?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-harassment-workplace?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=); G.S. 115C-407.15 through -407.18; 126-16; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0107 State Board of Education Policy SSCH-000; Parent Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education, (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division), available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/exceptional-children/parent-resources#dispute-resolution> <https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/parent-resources/parents-rights-handbook> <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/parent-rights-handbook>

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

Cross References: Hearings Before the Board (policy 1600), Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 1730/4022/7231), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 1735/4329/7311), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 4010), Title IX Sexual Discrimination Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 1725/4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 1726/4036/7237), ~~Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 1730/4022/7231)~~, ~~Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010)~~, School Plan for Management of Student Behavior (policy 4302), Responding to Complaints (policy 1742/5060), Grievance Procedure for Employees (policy 1750/7220), Prohibition Against Retaliation (policy 1760/7280), Hearings Before the Board (policy 2500), Staff-Student Relations (policy 4040/7310), School Plan for Management of Student Behavior (policy 4302), ~~Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 4329/7311)~~, Visitors to the Schools (policy 5020), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030), ~~Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace (policy 7232)~~

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: April 12, 2021; July 26, 2021; August 17, 2023 (contact information only); {DATE}

## TITLE IX NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX

Policy Code: 1720/4030/7235

The school system does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities and is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and federal regulations to not discriminate in such a manner. This requirement extends to admission and employment. The board will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of sex, including any form of sexual harassment as that term is defined under Title IX, in any program or activity of the school system. ~~(including on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, childbirth, sexual orientation, and or gender identity) and prohibits sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in its the education programs or activities, and is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and federal regulations. Throughout this policy, the term "education program" refers to all operations, services, and activities of the school system, including admissions and employment. The board also prohibits school system employees from implementing any policy, practice, or procedure, or from taking any employment action, on the basis of sex: (1) concerning the current, potential, or past parental, family, or marital status of a student, employee, or applicant for employment, which treats persons differently; or (2) that is based upon whether an employee or applicant for employment is the head of household or principal wage earner in such employee's or applicant's family unit, to not discriminate in such a manner. This requirement extends to admission and employment. The board will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of sex, including any form of sexual harassment as that term is defined under Title IX, in any program or activity of the school system.~~

### A. INQUIRIES ABOUT TITLE IX

The board has designated a Title IX coordinator to coordinate its efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX and its implementing regulations. Inquiries about the application of Title IX and its implementing federal regulations may be referred to the Title IX coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education.

The contact information for the Title IX coordinator is as follows.

The Title IX Coordinator is: Dr. Wayne M. Eberle II  
Office Address: 175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607  
Email Address: eberlew@wataugaschools.org  
Phone Number: (828) 264-7190

~~The contact information for the Office for Civil Rights with jurisdiction over North Carolina is as follows:~~

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

## B. RESOLUTION OF GRIEVANCES

The board has established grievance procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of sex. Any person may report alleged discrimination on the basis of sex, other than sexual harassment, in a school system program or activity occurring against a person in the United States through the process provided in policy 4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law. Any person may report alleged discrimination on the basis of sex, other than sexual harassment, in a school system program or activity occurring against a person in the United States through the process provided in policy 4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law. ~~(other than sexual harassment) in a program or activity of the school system occurring against a person in the United States. Students and parents or guardians may report such alleged discrimination through the process provided in policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sex Discrimination – Prohibited Conduct and Grievance Procedures. 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure. Employees and applicants may use the process provided in policy 1750/7220, Grievance Procedure for Employees.~~

The board has adopted additional means for reporting sexual harassment specifically. Any person may report alleged sexual harassment in the education program or activities of the school system occurring against a person in the United States in accordance with policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process. Those who believe they have been sexually harassed may also file a formal complaint of sexual harassment in accordance with policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, to initiate a prompt and equitable resolution through a formal investigation and adjudication or through an informal resolution process. The board encourages students, employees, and applicants to first make a report of sexual harassment in accordance with policy 1725/4035/7236 before filing a formal complaint.

The Title IX coordinator shall monitor the education program for barriers to reporting information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX and its regulations and take steps reasonably calculated to address any such barriers.

## C. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Retaliation against any person for the exercise of rights under Title IX or to interfere with those rights in any way is strictly prohibited and will subject the perpetrator to disciplinary action. The identity of any person who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination or sexual harassment or who is the alleged perpetrator of sex discrimination or sexual harassment will be confidential unless otherwise required or permitted by law. Individuals may report alleged retaliation through the processes provided in policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sex Discrimination – Prohibited Conduct and Grievance Procedures. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to policy 4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, the grievance processes established in policies 1740/4010 and 1750/7220. Acts of retaliation may also be subject

to policy 1760/7280, Prohibition Against Retaliation.

#### D. NOTICE OF THE BOARD'S POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEX

The superintendent is responsible for providing a notice of the board's nondiscrimination policy to students and their parents or legal guardians, employees, and applicants for admission or employment. The superintendent shall also ensure that each principal or site supervisor makes a copy of this policy available to those persons. In addition, the following must be posted on the school system website and included in all student and employee handbooks : (1) a statement of the board's policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of sex; (2) contact information for the Title IX coordinator; and (3) a statement that Title IX inquiries may be referred to the Title IX coordinator or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. ~~notice of nondiscrimination will contain the following information: (1) a statement that the school system does not discriminate of the board's policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in the education program, including in admission and employment, as required by Title IX and its regulations; (2) contact information for the Title IX coordinator; and (3) a statement that Title IX inquiries may be referred to the Title IX coordinator, or to the Office for Civil Rights, or both; Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (4) how to locate this policy and the grievance procedures for sex discrimination complaints (1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sex Discrimination Prohibited Conduct and Grievance Procedures); and (5) how to report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination and how to make a complaint of sex discrimination. All the information in the notice of nondiscrimination will be prominently displayed on the school system website and included in any school system handbook, catalog, announcement, bulletin, and application form made available to students, parents or guardians, employees, or applicants for admission or employment, unless the format or size of the publication makes it necessary to instead (1) include a statement that the school system prohibits sex discrimination in the education program and that individuals may report concerns or questions to the Title IX coordinator and (2) provide the location of the notice of nondiscrimination on the school system website.~~

#### TRAINING

~~In accordance with the requirements of Title IX, all school system employees must be trained on: (1) the school system's obligation to address sex discrimination in the education program; (2) the scope of conduct that constitutes sex discrimination, including the definition of sex-based harassment; and (3) all applicable notification and information requirements under 34 C.F.R. 106.40(b)(2) and 106.44.~~

~~In addition to the training applicable to all employees, employees with certain Title IX roles must undergo additional Title IX trainings specific to their responsibilities. All individuals who serve as investigators or decisionmakers for sex discrimination complaints or other persons who are responsible for implementing the sex discrimination grievance procedures or have the authority to modify or terminate supportive measures must be trained as required by 34 C.F.R. 106.8(d)(2). Facilitators of the informal resolution process for sex discrimination complaints must be trained on the rules and practices associated with~~

~~the informal resolution process and on how to serve impartially, including by avoiding conflicts of interest and bias. The Title IX coordinator and any designees must receive the training provided to the investigators and to the informal resolution process facilitators as well as training on their specific responsibilities, on the school system's recordkeeping system and related requirements, and on any other topics as necessary to coordinate the school system's Title IX compliance.~~

Legal References: Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*; 34 C.F.R. Part 106; *Grimm v. Gloucester County School Board*, 972 F.3d 586 (4th Cir. 2020)

Cross References: ~~Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 4020/7230), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 4036/7237), Staff-Student Relations (policy 4040/7310) Title IX Sexual Harassment Discrimination – Prohibited Conduct and Grievance Procedures Reporting Process (policy 4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 4036/7237), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Responding to Complaints (policy 1742/5060), Grievance Procedure for Employees (policy 1750/7220), Prohibition Against Retaliation (policy 1760/7280), Staff Student Relations (policy 4040/7310)~~

Other Resources: ~~*Enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 with Respect to Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Light of Bostock v. Clayton County*, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2021)~~

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: November 8, 2021; {DATE}

## **TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT – PROHIBITED CONDUCT AND REPORTING PROCESS**

*Policy Code:* **4035/7236**

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The board acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. As provided in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, the board will not tolerate sexual harassment in the education program and activities of the school system. The board takes seriously all reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment.

This Title IX sexual harassment policy specifically prohibits sexual harassment as that term is defined under Title IX. It provides a process for students, employees, and others to report such sexual harassment for response by school officials. All incidents of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment under this policy are to be reported and treated in accordance with this policy, whether or not the incidents may also constitute violations of other board policies or standards of conduct.

Conduct that involves discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex but that does not meet the definition of sexual harassment prohibited by this policy may nevertheless violate other board policies or established standards of conduct and will be treated accordingly. See, for example, policy 1735/4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited, policy 4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, and policy 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations. Nothing in this policy is intended to limit discipline for violations of other board policies in such circumstances when appropriate and consistent with law. In addition, nothing in this policy is intended to limit reports to law enforcement when warranted.

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment prohibited by this policy or who have witnessed or have reliable information that another person has been subjected to sexual harassment prohibited by this policy should use the process provided in Section C of this policy to report such violations.

The board also provides a grievance process for those who believe they have been victims of sexual harassment that is designed to achieve prompt and equitable resolution of formal complaints of sexual harassment through a formal investigation and adjudication of the allegations in the complaint or through informal resolution processes. The grievance process is provided in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process. Affected individuals are encouraged to report sexual harassment in accordance with the process provided in Section C of this policy before filing a formal complaint to initiate the grievance process.

The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that effective notice of this policy is provided to students, parents, employees, and applicants for admission or employment.

### **A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR**

Students, school system employees, volunteers, and visitors are expected to behave in a

civil and respectful manner. The board expressly prohibits sexual harassment by students, employees, board members, volunteers, or visitors. "Visitors" includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school system.

Sexual harassment prohibited under Title IX and by this policy is conduct *on the basis of sex* occurring in a school system education program or activity that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. an employee of the school system conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school system on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school system's education program or activities. This determination requires consideration of all the facts and circumstances, including, but not limited to, the ages and disability statuses of the harasser and the victim and the number of individuals involved and their authority;
3. sexual assault-, defined as an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI UCR).<sup>7</sup> The FBI UCR classifies as sex offenses (1) any sexual act (i.e., rape, including sodomy and sexual assault with an object, and fondling) directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity (including due to the influence of drugs or alcohol) or because of age including rape, and (2) unlawful sexual intercourse (i.e., statutory rape, fondling, and incest);
4. dating violence, which means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, with the existence of such a relationship determined based on a consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship;;
5. domestic violence, which includes crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under North Carolina family or domestic violence laws and also includes the use or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim, including verbal, psychological, economic, or technological abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior, by a person who (1) is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, or a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim; (2) is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; (3) shares a child in common with the victim; or (4) commits acts against a youth or adult victim who

is protected from those acts under North Carolina family or domestic violence laws;  
or

6. stalking, which means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

~~Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking will be defined in accordance with applicable law and the definitions will be incorporated into an administrative regulation developed by the superintendent.~~

Conduct that satisfies this standard is not sexual harassment for purposes of this policy if the conduct occurred (1) outside the United States or (2) under circumstances in which the school system did not have substantial control over both the harasser and the context in which the harassment occurred.

All references to "sexual harassment" in this policy mean sexual harassment that meets this definition.

Examples of conduct on the basis of sex that would be considered sexual harassment if the conduct satisfies the criteria above include, but are not limited to: unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual; sexual assault; sexual violence; the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials; posting sexually suggestive pictures of a person without the person's consent; and forwarding pornographic material depicting a classmate or other member of the school community. Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature may also constitute sexual harassment.

~~Conduct that is determined not to meet the definition above may violate other board policies or established standards of conduct and will be treated accordingly. For example, conduct that does not meet the definition of Title IX sexual harassment above may nevertheless violate other board policies, including:~~

- ~~• policy 4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited, prohibiting all forms of bullying and harassing conduct, including when it consists of unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature;~~
- ~~• policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace, prohibiting harassment in the workplace; or~~

- ~~policy 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations, prohibiting romantic or sexual relationships between employees and students.~~

~~Nothing in this policy is intended to limit discipline for violation of other board policies when appropriate and consistent with law.~~

## B. DEFINITIONS

The following additional definitions apply in this policy.

### 1. Report

A report is an oral or written notification that an individual is an alleged or suspected perpetrator or victim of sexual harassment.

Making a report initiates the interactive process with the complainant described in Section D.1, below. No disciplinary action will be taken against a respondent for sexual harassment based on a report alone.

### 2. Formal Complaint

A formal complaint is a document signed and filed with the Title IX coordinator by a complainant or signed by the Title IX coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that school officials investigate the allegation(s). Filing a formal complaint initiates the grievance process set forth in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process.

At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activities of the school system.

### 3. Complainant

The complainant is the individual(s) who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

### 4. Consent

Consent must be informed and freely and affirmatively given through mutually understandable words or actions that indicate a willingness to participate in the sexual activity. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. There is no consent when there is force, expressed or implied, or when coercion, intimidation, threats, or duress is used. Whether a person has taken advantage of a position of influence over another person may be a factor in determining consent. Silence or absence of resistance does not imply consent. Consent to one type of sexual activity does not amount to consent to another type of activity. Prior consent or sexual relations with

the same person do not imply future consent. The fact that both people are in a relationship does not, by itself, establish consent. A person cannot consent if they are unconscious, asleep, or impaired to the extent that they do not understand what is going on. Minors under the age of 16 are incapable of giving consent to sexual activity with a person more than four years older than the minor. Consent may never be given by mentally disabled persons if their disability was reasonably knowable to a sexual partner who is not mentally disabled. Consent between parties engaging in sexual activity does not prevent the school system from taking disciplinary action against the parties for violation of any other board policy.

#### 4-5. Respondent

The respondent is the individual(s) who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

#### 5-6. Grievance Process

Grievance process means the process for investigating and reaching a final determination of responsibility for a formal complaint of sexual harassment. The sexual harassment grievance process is set out in policy 1726/4036/7237.

#### 6-7. Title IX Coordinator

The Title IX coordinator is a school official who is designated to coordinate the school system's response to sexual harassment and allegations of sexual harassment. Contact information for the Title IX coordinator is posted on the school system's website and listed in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex.

#### 7-8. Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school system's education program and activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the school system's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

Supportive measures available to the parties include, but are not limited to, counseling, mental health services referral, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring, and other similar measures determined by school officials to be necessary to protect the safety or educational

or employment activities of a party.

~~8.9.~~ Days

Days are calendar days unless specified otherwise.

~~9.10.~~ Student(s)

“Student(s)” means the student and/or the student’s parent or legal guardian unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. When the complainant or respondent is a student, references to those terms also include the student’s parent or legal guardian unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

~~10.11.~~ Actual Knowledge

“Actual knowledge” means a school employee has notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment.

**C. REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

**1. Student Reports**

Any student who believes he or she is a victim of sexual harassment occurring in the school system’s education programs or activities is encouraged to report the matter to the student’s principal or to the Title IX coordinator. Reports may also be made to a teacher, counselor, assistant principal, teacher assistant, or any other school employee. Middle and high school students may also report sexual harassment through the anonymous tip line, but school officials may be limited in their ability to respond if the report does not identify the complainant.

**2. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees and Board Members**

Any employee or member of the board of education who has actual knowledge of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment occurring in the education program or any activity of the school system must report that information immediately to the Title IX coordinator.

Any of the following confers “actual knowledge” and must be reported immediately:

- a. a report of sexual harassment from a student or other person;
- b. the employee or board member witnesses conduct that is or reasonably could be sexual harassment; or
- c. the employee or board member discovers evidence of sexual harassment,

such as sexualized graffiti on school property, or otherwise has reliable information or reason to believe that a student, employee, or other individual may have been sexually harassed in violation of this policy, even if no one has reported the sexual harassment.

Employees who observe an incident of harassment are expected to intervene to stop the conduct in situations in which they have supervisory control over the perpetrator, and it is safe to do so. An employee with actual knowledge of possible sexual harassment in violation of this policy who does not promptly report the conduct and/or take proper action as required by this subsection, or who knowingly provides false information about the incident, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Any doubt about whether particular conduct is possible sexual harassment must be resolved in favor of reporting the conduct.

The mandatory reporting required by this section is in addition to required reporting under policies 4040/7310, Student-Staff Relations, and 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety, where the conduct at issue requires a report under either of those policies.

3. Reporting by Others

All other members of the school community are strongly encouraged to report any act that may constitute an incident of sexual harassment in violation of this policy to the school principal, the Title IX coordinator, or the superintendent.

4. Content of the Report

To the extent possible, reports should be sufficient to put school officials on notice of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. Employees making mandatory reports should provide as much detail about the alleged sexual harassment as is known, unless such disclosure would violate law or standards of professional ethics. Reports, other than mandatory reports by employees, may be made anonymously, but anonymous reports may limit the school system's ability to respond fully if the alleged victim is not identified.

5. Time Period for Making a Report

Reports by students and third parties can be made at any time. During non-business hours, reports can be made by using the contact information for the Title IX coordinator provided on the school system's website and in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex. A report should be made as soon as possible after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the report. Delays in reporting may impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to any subsequent formal complaint.

School employees and board members with actual knowledge of sexual harassment must report that information immediately, as provided in subsection C.2 above.

**D. SCHOOL OFFICIALS' RESPONSE TO ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

As required to meet the school system's obligations under Title IX, school officials shall respond promptly and impartially to actual knowledge of alleged sexual harassment in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. A response that is not deliberately indifferent is one that is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances and includes, at a minimum, the provision of supportive measures to the complainant, as described in this section.

Consistent with this duty, school officials shall respond to all reports of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment in accordance with this section. However, a report alleging conduct that is not sexual harassment as defined in this policy is not subject to this policy but may be referred to appropriate school officials as a possible violation of other board policies.

**1. Title IX Coordinator Initiates Interactive Process with Complainant**

Upon receiving a report of alleged sexual harassment, the Title IX coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant and the complainant's parent or guardian confidentially. This contact must occur within three days, excluding weekends, absent extenuating circumstances. The Title IX coordinator shall also notify the principal of the report and, if an employee is the complainant or respondent, the senior human resources official or designee.

When contacting the complainant and parent or guardian, the Title IX coordinator shall do all of the following during the contact and shall document the same:

- a. offer supportive measures;
- b. consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- c. explain that supportive measures are available with or without the filing of a formal complaint; and
- d. explain the process for filing a formal complaint with the Title IX coordinator and the response required of the school system when a complaint is filed, including all the following:
  - i. that a formal complaint will initiate the grievance process described in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process;

- ii. that a formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail;
- iii. the major steps in the grievance process, including (1) a notice of the allegations that will be provided to the respondent that includes identification of the complainant and the allegations made; (2) an investigation of the allegations of sexual harassment in which both parties will have opportunity to have an advisor, present witnesses, review evidence, pose written questions of the other party, and receive a copy of the investigative report; (3) a decision on responsibility in which a decision-maker objectively evaluates all relevant evidence and determines whether the respondent engaged in the alleged sexual harassment in violation of this policy; and (4) the opportunity for either party to appeal the decision;
- iv. the approximate time frame for concluding the grievance process;
- v. that school officials will treat both parties equitably by (1) providing remedies to the complainant if the respondent is found responsible, and (2) by not imposing disciplinary sanctions on the respondent without first following the grievance process set forth in policy 1726/4036/7237;
- vi. the circumstances under which a formal complaint might be consolidated with other formal complaints or dismissed; and
- vii. that the Title IX coordinator may have an obligation to initiate the grievance process in the absence of a formal complaint filed by the complainant and the time frame in which that decision will be made.

2. Title IX Coordinator Arranges Implementation of Supportive Measures

After considering the complainant's wishes, the Title IX coordinator shall arrange the effective implementation of appropriate supportive measures unless, in the exercise of good judgment, the Title IX coordinator determines that supportive measures should not be provided. If supportive measures are not provided to the complainant, the Title IX coordinator shall document why supportive measures were not provided and why not providing supportive measures is not deliberately indifferent to known sexual harassment.

If the complainant is a student with a disability, the Title IX coordinator may need to consult with appropriate school personnel to determine whether adjustments to the student's IEP or Section 504 plan are needed to implement any supportive measures to be provided and/or whether the student's plan necessitates any adjustment to the proposed supportive measures.

3. Title IX Coordinator Determines Whether to Sign a Formal Complaint

If the complainant declined to file a formal complaint within the designated time period following the interactive process described above, the Title IX coordinator shall determine on a case-by-case basis whether to sign, i.e., file, a formal complaint to initiate the grievance process.

The Title IX coordinator should file a formal complaint (1) if the respondent is a school employee and the complainant is a student; and (2) in other cases where, in the exercise of good judgment and in consultation with the school attorney as appropriate, the coordinator determines that a grievance process is necessary to comply with the obligation not to be deliberately indifferent to known allegations of sexual harassment. Credibility or merit of the complaint shall not be considered in making the determination.

A decision by the Title IX coordinator to sign a formal complaint is not to be construed as supportive of the complainant or in opposition to the respondent or as an indication of whether the allegations are credible or have merit, or whether there is evidence sufficient to determine responsibility. Signing a formal complaint does not make the Title IX coordinator a complainant or party to the complaint nor relieve the Title IX coordinator from any responsibilities under this policy.

The Title IX coordinator shall document the decision of whether to sign a complaint and the reasons for that decision.

4. Presumption of Non-responsibility of Respondent and Bar on Disciplinary Sanctions without Due Process

The respondent identified in any report alleging sexual harassment under this policy will be presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until the respondent's responsibility is conclusively established through the grievance process outlined in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process.

No disciplinary sanction or other action that is not a supportive measure, including but not limited to (1) short or long-term suspension, expulsion, or transfer to an alternative school or program for student-respondents and (2) suspension, demotion, or dismissal for employee-respondents, may be imposed for a violation of this policy unless the respondent agrees to a specific disciplinary sanction or action in an informal resolution or has been determined to be responsible for the sexual harassment at the conclusion of a grievance process that complies with the process in policy 1726/4036/7237. An employee-respondent, however, may be placed on administrative leave during the pendency of the grievance process if consistent with applicable state and federal laws.

Notwithstanding the limitation just described, respondents are subject to emergency removal as described in the next paragraph.

5. Emergency Removal of Respondent from School or Employment

Any respondent is subject to removal from the school system's education program and activities, or any part of the program or activities, on an emergency basis if a school-based threat assessment team conducts an individualized safety and risk analysis and determines that removal is justified because the person poses an immediate health or safety threat to any person arising from the allegations of sexual harassment. A removal under this subsection includes a transfer of a student to an alternative education program consistent with policy 3470/4305, Alternative Learning Programs/Schools. A schedule change, and/or removing a student from an extracurricular activity is also considered a removal under this subsection where such action would not otherwise constitute a supportive measure.

The emergency removal may take place regardless of whether a formal complaint has been filed. However, any such removal must be consistent with federal and state law, including any applicable law protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. The respondent shall receive notice of the removal and an opportunity to challenge the decision in an informal hearing with the superintendent or designee immediately following the removal.

An employee may be placed on administrative leave with or without pay during the pendency of the grievance process set out in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, if consistent with state law and in accordance with any applicable requirements of state law.

The superintendent or designee shall document all emergency removal decisions under this subsection, including the immediate threat to health or safety that justified the removal.

6. Supportive Measures

Supportive measures will be available to both the complainant and respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Supportive measures will remain confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality does not impair the ability to provide the supportive measures. The Title IX coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures.

**E. GRIEVANCE PROCESS FOR FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

The grievance process for formal complaints of sexual harassment under this policy is set out in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process. The policy also provides an informal resolution process for complainants who seek an alternate means of resolution to their complaint.

As described in subsection D.3 above, the Title IX coordinator may also initiate the grievance process, as needed.

## F. RECORDS

The Title IX coordinator shall create and maintain for a period of seven years records of all reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment. For each report or formal complaint, the coordinator shall document the following:

1. any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to the report or formal complaint;
2. that school officials have taken measures that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school system's education program and activities;
3. why school officials believe their response to the report or complaint was not deliberately indifferent; and
4. if supportive measures were not provided to the complainant, why that was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

In conjunction with the superintendent, the Title IX coordinator shall also maintain for seven years all materials used to train the Title IX coordinator, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. These materials will be made publicly available on the school system's website.

Legal References: Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; *Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District*, 524 U.S. 274 (1998); *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, 526 U.S. 629 (1999); G.S. 115C-335.5

Cross References: Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 1726/4036/7237), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 1735/4329/7311), Alternative Learning Programs/Schools (policy 3470/4305), Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 4020/7230), Staff-Student Relations (policy 4040/7310), Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety (policy 4240/7312), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 4329/7311), Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace (policy 7232)

Other Resources: ~~Questions and Answers on the Title IX Regulations on Sexual Harassment, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (July 2021), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/202107-qa-titleix.pdf>~~

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: January 11, 2021 (Legal references only); November 8, 2021 (Legal reference only);  
DATE



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

**A. LICENSURE AND OTHER QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

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

**B. EXCEPTIONS TO LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Adjunct CTE Instructors

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

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

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

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

3. Interim Principals

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

4. Cherokee Language and Culture Instructors

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

5. Driver Education Instructors

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

6. Service Members and their Spouses Relocating to North Carolina

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

**C. BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM**

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

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

**D. LICENSE CONVERSION**

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

#### **E. LICENSE RENEWAL**

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

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

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

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

#### **F. REPORTING MISCONDUCT**

Any administrator who knows, has reason to believe, or has actual notice of a complaint that a licensed employee has engaged in misconduct that (1) would justify automatic revocation of the employee's license pursuant to G.S. 115C-270.35(b), has resulted in a criminal charge or indictment for any of the crimes listed in G.S. 115C-270.35(b), involved the infliction of physical injury against a child or student other than by accident or in self-defense, or involved any sexual contact with a child or student, and (2) resulted in dismissal, disciplinary action, or resignation shall report the misconduct in writing to the State Board of Education within five days of the dismissal, determination of disciplinary action, or acceptance of resignation. If the employee resigns within 30 days of a complaint for misconduct or during an ongoing investigation of a complaint, the alleged misconduct is presumed to have resulted in the resignation.

In addition, if a licensed employee is dismissed, is demoted, or resigns as the result of conduct that is not covered by the preceding paragraph but that may otherwise justify disciplinary sanctions against the employee's license under 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0604, the superintendent or designee shall report the conduct in writing to the State Board of Education within 30 days of the dismissal, demotion, or resignation.

#### **G. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

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

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

#### **H. EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS**

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

Legal References: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 6301 *et seq.*; 50 U.S.C. 4025a; 34 C.F.R. 200.55-57, 200.61; G.S. 115C art. 17E; 115C-157.1, -270.15, -270.20, -270.21, -270.35, -284, -295, -298.5, -325(e)(1)(m) (applicable to career status teachers), -325.4(a)(12) (applicable to non-career status teachers), -326.20, -333, -333.1; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0602, .0604, .0608; State Board of Education Policies CTED-004, DRIV-003, DRIV-004, EVAL-004, EVAL-023, EVAL-034, EVAL-035, LICN-001, LICN-005, LICN-007, LICN-021, LICN-022, TCED-016; *Beginning Teacher Support Program Handbook* (NCDPI), available at <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/nceref/bt-support-program-resources>

Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 7800)

Adopted: February 9, 2015

Revised: September 11, 2017; May 21, 2018; March 11, 2019; September 9, 2019; May 11, 2020; February 8, 2021 and July 26, 2021 (Legal references only); December 13, 2021; May 8, 2023; March 11, 2024; July 11, 2024; November 12, 2024 (Legal references only)

Replaces: Policy 3.02.40, Qualifications of Certified Personnel

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

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

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

**A. ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL CONTACT PROHIBITED**

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

**B. RESTRICTIONS ON ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

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

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

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

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

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

maturity level;

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

### **C. REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT**

#### **1. Reporting by Employees**

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

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

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

#### **2. Reporting by Students**

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

#### **3. Report of Criminal Misconduct**

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

#### 4. Report to the State Board of Education

In accordance with Section F of policy 7130, Licensure, administrators shall report to the State Board of Education certain misconduct by licensed employees involving a student and resulting in termination of employment, nonrenewal of an employment contract, suspension without pay, dismissal, disciplinary action, or resignation.

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

Legal References: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 7926; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; G.S. 14-27.32, -202.4; 115C-47(18), -270.35(b), -326.20; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0601, .0602, .0604, .0605, .0608; State Board of Education Policies EVAL-014, EVAL-035, LICN-007

Cross References: Governing Principle – Removal of Barriers (policy 1700), Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1720/4030/7235), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 1725/4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 1726/4036/7237), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 1735/4329/7311), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 4010), Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety (policy 4240/7312), ~~Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 4329/7311)~~, Criminal Behavior (policy 4335), School Volunteers (policy 5015), Licensure (policy 7130), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Employee Use of Social Media (policy 7335)

Adopted: August 12, 2020

Revised: April 12, 2021; July 26, 2021; March 11, 2024; July 11, 2024; DATE