



**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
October 6, 2025

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| 4:30 p.m. | 1. CALL TO ORDER | Dr. Gary Childers |
| 4:33 p.m. | 2. CLOSED SESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Approval of the Minutes for 9/8/2025B. Reportable Offenses – N.C.G.S.115C-288(g)C. Student Records - N.C.G.S.143-318.11(a)(1)D. Personnel – N.C.G.S.143-318.11(a)(6)E. Attorney-Client - N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) | Dr. Gary Childers |
| 6:00 p.m. | 3. OPEN SESSION CALL TO ORDER/
WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE | Dr. Gary Childers |
| 6:03 p.m. | 4. DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA | Dr. Gary Childers |
| 6:05 p.m. | 5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT | Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:10 p.m. | 6. VALLE CRUCIS SCHOOL UPDATE | Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:15 p.m. | 7. STUDENTS' REPORT | Ms. Athena Elliott
Ms. Rosalyn Rabinowitz |
| 6:20 p.m. | 8. PUBLIC RECOGNITION <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ NCSBA Bell Award★ National Principals Month | Dr. Leslie Alexander
Dr. Leslie Alexander &
Ms. Bailey Little |
| 6:32 p.m. | 9. PUBLIC COMMENT | Dr. Gary Childers |

- 6:37 p.m. 10. CONSENT AGENDA Dr. Gary Childers**
A. Approval of the Minutes for 9/3/2025 and 9/8/2025
B. Field Trip Requests
C. Declaration of Surplus
D. Personnel Report
- 6:40 p.m. 11. 2024-25 AUDIT REPORT Ms. Shannon Dennison**
- 6:55 p.m. 12. YOUTH BEHAVIOR RISK SURVEY (YRBS) DATA Dr. Tierra Stark**
- 7:10 p.m. 13. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND READ Dr. Wayne Eberle**
• 3320: School Trips
• 3620: Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
• 4002: Parent Involvement
• 4020/7230: Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law
• 1720/4030/7235: Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
• 4035/7236: Title IX Sexual Harassment - Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process
• 7130: Licensure
• 4040/7310: Staff-Student Relations
- 7:15 p.m. 14. BOARD OPERATIONS Dr. Gary Childers**
➤ 2025 NCSBA Voting Delegates
➤ 2025 NCSBA Annual Conference (November 12-14)
➤ November BOE Date
- 7:25 p.m. 15. BOARD COMMENTS Dr. Gary Childers**
- 7:30 p.m. 16. ADJOURNMENT Dr. Gary Childers**
- 17. MISCELLANEOUS**
→ Calendar Committee Meeting Minutes (9/4/2025 and 9/25/2025)



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

DATE: September 3, 2025

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

PLACE: Margaret E. Gragg Education Center

PRESENT:

- Gary Childers, Alison Idol, Jay Fenwick, Adam Hege, Charlotte Lloyd (by phone), *BOE Members*
- Dr. Leslie Alexander, *Superintendent*
- Dr. Chris Blanton, *Assistant Superintendent*
- Mr. Joseph Nash, *Chief Financial Officer*
- Mr. John Henning, *Board Attorney*

CALL TO ORDER

A special work session was held for Board members to collaborate more in-depth on the topics of finance and facilities. Board Chair Dr. Gary Childers called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Dr. Leslie Alexander briefly reviewed the strategic plan for Watauga County Schools, including how her annual goals as Superintendent align with the plan.

ACHIEVEMENT DATA

Dr. Alexander presented achievement data across all subject areas. The MTSS focus for the year will center on strengthening core instruction. Looking ahead, a 2025–26 Professional Development Plan (PDP) goal for principals, in their role as instructional leaders, will be to: *Ensure alignment among learning, teaching, curriculum, instruction, and assessment to maximize student learning, while fostering a culture in which staff collectively take responsibility for the success of all students.*

FINANCE

The objectives for the discussion on Budget and Finance were for Board members to:

- gain a basic understanding of budget codes, including funding sources and typical expenditures;
- gain an understanding of how to interpret budget amendments;
- gain an understanding of where WCS ended fiscal year 2024-25.

Chief Financial Officer Joseph Nash provided a comprehensive overview to help Board members better understand budget codes, allotments, funding sources, and budget amendments. His presentation clarified the district's financial status for the 2024–25 fiscal year and offered a clearer outlook for 2025–26.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Chris Blanton presented information on classified staff wages for the 2024–25 school year. Noting that the last salary study was conducted in 2006, the Board approved a partnership with HIL Consultants to conduct a Comprehensive Salary Study for all non-certified job groups. The study will take place from September to October 2025. HIL Consultants will work closely with district leadership to develop a 30-step salary schedule for non-certified positions and provide cost estimates for the proposed structure.

VALLE CRUCIS SCHOOL UPDATE

The remaining key milestones include completion of the TAB (Testing, Adjusting, and Balancing) report, installation of the water system filter, resolution of punch list items related to life safety, and final inspections by the architect. It is recommended that either the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy or the full Certificate of Occupancy be secured by October 1, 2025, to ensure the new school can open for students on October 22, 2025. Possible dates for a ribbon-cutting ceremony were discussed, but a final decision was not made.

FEMA

WCS continues to await the outcome of the FEMA application, but potential funding options being considered include repurposing the old Valle Crucis School building, installing air conditioning in schools, and constructing an addition to Parkway School.

FACILITIES

Due to time constraints, the discussion on Facilities will be at a later date.

BOARD COMMENTS

Dr. Childers reminded the Board members about the NWRESA LEAD Training on September 11th. He also suggested that there be consideration of having a work session/retreat on a quarterly basis.

ADJOURNMENT

Alison Idol made a motion to adjourn, Dr. Jay Fenwick seconded, and all Board members approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Margaret E. Gragg Education Center
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WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

DATE: September 8, 2025

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Margaret E. Gragg Education Center

PRESENT:

- Gary Childers, Alison Idol, Jay Fenwick, Adam Hege, Charlotte Lloyd (by phone), *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 6:07 p.m. He welcomed those who were present, and he extended a special greeting to Rosalyn Rabinowitz (new Student Board Representative), Kirk Houser (CEO of MB Haynes Corporation) and members of his team, and Ronnie Marsh (County Commissioner). Dr. Childers then requested to observe a moment of silence.

DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA

An action item was added after Public Comment, so #10 became *Resolution of the Watauga County BOE*.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Dr. Alexander warmly welcomed the Student Board Representatives. Ms. Athena Elliott was introduced as the Senior Representative, and Ms. Rosalyn Rabinowitz (attending her first meeting in this new role) was introduced as the new Junior Representative.
- The first three weeks of the school year have gone smoothly, and Dr. Alexander expressed her gratitude to the teachers and administrators for their hard work in ensuring a seamless transition.
- Dr. Alexander is deeply grateful to the auxiliary support staff for their vital role in ensuring a smooth start to the school year. She gave a special thank you to the Transportation Department and bus drivers for safely getting students to and from school, as well as to Dr. Blanton, Dr. Eberle, and Mr. Norman for stepping in to cover multiple bus routes. She expressed her appreciation to Monica Bolick and the Child Nutrition team for providing healthy meals, and to Eric Bolick and the Maintenance team for handling 212 work orders to maintain the facilities. She is thankful to Dr.

Alison Schleede and the Technology team, who have addressed an impressive 857 work orders since the beginning of the school year.

- Fall Festivals at the schools are always lots of fun, and these will be held from September 19th to November 1st. Families will be able to find out the date, time, and details for their child's particular school on their school's website.
- Recognition Dates:
 - Hispanic Heritage Month
 - September 7-13: National Arts in Education Week
 - September 16- National IT Professionals Day
 - September 26: National Teacher Assistants' Day

VALLE CRUCIS SCHOOL UPDATE

Dr. Alexander invited Mr. Kirk Houser, CEO of MB Haynes Corporation, to give an update and assessment of when students and staff can expect to occupy the new Valle Crucis School. Mr. Houser said, "Our shared goal is to have students moving into the new school at the start of the second quarter of the school year, which is the third week of October." He acknowledged the challenges caused by the delays and expressed his understanding of the frustration felt by students, parents, faculty and staff, school officials, and the broader community. He went on to say, "What matters now is how we move forward, and I want to assure you our focus is on finishing this school quickly, safely, and as responsibly as possible. We owe it to you to finish strong, and that is exactly what we intend to do."

Following Mr. Houser's remarks, Dr. Gary Childers thanked him for attending the meeting and for listening to the concerns regarding the impact the delays have had. Dr. Jay Fenwick commended Mr. Houser for "owning the situation," and Ms. Alison Idol acknowledged him taking the time to visit the current school locations, which helped underscore the urgency of the matter. Dr. Alexander expressed her appreciation for the detailed spreadsheet she received, which outlines the remaining issues and target dates needed to obtain the Certificate of Occupancy.

STUDENTS' REPORT

- Students returned to school on August 18th, but before the school year began, families had the opportunity to attend the annual "Back to School Festival." This event offers students access to free school supplies, backpacks, shoes, and more ~ helping ensure they start the year prepared and confident. Since its inception in 2013, the festival has been made possible through the generosity of local businesses and community members.
- On August 14th, incoming 9th graders were welcomed to the high school during *Freshman Orientation*. This year marked the introduction of a new program called "LINK," which is a peer mentoring program designed to foster connections and build a sense of community across grade levels by pairing each group of freshmen with senior, junior, and sophomore LINK Leaders.
- Fall sports are in full swing at Watauga High School, with impressive wins and accomplishments across multiple teams. The varsity football team has secured its third victory of the season, the volleyball team has a nine-game winning streak, and the Women's Tennis Team remains undefeated. At their first meet of the year on August 31st in Spartanburg, SC, the Women's Cross Country Team

secured an impressive third place among 143 teams. Sophomore Cali Townsend had a standout performance, winning the international girls division and earning the #1 ranking in the 6A region.

- New safety policies are now in effect for entry to many athletic events. These include that all attendees must pass through a metal detector upon entry, bags larger than 4.5" x 6.5" must be clear, and no outside food or beverages are permitted. These measures will be enforced at every football, basketball, and volleyball game.
- For the second consecutive year, Jay Harris and Foscoe Companies ~ through their partnership with the Watauga Booster Club ~ have generously sponsored free student admission to all conference sporting events. Students can access their free pass via *GoFan*.
- House Bill 959 was recently passed by the North Carolina General Assembly which bans the use of wireless communication devices during the instructional day. The K-8 schools have implemented an "away for the day" phone policy which means students can only use their phones before the school day begins and after it ends. A "bell-to-bell policy" has been implemented at Watauga High School/Innovation Academy, which means that students may use their phones during class changes and lunch. At the beginning of class, students put their devices in a "phone locker" where they are securely stored for the period. Athena Elliott shared from a student perspective that she has already seen this policy benefiting her and those around her by allowing students to be much more engaged in class, be face-to-face with peers, and work in a better learning environment.
- To help students explore their postsecondary options, a College Fair will be held on September 15th at 5:30 PM at Watauga High School. Students will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from a variety of colleges, learn about different majors and programs, and ask questions.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

★ NCCTM Outstanding Secondary Mathematics Teacher

Chief Academic Officer Phil Norman recognized Mrs. Angela Bland for being named the *NCCTM Outstanding Secondary Mathematics Teacher* for Watauga County Schools. She will also be honored at the state mathematics conference in November. Mrs. Bland shared that she is applying the skills and insights she gained in the classroom to her new role as Assistant Principal at Parkway School.

★ Chief Financial Officer Joseph "Joe" Nash

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Chris Blanton surprised Chief Academic Officer Joseph "Joe" Nash, who has been in his current role with Watauga County Schools for less than a year, by announcing that he achieved the best "zero-out" rate of any school district CFO in North Carolina. At the NCDPI summer conference, Mr. Nash was acknowledged for having the closest projection of state and federal cash needs in the entire state, with a variance of less than \$100. Dr. Blanton noted that Joe is extremely humble and not one to seek recognition. Joe Nash expressed his gratitude and his dedication to finding ways to enhance the district.

PUBLIC COMMENT

One citizen made a public comment. Mitch Mayhew, President of the Valle Crucis PTO, thanked Dr. Alexander and the Board of Education for their dedicated efforts to ensure the completion of Valle Crucis School. He also acknowledged Principal Dr. Bonnie Smith and the Valle Crucis faculty/staff for their "superhuman efforts."

RESOLUTION OF THE WATAUGA COUNTY BOE

Board Attorney John Henning read the *Resolution of the Watauga County Board of Education*. Part of the Resolution reads: “The Board intends to occupy the new Valle Crucis School building immediately upon the issuance of a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO), based upon H&M Constructor’s representations and projection of the timeline for completion and receipt of the consent of the County, with the goal of having a permanent Certificate of Occupancy (CO) and holding the first student day in the new building on October 22, 2025.” It also states that the “Board serves its sincere appreciation for the County’s Commissioners and administration, in their leadership overseeing the project.”

Alison Idol made a motion to adopt the resolution. Dr. Adam Hege seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for 8/11/2025
- B. Field Trip Request
- C. Declaration of Surplus
- D. Personnel Report

Dr. Jay Fenwick made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Alison Idol seconded the motion, and it was approved by all Board members.

WCS DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATE

Director of Accountability, Dr. Wayne Eberle, provided an update on WCS data. He presented End-of-Course (EOC) proficiency comparisons from Pre-COVID Fall 2019 to Fall 2024, as well as End-of-Grade (EOG) proficiency comparisons from Pre-COVID Spring 2019 to Spring 2025. None of the schools in Watauga County are designated as “low-performing.” Bethel, Parkway, and Watauga High Schools all exceeded expected school growth in 2025. The WCS cohort graduation rate reached 92.9%, marking the highest rate to date.

Among the 115 LEAs in North Carolina, WCS ranked:

- 13th in EOG Grade 5 and EOG Reading Grade 3
- 12th in EOG Math Grade 4
- 11th in EOG Grade 4, EOG Reading Grade 4 and EOG Science Grade 5
- 7th in All EOC, English II, EOG Math Grade 8 and EOG Reading Grade 5
- 6th in EOG Math Grades 3-8
- 5th in Math I and EOG Math Grade 6
- **4th in ALL EOG/ EOC (state ranking)**, Math III, EOG Grade 6, and Science Grades 5 and 8
- 3rd in ALL EOG, EOG Grade 8, EOG Math Grade 7 and EOG Reading Grades 3-8
- 2nd in EOG Grade 7, EOG Reading Grade 6 and EOG Science Grade 8
- 1st in EOG Reading Grade 7 and EOG Reading Grade 8

Of the thirty identified accountability areas, WCS ranked in the top 10 in 20 areas and in the top 5 in 19 areas, demonstrating strong performance across multiple measures.

POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND READ

- 1442: Voting Methods
- 4200/7270: School Safety
- 4329/7311: Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited
- 4023/7233: Pregnant and Parenting Students and Employees
- 4240/7312: Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety
- 8325: Daily Deposits

Dr. Jay Fenwick made a motion to approve the policies with proposed clerical edits. Dr. Adam Hege seconded, and all Board members approved.

POLICY TO RESCIND

- 7232: Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace

Dr. Jay Fenwick made a motion to rescind policy 7232. Alison Idol seconded, and it was approved by all Board members.

POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ

- 3320: School Trips
- 3620: Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
- 4002: Parent Involvement
- 4020/7230: Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law
- 1720/4030/7235: Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
- 4035/7236: Title IX Sexual Harassment - Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process
- 7130: Licensure
- 4040/7310: Staff-Student Relations

Dr. Eberle and Mr. Henning responded to questions and provided clarification to Board members regarding the proposed policies. Dr. Fenwick suggested it would be helpful for the State Board of Education to include notes explaining the rationale behind policy edits. These policies will be brought forward for a second read at the October Board meeting.

BOARD OPERATIONS & COMMENTS

Alison Idol expressed her appreciation for the Board work session held on September 3rd, and Charlotte Lloyd concurred, noting that the presentations were helpful.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Jay Fenwick made a motion to adjourn, Alison Idol seconded, and it was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

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

Day 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) J Scott Townsend School: Watauga High School Indoor Track

Cell phone number: 828-773-6683 Grade(s): 9-12 Number of students: 50

Departure date: Friday, Dec. 5, 2025 Return date: Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025

Departure time: 12:00pm Return time: 8:00pm

Educational purpose:

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

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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

Athletic Competition

Lodging: Holiday Inn Express - 5600 Seminole Ave., Lynchburg, VA 24502

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: J Scott Townsend, Kim Kop, Adam Gilbert, Kevin Yandle, Matt Anderson,

Ryan Abrams, Angela Honeycutt (All Members of the WHS Indoor Track Coaching Staff)

Names of all non-school chaperones: _____

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

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) N/A

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) _____

Name of charter bus company (if checked above) _____

(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

Driver/s: Adam Gilbert/Kevin Yandle Round trip mileage: 550 # of buses needed: 1

Total cost per student \$ 50.00 Source of funds: Track Boosters/Parents

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

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: J Scott Townsend Date: 09 / 24 / 2025

Principal approval: [Signature] Date: 9 / 29 / 25

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: 9 / 30 / 25

Superintendent approval: [Signature] Date: 10 / 1 / 25

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

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

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

Day and overnight trips must be submitted to the principal 15 days before the trip. In-state overnight requests require the approval of the principal, Transportation Director, and Superintendent. Out-of-state field trip requests must be submitted to the Superintendent by the first day of each month, and require 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) Natasha Lyons School: Valle Crucis

Cell phone number: 828-263-2383 Grade(s): 8th Number of students: 46 max.

Departure date: Wed, April 22, 2026 Return date: Fri, April 24, 2026

Departure time: 7:00am Return time: 8:00pm

Educational purpose:

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

Williamsburg, VA → see attached itinerary

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: This trip aligns with the following NC state standards in Social Studies: 8.H.1.1-8.H.1.4, 8.H.2.1, 8.H.2.2, 8.H.3.1, 8.H.3.2, 8.C.1.1, 8.C.3.1, 8.C.1.2, 8.E.1.1,

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: Natasha Lyons, David Shack, and one-two additional staff members as needed for ratio numbers dependent on how many students go on the trip.

Names of all non-school chaperones: n/a No non-school staff will be chaperones.

All chaperones have a background check completed: ☒ Sponsoring teacher initials: NL

Are all site(s) accessible to students with disabilities? ☒ yes ☐ no How will students with disabilities be accommodated for site access and transportation? All locations have ADA accessible paths.

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) NL

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) _____

Name of charter bus company (if checked above) Youngs Transportation

(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

Driver/s: Youngs Driver Round trip mileage: ~750mi # of buses needed: 1

Total cost per student \$ 600 - ~~1000~~ \$700 Source of funds: Student/Family Pmts

Includes → *This is dependant on how many students go and room arrangements (payment plans)
snacks + trip shirt

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

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: Natasha Lyons Date: 09/29/25

Principal approval: Bonnie Smith Date: 09/29/25

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: 9/29/25

Superintendent approval: [Signature] Date: 9/30/25

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

Safety/Supervision Plan

Written by: Natasha Lyons; Valle Crucis School Teacher & Trip Sponsor
Williamsburg, VA ; April 22 - 24, 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure safety for all Valle Crucis School students attending the 8th grade trip to Williamsburg, VA in April of 2026.

Transportation

All students will be on one (1) charter bus. The charter company we are working with is Young Transportation and is on the list of approved charters. Valle Crucis has worked with this company for several other trips over the past 11 years, two (2) of which were to Williamsburg, VA. While on the charter, students will remain seated in an assigned seat. Seats are not to be changed unless prior approval from a chaperone has been granted. Reasons for moving seats will be on a case-by-case basis but will only be done in case of an emergency or student illness. There will be three - four (3-4) chaperones on the bus at all times with students. When entering the bus, up to two (2) chaperones will go on the bus first to ensure the safety of all students as they enter the bus while the remaining chaperones will wait outside the bus to ensure all students have made it on the bus. Before the bus pulls away, the chaperones will confirm that all students are on the bus by either counting the number of students or calling out their names. When exiting the bus, two (2) chaperones will exit the bus first to ensure the safety of the students as they are getting off the bus. The remaining chaperones will stay on the bus and confirm that all students came off the bus before they exit. When off the bus, students will need to check in with their assigned chaperone to ensure all students are in the correct place.

Activities

Students will be with a chaperone group at various times throughout the trip. These times will be noted in a parent handout two (2) weeks prior to the departure of the trip. If students are not noted as being in a chaperone group, students will be in one large group together with all three-four (3-4) chaperones. While at Busch Gardens, students will be exposed to high risk activities through the various rides at the amusement park. Students will never be forced to get on a ride they do not wish to get on. While at the amusement park, students will be in an assigned chaperone group. Changes to these groups must be approved by the chaperones. Students may be permitted to break off into groups of no less than three (3) with approval from the parents, chaperones, and principal while at the amusement park. If this is permitted, students will be required to check-in with their assigned chaperone at different times throughout the day at pre-designated spots.

Lodging

We will be lodging at the SpringHill Suites located at 1644 Richmond Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23185. The phone number for the hotel is (757) 941-3000. All students and chaperones will be lodging at the same hotel. Boys and girls will not be lodging on the same floor. Male chaperones will be on the floor, in their own room, with the male students while the female chaperones will be on the floor, in their own room, with the female students. Boys will **NOT** be permitted on the female floor unless they are obtaining medication from the trip sponsor, Natasha Lyons. Girls will **NOT** be permitted on the male floor under any circumstances. Students will be in rooms of no more than five (5) students to a room with chaperones being in separate rooms. All rooms have their own private bathroom, two queen beds, and a pull out sofa bed. Students will be given a "lights out" time

when returning to the hotel each night. At that time, students are to be in their assigned rooms getting ready for bed. During the night, there will be a security guard present to ensure the safety of the students while they are sleeping. After lights out, students are not permitted to exit their room unless there is an emergency. Any emergencies will be reported to the trip sponsor, Natasha Lyons. The security guard will give the trip sponsor a report each morning on how the students were. Students will not be allowed to run through the halls or disrupt other guests in the hotel while we are staying there. For additional lodging information, please see the attached lodging information sheet.

Apparel

While on the trip, students are permitted to wear school appropriate clothing. Students **MUST** wear proper attire on their feet. Flip flops will **NOT** be permitted. Students may wear tennis shoes, Chacos, or other footwear appropriate to be walking around in. Students will be required to wear a provided trip shirt on the second day of the trip, which is the day we will be at Busch Gardens, in the event the student gets separated from their group while at the amusement park. This shirt must be visible at all times.

Other Safety Items

Chaperone David Shack is CPR certified. Natasha Lyons is also authorized to administer medication to students for the duration of the trip.



PROPOSAL

Valle Crucis School – 8th Grade

Williamsburg, VA

TBN# 6781

April 22-24, 2026

April 22:

- 6:30 AM Coach arrives at the school for loading
- 7:00 AM Depart for Williamsburg making rest area stops and **fast-food lunch** stop en route (\$10.00 cash per person included)
- 2:00 PM **Guided Tour of Yorktown**
- 5:00 PM Board the bus and depart for dinner
- 5:30 PM **Dinner at Golden Corral** (buffet, beverage, tax and gratuity)
- 7:00 PM **Ghosts of Williamsburg Tour** (or Night Program at Colonial Williamsburg – same price)
- 9:00 PM **Check in to the SpringHill Suites** (each room has 2 beds and a sleeper sofa)
- 10:30 PM **Private security** guard reports for duty

April 23:

- AM **Hot breakfast** at the hotel
- 9:00 AM Depart for touring
- 9:30 AM **Visit Colonial Williamsburg** including the Governor's Palace
- 12:30 PM **Lunch on your own and shopping in Merchant Square** (\$20.00 cash per person included)
- 2:30 PM Depart for Busch Gardens
- 3:00 PM **Enjoy Busch Gardens** with a **meal voucher for dinner** in the park
- 9:00 PM Depart for the hotel
- 10:30 PM **Private security** guard reports for duty

April 24:

- AM **Hot Breakfast** at the hotel
- 8:30 AM Load luggage, teachers check rooms & group checks out of the hotel
- 9:00 AM Depart for touring
- 9:30 AM **Guided Tour of Jamestown**
- 12:00 PM **Lunch at Jamestown Settlement Café** (Individual choice of Hamburger, Cheeseburger, ¼ All Beef Hotdog, 4 Piece Chicken Tenders, Ind. Cheese Pizza, Ind. Pepperoni Pizza, Turkey Sub, Ham Sub, Veggie Sub all served with Chips, Grandma's Chocolate Chip Cookies and bottled water)
- 1:00PM Depart for home making rest stops and a **fast-food dinner stop** en route (\$10.00 cash included per person)
- 8:00 PM Estimated arrival time back at the school

Price Per Person Includes:

- Round-trip transportation aboard a luxury coach
- Two nights' accommodation and room taxes at the SpringHill Suites by Marriott Williamsburg
- Private security guard at the hotel each night
- All touring and admissions as detailed
- Two breakfasts, three lunches and three dinners
- One complimentary teacher per 10 paying students (double occupancy)

"Travel with Distinction"

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Price Per Person: **(Driver Gratuities NOT included)**

<u>1(56) pass:</u>	<u>Quint</u>	<u>Quad</u>	<u>Triple</u>	<u>Double</u>	
35-39 paying:	\$590.00	\$606.00	\$636.00	\$694.00	3 comps in 2 rooms
40-49 paying:	\$556.00	\$572.00	\$602.00	\$660.00	4 comps in 2 rooms

Options:

- Group can bring a bag lunch from home on day one and the prices would decrease by \$10.00 p/p
- Group can do a Chick fil a box lunch on day two and eat in the park before shopping at Merchant's Square and the prices would decrease by \$5.00 p/p
- Group can omit the security guard, and it would take \$660.00 total off the price of the tour which is \$16.50-\$18.85 less per person

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

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

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

Sponsoring teacher: (Print) Mary Greene School: Parkway School
Cell phone number: (828) 446-7998 Grade(s): 8th Number of students: 73
Departure time/date: April 29 @ 7:00am Return time/date: May 1 @ 7:30pm

Educational purpose:

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

Charleston, South Carolina:

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: The trip relates to the following
8th Grade Standards

Science

LS.8.2

8.H.1

8.H.2

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: Mary Greene, Sonya Burchell, Kasey Overcash

Names of all non-school chaperones: Parent Chaperones TBD
(4 - Chaperones)

All chaperones have a background check completed:

Sponsoring teacher initials: MA

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

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

Transportation plan:

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

Name of charter bus company (if checked above) Burke Tours

(If applicable, bus request form must be attached)

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

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

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

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: Mary Sheene Date: 9 / 19 / 25

Principal approval: [Signature] Date: 9 / 23 / 25

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: 9 / 29 / 25

Superintendent approval: [Signature] Date: 9 / 30 / 25

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

↓
all chaperones must have background checks



Burke Educational TRAVEL

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P.O. Box 890 | Newton, NC 28658 | 828-465-3900



Historic Charleston

April 29 - May 1, 2026

Parkway School 8th grade trip

Proposal

June 24, 2025 (Rev 9/5/25)

Ms. Mary Greene

160 Parkway School Dr
Boone, NC 28607

School Phone: 828-264-3032

greenem@wataugaschools.org

ITINERARY

Day 1 (Wednesday):

- Coach arrives for boarding at 6:30 am
- Depart the school at 7:00 am
- One rest stop en route
- Fast food lunch (*on your own*)
- Tour of the USS Yorktown at Patriot's Point
- Enjoy pizza dinner & fun at Summit Adventure Trampoline & Adventure Park (*included*)
- Check-in at our Charleston, SC area hotel (*2 nights*)

Day 2 (Thursday):

- Continental breakfast (*included*)
- Ride the ferry and tour Fort Sumter
- Boxed lunch (*included*)
- Visit the South Carolina Aquarium
- Enjoy a Barrier Island Eco Tour
- Beachside cookout dinner (*included*)
- Ghost tour of Historic Charleston
- Return to the hotel for the evening

Day 3 (Friday):

- Continental breakfast (*included*)
- Visit Boone Hall Plantation
- Fast food lunch (*\$15 allowance included*)
- Depart for home
- Fast food dinner en route (*\$15 allowance included*)
- Return to the school approx. 7:30 pm



Hotel Accommodations for 8th Grade Charleston, SC Trip:

Drury North Charleston-2934 W Montague Ave, North Charleston, SC 29418

Water Policy on Field Trip:

Although students will be near water for the Barrier Island Ecosystem Activities, they will not be swimming. The students will not be allowed to swim at the hotel accommodations either. There will be no swimming in water on this trip.

NC Standards for Charleston SC trip - Social Studies/Science

- **8.H.1:** Understand the role of conflict and cooperation in the development of North Carolina and the nation. This includes explaining causes and effects of conflicts in NC/US. Fort Sumter is essential here (Civil War outbreak). Yorktown fits in as a key battle in the Revolutionary War.
- **8.H.2:** Understand how innovation and change have impacted development in NC and the US. This could connect to changes in war technology, battlefield tactics, or shifts in political systems (Revolutionary era vs. Civil War).
- **8.G.1.2:** Explain how location, resources, and human geography have influenced development in NC and the nation.
 - Fort Sumter's coastal position, Charleston harbor, military strategy; Yorktown's peninsula position; importance of geography in battles.
- **LS.8.2:** Understand how organisms interact with and respond to the biotic and abiotic factors in their environment.

Declaration of Surplus Items - OCTOBER 2025

Date Approved: _____

Bethel

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
NONE	3	TABLES- SCIENCE		3
	3		0	3

Blowing Rock

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
35323	1	CHROMEBOOK- 100e		1
200888	1	DOC CAMERA		1
200891	1	DOC CAMERA		1
	3		0	3

Cove Creek

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
36687	1	CHROMEBOOK- HP		1
NONE	1	MONITOR- DELL		1
36712	1	CHROMEBOOK- HP		1
	3		0	3

Green Valley

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
400000	1	SCORBOARD		1
NONE	1	SCORBOARD		1
NONE	105	CHAIRS- MISC	105	
	107		105	2

Hardin Park

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
34528	1	CHROMEBOOK- LENOVO 300e		1
NONE	15	TABLES- 4' CARD	15	
42644	1	SMARTBOARD		1
33548	1	CHROMEBOOK- LENOVO 300e		1
51654	1	CHROMEBOOK- LENOVO 300e		1
51684	1	CHROMEBOOK- LENOVO 300e		1
33508	1	CHROMEBOOK- LENOVO 300e		1
51649	1	CHROMEBOOK- YOGA N23		1
NONE	4	BINS- RECYCLE	4	
500319	1	PRINTER- HP LASERJET		1
NONE	1	FILE CABINET- 4 DRAW	1	
NONE	1	STORAGE CABINET	1	
501975	1	WASHER- CLOTHS-MAYTAG		1
34978	1	CHROMEBOOK- 100e		1

31

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21

10

Mabel

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

Parkway

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

Valle Crucis

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
35555	1	CHROMEBOOK- AST 100e		1
	1		0	1

Watauga High School

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
39059	1	CHROMEBOOK- HP		1
29853	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1
903071	1	SMARTBOARD		1
900533	1	SMARTBOARD		1
37009	1	CHROMEBOOK- HP		1
37255	1	CHROMEBOOK- HP		1
38822	1	CHROMEBOOK- HP		1
28714	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1

8

0

8

Central Office

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

0

0

0

Technology Department

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
35888	1	HOTSPOT- CAROLINA WEST		1

1

0

1

Transportation Department

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

0

0

Maintenance Department

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

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0

0

Child Nutrition

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

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.

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

(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.

4.3. 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 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

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=; 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.nepublicschools.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.nepublicschools.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, asnd 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**

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).⁷ 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.~~ 9.9. Days

Days are calendar days unless specified otherwise.

~~9.10.~~ 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.~~ 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 superintendent, associate superintendent, assistant superintendent, personnel, administrator, or principal, 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 termination of employment, nonrenewal of an employment contract, suspension without pay, dismissal, disciplinary action, or resignation shall report the misconduct in writing to the State Board of Education within five days of the termination, nonrenewal, suspension, 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, does not have an employment contract renewed, 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, nonrenewal, 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, .0605, .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/ncref/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); DATE

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

**Agenda and Minutes
Calendar Committee Meeting
4 September 2025
3:45P WHS Room 2202**

Welcome, Introductions and Sign-In:

Team members in attendance: Dr. Wayne M. Eberle II (CO), Jim Priest (WHS) Pam West (Bethel), Janet Tanner (Transportation), Rachel Willingham (WHS/ WIA), Rebecca Pitts (HP), Allison McFalls, Char Chiarolanzio (PKW), Amy Warren (CC), Phil Norman (CO), Kelly Carter (HP), Bryan Lynch (M), Jana Yount (VC), Heather Ward (GV), Dr. Scott Strickler (WHS/ WIA), Jennie Weschler (GV)

Information Sharing:

Dr. Eberle expressed his thanks for team members attending and giving attention and time to be a part of the important committee impacting the district.

Team members introduced themselves.

Dr Eberle shared that there were 3 subcommittees working over the summer:

Remote Learning, Transportation, and the Instructional Day

There will be information shared by representatives of each committee during the meeting.

Timeline for creating the 2026-2027 Calendar: The goal of the committee is to bring a proposed calendar to the school board for the December meeting. Going beyond January is not advisable for people making future plans. Dates for future meetings were reviewed.

The previous school year and amount of days and hours completed were reviewed by Dr. Eberle. During Helene, the term “deemed complete” was important in giving credit for time and paying staff.

There is no waiver of days to forgive time that exists; only a good cause start date that allows for an earlier start and remote learning. This is based on changing the begin date of the school year based on past inclement weather. Watauga County has been given approval to begin August 17, 2026. This is based on if no changes are made at a state level. Up to 15 remote instructional days or 90 instructional hours based on weather conditions are also approved within this waiver. Last year 30 days were approved based on Helene, but this does not currently apply to the district.

School Calendar Legislation, Waiver (No Waivers to be granted this year only “good cause” for start and end dates), and Guidelines (student days, holidays, workdays for teachers = 215 required days); Watauga county has received a weather waiver for SY 26-27 to begin on August 17, 2026.

History of Inclement Weather Days/ Start and End Dates in WCS

Guidelines for Inclement Weather Days and Staff Time

Dr Eberle reviewed the state laws and rules : 215 days are required for the 10 month employee calendar and all of the instruction occurs between the beginning and end. 185 days or 1025 hours of instruction must occur. The district uses the hours based measure rather than days.

There must be 10 annual leave days and 11 designated holidays.

There is one change noted from the first draft sent to committee members. One holiday was added and decreased by one annual leave day. This is based on when holidays fall.

There may be up to 2 days used for teachers to use accumulated vacation days.

Total working days must not exceed 195 days.

Days for teacher workdays are up to the discretion of the local education agency. The snow day pass is a system established by Watauga County to support and honor the time of teachers rather than a stipend. Optional workdays are allowed to use snow day passes while on Mandatory WDs this is not allowed.

School cannot be held on Sunday but can be held on Saturday.

The chart that shows by month when remote learning was used was shown and reviewed by the committee. This also notes COVID and Hurricane Helene impacts.

There is also a document available to staff about what options are available when staff receive notification of inclement weather and its impacts.

Discussion of Priorities from past meetings were shared with the current team:

- WHS is willing to reduce number of days in 1st semester to as low as 84 to ensure 1st semester testing occurs or may begin before holiday break: *SY 25-26 first semester testing will most likely occur following the holiday break due to the limited number of days achieved with an August 18th start date/ likely testing will occur following the*

holiday break for SY 26-27 as well. The last 5 days must be tested for a semester and this is a legislative requirement.

- *AP exams and yearlong classes are impacted with the weather and the cumulative effects and testing law impacts in losing time. Testing before Christmas would require harvesting days from other areas (PD, Annual Leave, days before the holiday). Having a legal day as a holiday to be protected would be a possible break that could be protected in February for President Day. We could remove the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, two days before Christmas and take off work days in the first semester.*
- One full week at Spring Break- other options such as aligning with other districts, the timing or ASU, often ends in moving back to the Easter alignment.
- Easter at the beginning of Spring Break (Easter is 28 March 2027)
- Support the use of Saturday school as early as possible (Note- Remote Days significantly reduce the need for this option) This is only allowed when there is a “NO Day” within the week.

Consideration/consensus on calendar choices/ options- what works and what does not

- Start with presented calendars as templates with the following options to consider:
 - First semester will not end until after the holiday break- this is due to the “good cause” waiver and earliest start date being pushed up to Aug 17 (we dealt with this last year and before that it was SY 16-17 due to the rotation of the calendar)
 - Feedback from Inclement Weather Subgroup Committee: Mr. Norman
 - Mr Norman shared information about the subgroup for extending the instructional day. The group met 5 times during the spring and summer based on surveys collected by staff and parents. People were not in favor of Saturday school. Strategies and supports for when remote learning occurs is being shared.
 - The question of adding time to the instructional day was a possible scenario discussed to avoid using remote learning. The team reviewed research and looked at nearby districts in consideration of background information. The team represented all stakeholders including parents, teachers, community members, and administrators. The added time was also viewed as how to give the most instructional impact for students and being intentional.
 - A chart comparing regional school days and length of instructional time was reviewed. Watauga has the shortest school day in comparison to Wilkes, Avery and Ashe and all of the other school systems in the region. For Wilkes, the day was lengthened due to budget restrictions such as bus drivers, custodian, working as only 164 days compared to 180 days. The longer days can be challenging based on the feedback gathered. Nationwide, the schools are in session over 1200 hours.

- Adding instructional time to the day is impactful only when the time is intentional and impactful to student learning.
 - Adding 15 minutes to the day would increase to 1180 hours and gain up to 5 optional work days. Adding 30 minutes to the day would increase to 1230 hours and gain up to 5 optional work days. This would take pressure off of remote learning.
 - Suggested time added for core instruction at the high school, K-5 would be used for literacy, and for middle school core instruction or intervention are options.
 - Drawbacks could be impacts for extracurricular, working hours may be negative impacts, and challenging to families.
 - This work will continue with an eventual recommendation to the school board.
 - Suggestion for looking at release times of competitor schools to help align for athletics and making plans moving forward.
- Ms Tanner shared information about transportation. By state law, the county cannot accept transportation funds unless all students are offered transportation/ bus route to get to school. There are limited A and paved roads only as options for inclement weather. The committee is looking at a limited B route that would increase options and allow for in person learning when there is snow and ice. The expectation of businesses as community stop is not feasible for salting. The maintenance crew cannot reach all stops if community stops would be used. The liability is not acceptable for business owners for inclement weather. The committee is also looking at possible differentiation of limited routes for schools as needed and regular for schools who do not have needs. Each school is reviewing the limited A route at this time.
 - The remote learning subgroup will be sharing their findings with schools in October.

Next Steps for sharing with faculties, parent groups, community members

The current draft aligns with the 25-26 calendar and meets all legal requirements. Each member is to go back to groups and find concerns from faculty and parents to gather suggestions. The next meeting will begin with a review and then will share out ideas.

To note, AP exams occur May 3rd through 14th and EOCs begin May 19-21 . This impacts 400 students at the high school. May standard final exams come very close to the AP exams. Spacing this would help students complete projects being assigned as finals and to study for standard exams.

Questions/Concerns

Meeting adjourned at 4:58P

Next Calendar Committee meeting dates: September 25, October 16 and November 13 beginning at 3:45P. **BOE Meeting is December 8th at 6P at the Central Office**

Historical Information:

SY 12-13 180 days/ 1129 hrs.

SY 13-14 179 days/ 1120 hrs.

SY 14-15 178 days/ 1132.5 hrs.

SY 15-16 180 days/ 1131 hrs.

SY 16-17 180 days/ 1149 hrs.

SY 17-18 175 days/ 1080 hrs.

SY 18-19 180 days/ 1132 hrs.

SY 19-20 167 days/ 1061.5 hrs. (F2F/ Remote) COVID-19

 **13 March 2020- completed 123 days/ 775.5 hrs. before moving into remote

SY 20-21 180 days/ 1148 hrs.

SY 21-22 180 days/ 1156 hrs.

SY 22-23 179 days/ 1145.5 hrs.

SY 23-24 180 days/ 1142 hrs.

SY 24-25 178 days/ 1135 hrs. (17 days 'deemed completed' due to Hurricane Helene)

Meeting Minutes
Calendar Committee Meeting
25 September 2025
3:45P WHS Room 2202

Members in Attendance: Dr. Wayne Eberle (CO - Chairman), Natasha Lyons (VC - Minutes Recorder), Phil Normal (CO), Jim Priest (WHS), Char Chiarolanzio (PKY), Dr. Adam Hege (BOE), Rachel Willingham (WHS), Melissa VanLenten (PKY), Kim Shockey (VC - Parent Representative), Dr. Chris Blanton (CO), Dr. Scott Strickler (WHS), Rebecca Pitts (HP), Heather Ward (GV), Jennie Weschler (GV), Jana Yount (VC), Brian Lynch (Mabel), Pamela West (Bethel), Eric Bolick (CO - Maintenance)

Welcome and Sign-In

- Dr. Eberle called the meeting to order at 3:52pm.
- Dr. Eberle welcomed members to the meeting.

Review items discussed from 4 September meeting

- Dr. Eberle reviewed the minutes from the last meeting as well as a general review of what was discussed at the previous meeting.
 -  Minutes of Calendar Committee Mtg Agenda 4 Sept 2025

Discussion of Priorities from past meetings:

- Dr. Eberle went over the following priorities with the members present.
 - WHS is willing to reduce number of days in 1st semester to as low as 84 to ensure 1st semester testing occurs or may begin before holiday break: *SY 24-25 first semester testing will occur following the holiday break due to the limited number of days achieved with an August 19st start date/ likely testing will occur following the holiday break for SY 25-26 as well*
 - One full week at Spring Break
 - Easter at the beginning of Spring Break (Easter is 5 April 2026)
 - Support the use of Saturday school as early as possible (Note- Remote Days may significantly reduce to need for this option in the future)

Consideration/consensus on calendar choices/ options- what works and what does not

- Start with the presented calendar from the last meeting, using it as a template and discuss stakeholder feedback. **We will take a closer look at it.** Pros/ Cons
 - Considerations from last meeting may include: (Please bring your school's feedback as well)

- Fall testing at the high school before Christmas- discuss where days might come from (Remove TWD after 1st nine weeks, Make Wednesday before Thanksgiving an ER Day, Attend school on Dec 21-22)
 - Possibly Adding Good Friday to Spring Break and Adding President's Day as a holiday
 - Note- AP Testing (3-14 May 2027)
- Discuss adjustments, if any, to calendar
 - Dr. Eberle: August 11th and June 7th are the bookends of the calendar as we cannot go beyond that due to 10 month employees being paid for 215 days.
 - Discussion Points
 - Is there anyway to move one workday to the beginning to make 5 days instead of 4?
 - Dr. Eberle: The short answer is yes which would make the bookends change to August 10th - June 4th. The reason we went back to four workdays at the start of the year was going back to inclement weather days as once we use the day, we cannot recover it so that was the rationale with going back to four days at the start of the year.
 - Green Valley had a request to have an optional teacher workday after coming back from the December Break. Could the November 25th day be moved from the day before Thanksgiving to January 4th to give teachers time to come back from break with a workday?
 - Dr. Eberle: We can do that if we want to but it would just be a matter of what is the priority
 - A few years ago we worked hard to have that day before Thanksgiving a workday to allow families to travel.
 - A teacher from the high school noted that she had talked with a few students and they would want to have exams done before the December break. We typically get more snow in January than we do in December so being able to get exams done before the December break is ideal as it also would help not delay the spring semester as well as get students off balance who take NCVPS courses or Caldwell courses while still needing to finish Fall classes at the high school.
 - A question was asked about if it is less stressful or more stressful for high school students and teachers knowing their exams will happen after the December break then having the rug pulled out if they try and do exams before the December break and not be able for that to happen due to inclement weather.

- Dr. Eberle: There is no difference as far as the data shows with test scores but what has been heard is that they prefer to know when they are testing then have it change last minute due to inclement weather. Some teachers may prefer to just try and get them in before the December break.
- The High School is going to collect data from the staff at the high school to see if they would like to cut down their semester to 84 days (79 instructional days) for the first semester in order to try and get their exam in or if they don't think that is enough time.
- A question was asked about making the teacher workday at the end of the first nine weeks a full student day or a half day.
 - It was voiced that this is difficult for K-8 teachers to finish report cards (especially K-2 where they are not letter grade based) and prepare for conferences and a full day was very much needed.
- It was asked at the high school if we can start on August 19th and have a Wednesday start.
 - Dr. Eberle: Since we do get a good faith waiver in order to start a week early, we need to really be starting as early as the state allows us to and the state could come back and say we don't need the early start and can just start on August 24th with the rest of the state.
- It was asked if we can make February 15th (President's Day) a Holiday/Annual Leave Day to break up the long stretch from coming back from the December Break and Spring Break.
 - We can do that but we would need to take another Holiday (Memorial Day) or Annual leave day from somewhere else (December break, Spring Break, etc.)
 - We can turn days into Optional Teacher Workday and take them from the end of the year.
 - Whatever is done, we have to be able to have a switch from somewhere else.
 - No proposed dates were made - this has been tabled.

Next Steps for sharing with faculties, parent groups, community members

- **Feedback to obtain from stakeholders**

- **ALL SCHOOLS**

- **5 days at the beginning of the year (August 10th - August 14th) that would be taken from the end of the school year.**

- Desire to swap Wednesday, November 25th (day before Thanksgiving) with Monday, January 4th to have an optional workday coming off from the December break.
 - We can do an Early Release on Wednesday, November 25th
- Gather feedback about possibly moving a holiday for President's Day; either Memorial Day or a day within Spring Break.
- HIGH SCHOOL
 - The High School is going to collect data from the staff at the high school to see if they would like to cut down their semester to 84 days (79 instructional days) for the first semester in order to try and get their exam in or if they don't think that is enough time.

Questions/Concerns

Next Calendar Committee meeting dates: October 16 and November 13 beginning at 3:45P.

****BOE Meeting is December 8th at 6P at the Central Office****

Motion to Adjourn Meeting Moved by Natasha Lyons

Meeting Adjourned 4:46pm