



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA ***January 12, 2026***

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| 4:30 p.m. | 1. CALL TO ORDER | Board Chair |
| 4:33 p.m. | 2. CLOSED SESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Approval of the Minutes for 11/17/2025B. 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) | Board Chair |
| 6:00 p.m. | 3. OPEN SESSION CALL TO ORDER/
WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE | Board Chair |
| 6:03 p.m. | 4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS | Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:08 p.m. | 5. DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA | Board Chair |
| 6:10 p.m. | 6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT | Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:14 p.m. | 7. STUDENTS' REPORT | Ms. Athena Elliott
Ms. Rosalyn Rabinowitz |
| 6:18 p.m. | 8. SPECIAL RECOGNITION <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ School Board Appreciation Month★ Outstanding Teacher of American History★ NC Northwest Region Teacher of the Year★ Resolutions Honoring Achievements★ NBPTS Tamara Stamey Memorial Fund Scholarships★ 2025 National Board Maintenance of Completion★ 2025 National Board Certified Teachers | Dr. Leslie Alexander
Ms. Donna McNeil
Dr. Leslie Alexander
Dr. Leslie Alexander
Dr. Scott Elliott
Ms. Keana Triplett
Ms. Keana Triplett |

6:40 p.m.	9. PUBLIC COMMENT	Board Chair
6:45 p.m.	10. CONSENT AGENDA A. Approval of the Minutes for 11/17/2025 B. Field Trip Requests C. Declaration of Surplus D. School Nutrition Procurement Plan E. WCS 2026-27 School Calendar F. Personnel Report	Board Chair
6:48 p.m.	11. WCS TECHNOLOGY UPDATE	Dr. Alison Schleede
7:00 p.m.	12. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND READ • 3210: Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials • 3510: Religious-Based Exemptions from School Programs • 4120: Domicile or Residence Requirements • 4318: Use of Wireless Communication Devices • 5024/6127/7266: Emergency Epinephrine Delivery Systems • 5070/7350: Public Records - Retention, Release, and Disposition • 6125: Administering Medicines to Students • 6340: Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts • 7100: Recruitment and Selection of Personnel • 7820: Personnel Files • 4400-R(1): Attendance - High School	Dr. Wayne Eberle
7:05 p.m.	13. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ • 3400: Evaluation of Student Progress • 3460: Graduation Requirements • 3101: Dual Enrollment • 4050: Children of Military Families • 4120: Domicile or Residence Requirements • 4240/7312: Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety • 5150/7313: Reporting to External Agencies • 4010: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure • 7210: Grievance Procedure for Employees • 1325/7215: Confidential Information	Dr. Wayne Eberle
7:35 p.m.	14. BOARD OPERATIONS ➤ February BOE Half-Day Work Session	Board Chair
7:40 p.m.	15. BOARD COMMENTS	Board Chair
7:45 p.m.	16. ADJOURNMENT	Board Chair



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

DATE: November 17, 2025

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Margaret E. Gragg Education Center

PRESENT:

- Gary Childers, Alison Idol, Jay Fenwick, Adam Hege, *BOE Members*
- Dr. Leslie Alexander, *Superintendent*
- Mr. Chris Campbell, *Board Attorney*

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Board Chair Dr. Gary Childers called the open session to order at 6:01 p.m., welcomed attendees, and led a moment of silence. He recognized Watauga County Manager Deron Geouque, Commissioner Chair Braxton Eggers, and Commissioner Ronnie Marsh for their presence. Dr. Childers also congratulated Student Board Representative Athena Elliott on her recent selection as Watauga's Homecoming Queen.

DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA

There was no discussion or adjustment of the agenda.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Watauga County Schools had a strong start to the second quarter. Last week, schools celebrated Veterans' Day, with many hosting parades to honor our veterans. The WCS Facebook page features some special moments from these events.
- A Remote Learning Day was called on November 10. Dr. Alexander reported that principals observed high attendance and strong student engagement. Across the district, professional development continues to ensure best instructional practices are in place. Dr. Alexander expressed appreciation to teachers for delivering high-quality lessons, parents for encouraging student attendance, and students for staying engaged in virtual learning.
- While official monthly updates for Valle Crucis are no longer necessary, I am pleased to share that the new school year has started beautifully. Students and staff have settled in with excitement and pride, filling the halls with the same sense of community and care that carried them through the transition.
- "Come Back Shack" has announced its third annual Give Back Shack partnership with Watauga County Schools to help eliminate student lunch debt, which exceeds \$25,000 each year. The initiative

includes three Give Back Shack days this school year, with the first set for November 18. On these days, 20% of all sales from both Boone locations will be donated directly to Watauga County Schools, with all funds used exclusively to reduce student lunch debt.

➤ **Recognition Dates:**

- Native American Heritage Month
- November 3-7: National School Psychology Week
- November 17-21: American Education Week
- November 26-28: No school for students as we celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday

STUDENTS' REPORT

- On October 22nd, 2025, the new Valle Crucis School officially welcomed all students back to campus. The building is beautiful, thoughtfully designed, and well worth the wait. While the support from the Valle Crucis Conference Center and Caldwell Community College was invaluable during the transition, nothing compares to having a consistent classroom and a school community under one roof. On the same day, Mo Greene, representatives from DPI, and our County Commissioners toured both the Watauga High School and the new Valle Crucis School to see the progress firsthand. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the strength and resilience of our county.
- Watauga High School hosted its annual "Trunk or Treat" event on October 28th. Even with a last-minute move indoors, the event drew hundreds of families and students from our K–8 schools. It offered a safe and fun place for children to trick-or-treat while bringing the community together, and it also provided a great opportunity for high school clubs and sports teams to volunteer by setting up booths and handing out candy.
- Watauga County held its first remote learning day of the year on November 10th, introducing several new expectations: cameras were required during instruction, FLEX was added at the high school, and class transitions were shortened from ten minutes to five. Remote learning can be challenging for families with multiple children, and the camera requirement sometimes strains home internet connections.
- On November 20th, Watauga DECA will host its first-ever Fall District Competition. Professors, teachers, community members, and Board Member Dr. Hege will serve as judges, reflecting the community's strong support for students. Normally held at Shelby High School, the event is being hosted by Watauga this year after Shelby could no longer accommodate it. Ninety Watauga DECA students will compete in various marketing events, each requiring a 100-question exam and a roleplay in which students develop a marketing plan or business solution. Top performers will qualify for the State DECA Conference (CDC) in the spring.
- On December 6th, Watauga High School's Student Council will host the annual "Mr. WHS" show for the 26th consecutive year, directed by Student Body President Anna Byrne. "Mr. WHS" is a beloved tradition that boosts school spirit, increases student involvement, and raises significant funds for local families in need. Last year, the event partnered with McDowell and West Henderson High Schools, collectively raising \$50,000 for families affected by Hurricane Helene.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The Watauga County Board of Education and Watauga County Commissioners jointly honored players and coaches from five Watauga High School sports teams with formal resolutions recognizing their outstanding achievements this season. County Commissioner Chair Braxton Eggers expressed pride in the

student-athletes, coaches, and mentors, while Commissioner Ronnie Marsh reminded students to acknowledge and appreciate their parents for their unwavering support throughout their athletic journeys.

★ **Resolutions Honoring Achievements**

- *Watauga High School Women's Golf Team, Head Coach Tasha Adams, Assistant Coach Dustin Adams, and Athletic Director Dustin Kerley* for their exceptional achievement as the 2025 NCHSAA 6A West Regional Runner-Up. Senior Chloe Weigl was named the Northwest 6A/7A Conference Player of the Year and placed in the top ten at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) 6A Women's Golf State Championship Tournament.
- *Watauga High School Women's Tennis Team, Head Coach Shay Casey, Assistant Coach Donna Nicastro, and Athletic Director Dustin Kerley* for their exceptional achievement as the 2025 NCHSAA 6A Regional Runner-Up after advancing to the NCHSAA 6A State Championship match. The team achieved an exceptional overall record of 19–1, captured the conference championship, and completed regular-season play undefeated. Senior Larson Berry and sophomore Abby Talton represented Watauga High School in the NCHSAA 6A State Doubles Tournament, earning an impressive second-place finish in the state.
- *Watauga High School Women's Volleyball Team, Head Coach Kim Pryor, Assistant Coaches Casey Gragg, Becca Bumgarner, Hannah Masucci, Susan Miller, and Brelyn Sturgill, and Athletic Director Dustin Kerley* for their exceptional achievement as the 2025 NCHSAA 6A State Runner-Up. This marked their first state championship appearance since 1998. The team earned the title of the 6A West Regional Championship through perseverance, skill, and teamwork. Junior Ashlyn Smith received the NCHSAA Sportsmanship Award, the highest honor for volleyball at the state level. Senior Emma Pastusic and junior Lainey Gragg were named to the North Carolina Volleyball Coaches Association's All-State and All-Region Teams for the 6A classification. Kim Pryor received the NCVBCA (North Carolina Volleyball Coaches Association) Coach of the Year award for class 6A.
- *Watauga High School Men's Cross Country Team, Head Coach Randy McDonough, Assistant Coaches Dan McAulay, Matt Anderson, Alayna McLaughlin, Dolly Reaves, and Scott Townsend, and Athletic Director Dustin Kerley* for their exceptional achievement as the 2025 NCHSAA 6A West Regional Champions. The Watauga High School Men's Cross Country Team completed an outstanding 2025 season, finishing in sixth place at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association 6A State Championship. The team earned the title of 6A West Regional champions, captured their 21st consecutive conference, and achieved an impressive 37 total conference championships in program history.
- *Watauga High School Women's Cross Country Team, Head Coach Randy McDonough, Assistant Coaches Dan McAulay, Matt Anderson, Alayna McLaughlin, Dolly Reaves, and Scott Townsend, and Athletic Director Dustin Kerley* for their exceptional achievement as the 2025 NCHSAA 6A State Champions and for representing Watauga County with excellence and pride. This state title marks Watauga's fifth championship in program history and the first since 1995. The team earned the title of 6A West Regional champions, captured their ninth consecutive conference, and achieved an impressive 37 total conference championships in program history. Sophomore Cali

Townsend was named the Conference Runner of the Year and the 6A Regional Champion. Josie Mayo won the NCHSAA 2025 Women's Cross Country Sportsmanship Award.

★ **Servant's Heart Awards**

The Servant's Heart Award is the highest honor presented by the Superintendent and the Watauga County Board of Education. It recognizes those who go above and beyond the call of duty—those who serve not for recognition, but from the heart. Dr. Leslie Alexander said, “When Valle Crucis School was damaged by Hurricane *Helene* and its students were suddenly without a place to learn, our community rose to the occasion in remarkable ways. In the face of challenge, compassion answered the call.” After the storm, Valle Crucis staff showed remarkable resilience, prioritizing students despite losing their school building. They transformed temporary spaces into classrooms, with support from the Appalachian State University's Child Development Center (Pre-K), Holy Cross Episcopal Church (K–1), Valle Crucis Conference Center (grades 2–5), and Caldwell Community College (grades 6–8). These partners ensured continuity of learning, stability, and care, preserving both education and a sense of normalcy. Each of these partners became a vital thread in the fabric of recovery, reminding us that a school is so much more than a building.

For their extraordinary kindness and unwavering support of the Valle Crucis School community, Dr. Alexander proudly presented each of them with the Servant's Heart Award. Accepting the awards were:

- Valle Crucis Faculty/Staff: Brittany Burrow, Traci Hartley, Erin Jones, Missy Lipford, David Shack, Dr. Bonnie Smith (*Principal*), and Jennifer Stevens
- ASU's Child Development Center: Moriah Stegall (*Director*), Jennifer Eller (*Assistant Director*), Christian Cook (*Master Teacher*), and Jamie Parson (*Acting Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Policies, Development, and Training*)
- Valle Crucis Conference Center & Holy Cross Community Church: Margaret Love (*Executive Director*), Brenda Lowman (*Board President*), and Jennifer Browning
- CCC&TI Watauga Campus: Dr. Mark Poarch (*President*), Ronald Holste (*Executive Director*), and Jason Chaffin (*Chief of Staff*)

Dr. Childers thanked Dr. Alexander for sharing the “heart” behind the recognition of these partners. Dr. Poarch and Ronnie Holste each expressed how honored they were to support the efforts and to be part of the solution. Dr. Bonnie Smith noted that words cannot fully capture the appreciation owed to these groups for their care and support of the students and faculty of Valle Crucis. Dr. Jay Fenwick added, “There is a depth to this effort that is not captured with words or certificates, but ‘thank you’ is all we have.” Dr. Alexander concluded by thanking the Valle Crucis faculty/staff, the Board of Education, and the Commissioners for “fighting the good fight” throughout the entire process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no citizens who made public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of the Minutes for 10/6/2025

- B. Field Trip Requests
- C. Declaration of Surplus
- D. Approval for the Purchase of New Activity Bus
- E. Contracted Custodial Services for Hardin Park
- F. Policies:
 - o 4130: Discretionary Admission
 - o 4150: School Assignment
 - o 4152: Unsafe School Choice Transfer
 - o 7425: School Administrator Contracts
- G. Personnel Report

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

BUDGET RESOLUTION

Chief Financial Officer Joe Nash presented the 2025–26 Budget Resolution and provided a detailed overview of the following funds:

- Fund 1 – State Public Schools: \$36,996,536
- Fund 2 – Local Current Expense: \$16,886,584
- Fund 3 – Federal Grants: \$2,593,342
- Fund 4 – Capital Outlay: \$13,770,216
- Fund 5 – School Nutrition: \$2,649,100
- Fund 6 – Extended Learning Centers: \$779,869
- Fund 8 – Special Revenues: \$3,964,491

Total: \$77,640,138

Mr. Nash expressed his gratitude to all who carefully manage spending and funding for Watauga County Schools, ensuring that resources are available to support students.

Dr. Adam Hege moved to approve the Budget Resolution. Alison Idol seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ

- 3210: Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials
- 3510: Religious-Based Exemptions from School Programs
- 4120: Domicile or Residence Requirements
- 4318: Use of Wireless Communication Devices
- 5024/6127/7266: Emergency Epinephrine Delivery Systems
- 5070/7350: Public Records - Retention, Release, and Disposition
- 6125: Administering Medicines to Students
- 6340: Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts
- 7100: Recruitment and Selection of Personnel
- 7820: Personnel Files
- 4400-R(1): Attendance - High School

Dr. Wayne Eberle shared policies for first read, and they will be brought to the January BOE meeting for second read.

BOARD OPERATIONS

Alison Idol asked that the Board keep Charlotte Lloyd and her husband in their thoughts. Dr. Childers will participate remotely in the December BOE meeting, which will include the election of officers.

{The December BOE meeting was canceled.}

BOARD COMMENTS

Dr. Childers highlighted an EdNC article featuring Watauga's ongoing literacy efforts. Dr. Alexander noted that the schools are using data to guide instruction and have a systematic approach to literacy development. While work remains, she emphasized that many exciting initiatives and successes are already underway.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Jay Fenwick made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alison Idol. The motion was approved by all members, and the meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Board of Education Chair

Dr. Leslie Alexander, Superintendent

WATAUGA COUNTY FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

This request is for a: ___ day trip ___ out of state day trip ___ overnight trip ___X___ 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) _____**Frankie Lancaster**_____ School: _____ Cell phone
number:**3366922713**_____ Grade(s): **10-12**_____ Number of students: **13**_____

Departure time/date: _____**March 5th, 2026**_____ Return time/date: _____**March 8th, 2026**_____

Educational purpose:

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

Biloxi Mississippi, Travel on march 5th, Competition is March 6th and 7th, return home the 8th

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: **We have been invited to a National Acappella Competition to represent WHS. The competition is in Biloxi Mississippi and directly reflects the growth and direction of the choral program. I also realize there are still many details to work out because we were just accepted a little over a week ago. Due to scheduling conflicts this will be a one stop competition for us. We have chosen this location because this quarterfinal Showcases the Defending Two Time National Champion for this entire competition. We thought it best to go and really determine where we stand in this new realm for WHS by competing against the best there is.**

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff _____**Frankie Lancaster, Meagan Lancaster (HP),(potentially Jesse Carswell WHS)**_____

Names of all non-school chaperones: **Sunnee Freed (GV)**

Transportation plan:

Local business partnership

Approval/Signatures:

Required signatures if applicable:

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

Below is A brief overlook of the Itinerary for the AudioVox Competition trip on March 5th-8th.

March 5. 2026

- Travel day starting at 5:30am
- 2 WCS vans driven by myself and Jesse Carswell, WHS
- Travel time will be close to 12 hours to Biloxi, Mississippi
- Check into VRBO, VRBO Link, there are two separate houses that have been obtained
- *One house is for the young men and the other is for the young ladies with a WCS employee, Sunnee Freed staying in the young ladies house

March 6th. 2026

- Morning meal and preparation for competition
- early afternoon we will make our way to the Immersive Media Performing Arts Center in Gulfport Mississippi for contest preparation, sound check and the first round
- ending late evening with a dinner

March 7th. 2026

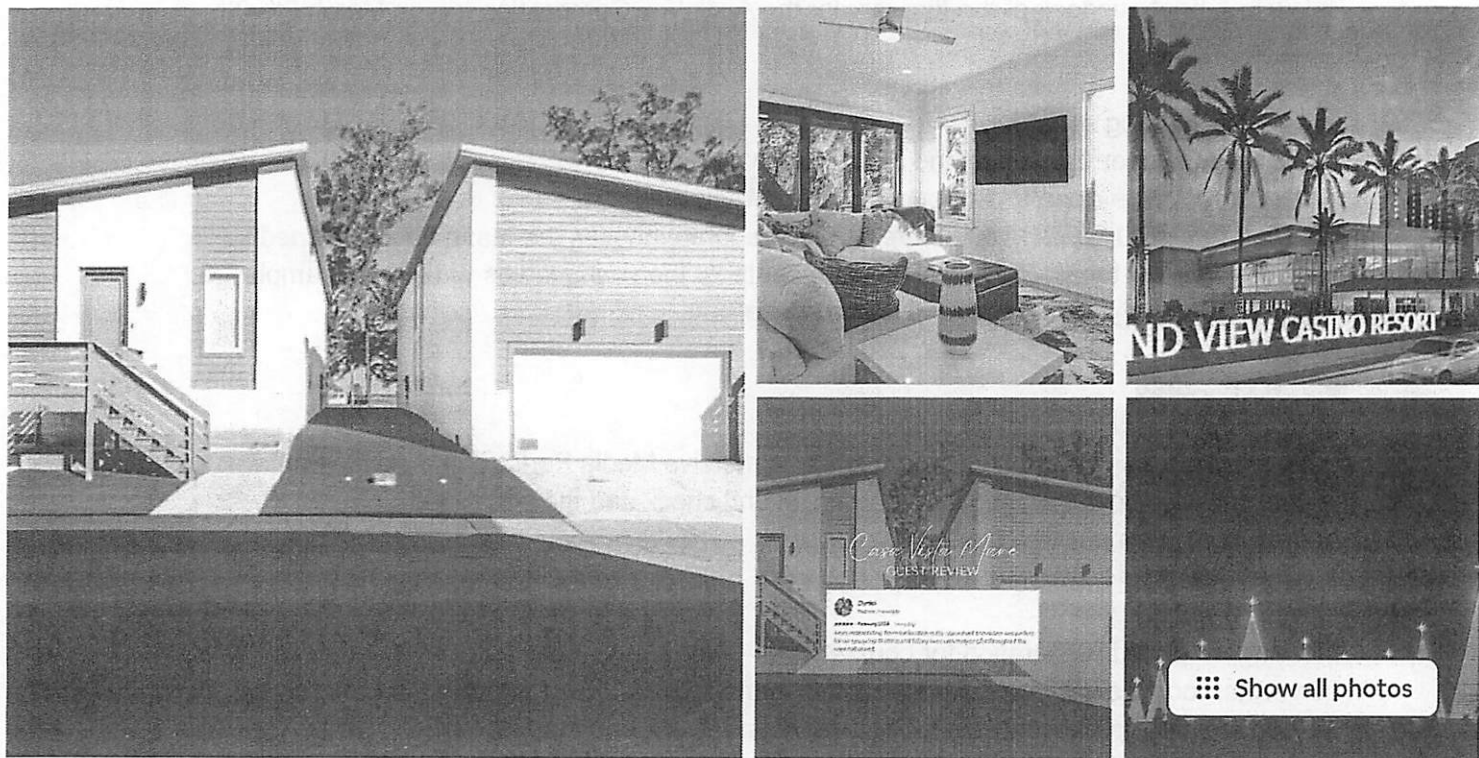
- Morning meal and preparation for competition
- early afternoon we will make our way to the Immersive Media Performing Arts Center, iMPAC in Gulfport Mississippi for contest preparation, sound check and the first round
- ending early evening with an awards ceremony

March 8th. 2026

- travel day back to Boone starting at 5:30am
- roughly 12 hours

Modern, Steps to Beach/Ocean View/Casinos

[Share](#) [Save](#)



Entire home in Gulfport, Mississippi

16+ guests · 8 bedrooms · 10 beds · 4 baths



4.89
★★★★★

18
Reviews



Hosted by Brandon And Tiffany

Superhost · 9 years hosting

Add dates for prices

CHECK-IN Add date	CHECKOUT Add date
GUESTS 1 guest	

[Check availability](#)



Self check-in

Check yourself in with the smartlock.



Extra spacious

Guests love this home's spaciousness for a comfortable stay.



Peace and quiet

This home is in a quiet area.



[Report this listing](#)

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) Samuel Vining School: Watauga High School

Cell phone number: 828-817-9416 Grade(s): 10th - 12th Number of students: 30

Departure date: 03/16 Return date: 03/20

Departure time: 7:30am Return time: 4:30 - 6:30pm

Educational purpose:

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

Washington, DC. Including a stop in Charlottesville. Includes visiting
many of the political sights in DC as well as historical.

Purpose of trip and how it relates to the curriculum: This is a rotating DC trip (every 4 years)
part of the Civics club - Political Pioneers. The goal of this trip is to help students
have a direct connection to the people that represent them at the national
level. The trip is also informative of our nation's history and
can help the ~~united~~ students garner a greater grasp of the mistakes
from the past to better engage the future.

Supervision and Safety:

Names of all school staff chaperones: Samuel Vining, Jamie Wilson, Daniel Machon

Names of all non-school chaperones: _____

All chaperones have a background check completed: ☒

Sponsoring teacher initials: BT

Are all site(s) accessible to students with disabilities? ☒ yes ☐ no How will students with disabilities be

accommodated for site access and transportation? ADA compliance is available at every site
we visit to place we eat.

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) _____

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: Daniel Mackon Round trip mileage: 750 # of buses needed: 1

Total cost per student \$ 730 Source of funds: Students & Fundraising

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

Approval/Signatures:

Sponsoring teacher signature: [Signature] Date: 11 / 25 / 2025

Principal approval: [Signature] Date: 12 / 5 / 25

Required signatures if applicable:

Transportation Director approval: [Signature] Date: / /

Superintendent approval: [Signature] Date: 12 / 16 / 25

Board of Education approval: [Signature] Date: / /

**WHS Washington D.C. Student Trip – March 16–20,
2026 – Associated with Political Pioneers, taking 3
chaperones.** (Vining, J. Wilson, D. Machon)

Tentative Itinerary

March 16, 2026 – Travel & Monticello

- 7:00am: Arrive at WHS with packed bags; load buses.
 - 7:30am: Review trip guidelines on bus; depart for Washington, D.C.
 - 12:00pm: Packed lunch in Charlottesville (on bus).
 - 1:15pm: Arrive at Monticello.
 - 1:30–2:15pm: Highlights Tour (\$336).
 - 2:15–3:30pm: Explore grounds, museum, and gift shop.
 - 3:30pm: Latest departure from Monticello.
 - 4:00–5:30pm: University of Virginia History Tour.
 - 5:30–7:00pm: Dinner at The Dairy (Charlottesville Food Court).
 - 7:00–9:00pm: Travel to hotel (Hampton Inn Washington DC NoMa Union Station)
 - 10:30pm: Lights out.
-

March 17, 2026 – Branches of Government Day

- 7:30am: Wake up and breakfast.
- 8:30am: Load buses; depart for D.C.
- 9:30am: Visit a memorial or two on arrival.

- 10:00–11:30am: Library of Congress.
 - 11:30am–12:30pm: Supreme Court (lecture).
 - 12:30pm: Lunch.
 - 2:00–3:30pm: U.S. Capitol Building tour.
 - 3:30–4:00pm: White House tour.
 - 6:00pm: Dinner (location TBD).
-

March 18, 2026 – Memorials Day

- 7:30am: Wake up and breakfast.
 - 8:30am: Load buses; depart for memorials.
 - 9:00–11:00am: Arlington National Cemetery; walk across bridge.
 - 11:15–11:45am: Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Memorial, WWII Memorial.
 - 12:00pm: Lunch.
 - 1:30pm: Washington Monument.
 - 2:30pm: Jefferson Memorial.
 - 3:30pm: FDR Memorial.
 - 4:30pm: MLK Jr. Memorial.
 - 5:30pm: Dinner at a formal restaurant (TBD).
 - 7:30pm: Return to Lincoln Memorial/Korean War Memorial.
 - 9:00pm: Back to hotel.
 - 10:30pm: Lights out.
-

March 19, 2026 – Smithsonian Day

- Morning: National Museum of African American History and Culture.
 - Late morning: National Archives.
 - Lunch: TBD.
 - Afternoon: National Air & Space Museum.
 - Late afternoon: Holocaust Memorial Museum tour.
-

March 20, 2026 – Mount Vernon & Return

- Morning: Visit Mount Vernon (\$495). Potential for White House Tour here instead
- Late morning: Depart for Boone.

Cost Schedule

Item	Cost
Monticello Tour	\$336
Sub Vining (5 days)	\$180/day × 5 = \$900
Sub Wilson (5 days)	\$180/day × 5 = \$900
White Bus Rental	\$1,060 (\$1500)
Hotel (9 doubles, 2 singles, 5 nights)	\$7,956.20
Arlington National Cemetery Tour	\$150
Mount Vernon	\$495
Food (\$45–50/day × 5 days)	\$225–\$250
Metro Pass (3-day)	\$1,113.75

Estimated total cost per student:

- Add all costs and divide by 30 students: roughly (gonna charge \$500– \$430.36 + \$230 (final total with food and additional expenses—\$730 total)

Hardin Park

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
28954	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1
500229	1	SMARTBOARD		1
NONE	2	5 DRAWER FILE CABINETS	2	
40204	1	IFP- VIEWSONIC		1
5			2	3

Mabel

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
25166	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1
1			0	1

Parkway

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
NONE	1	MONITOR		1
NONE	1	STUDENT CHAIR		1
37205	1	CHROMEBOOK		1
37641	1	CHROMEBOOK		1
NONE	26	STUDENT DESKS	26	
30			26	4

Valle Crucis

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
33620	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
33624	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
33627	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
33634	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
33639	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
33641	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
33657	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
36379	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
36621	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
51667	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
51668	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
51669	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
51680	1	Lenovo 300e	1	

51709	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
51726	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
51730	1	Lenovo 300e	1	
34045	1	Lenovo 100e	1	
36885	1	HP CHROMEBOOK		1
36953	1	HP CHROMEBOOK		1
300127	1	DOC CAMERA- ELMO		1
300188	1	DOC CAMERA- ELMO		1
300145	1	DOC CAMERA- ELMO		1
300138	1	DOC CAMERA- ELMO		1
35548	1	LAPTOP GEN2 100e		1

24

17

7

Watauga High School

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
80751	1	PRINTER- BROTHER MFC		1
51746	1	iPAD AIR 2		1
37457	1	HP CHROMEBOOK		1
903543	1	PRINTER- HP		1
NONE	1	MONITOR		1
906030	1	iPAD MINI		1
906046	1	iPAD MINI		1
906041	1	iPAD MINI		1
900782	1	IFP-		1
28808	1	PROJECTOR		1
37418	1	HP CHROMEBOOK		1
38813	1	HP CHROMEBOOK		1
37418	1	HP CHROMEBOOK		1
52238	1	CHROMEBOOK 300e		1
905642	1	CTE monitor		1
905647	1	CTE monitor		1
905644	1	CTE monitor		1
905645	1	CTE monitor		1
905634	1	CTE monitor		1
905635	1	CTE monitor		1
905651	1	CTE monitor		1
905638	1	CTE monitor		1
905632	1	CTE monitor		1
905637	1	CTE monitor		1
905650	1	CTE monitor		1
905641	1	CTE monitor		1
905649	1	CTE monitor		1
905640	1	CTE monitor		1
905636	1	CTE monitor		1

905646	1 CTE monitor	1
80160	1 CTE monitor	1
905648	1 CTE monitor	1
903523	1 Elmo Document Camera	1

33

----------------------	----------------------

0

33

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>
	0		0	0

Transportation Department

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

Maintenance Department

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

Child Nutrition

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



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

School Nutrition Program Monica C. Bolick, Director

Child Nutrition Procurement Plan January 12, 2026

School Nutrition Procurement Plans are written to promote and enforce free and open competition for the procurement of goods and services within the School Nutrition Program. The plan will ensure that all reasonable effort is made to solicit bids, proposals and/or quotes from as many qualified vendors as possible.

In October 2025, new federal guidelines were adopted to increase the micro purchasing threshold from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The following plan has been updated to reflect this change and to align the WCS School Nutrition procurement plan to these federal regulations.

Thank you for your support of the School Nutrition Program.

Monica C. Bolick
Director of School Nutrition



**WATAUGA COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**
Margaret E. Gragg Education Center
175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607
(828) 264-7190

Procurement Plan for School Food Authorities

Watauga County Schools

PROCUREMENT PLAN

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

The procurement plan described on the following pages (pages 2 through 41) was adopted by the Watauga County Schools Board of Education (BOE) and will be implemented effective January 12, 2026 and from that date forward until amended. All procurement processes and activities will be consistent with the principles of free and open competition. The SFA will avoid unreasonable conditions that restrict competition. All reasonable efforts will be made to solicit bids, proposals and/or quotes from as many qualified vendors as possible; all qualified vendors are invited to respond to solicitations.

The procurement of all goods and services using School Nutrition funds will be carefully documented during each phase of the procurement process. The BOE shall award contracts to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed solicitation. The BOE will restrict awards, sub-awards and contracts with any party that is debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. All parties involved in the procurement process involving School Nutrition funds will comply with a written code of ethics/conduct, which includes a conflict-of-interest policy. Adherence with the code of ethics/conduct and conflict of interest policies is fundamental to the integrity of the procurement process.

Chair, Board of Education

Date

Superintendent of Schools

Date

Watauga County Schools

PROCUREMENT PLAN

The Watauga County Schools (hereinafter referred to as the School Food Authority (SFA)) plan for procuring goods and services for use in the School Nutrition Program is described in detail herein. The plan includes all Federal food-assistance programs administered by the SFA. Adhering to the procurement plan is intended to ensure free and open competition, in an environment that promotes transparency in all transactions, documented comparability for ethical decision-making, and adequate documentation to substantiate the allowable use of School Nutrition funds.

Part I: Code of Ethics/Conduct governing the procurement of goods and services using School Nutrition Funds

A. The following conduct will be expected of all people who are engaged in the award and administration of contracts supported by School Nutrition funds.

1. No employee, officer or agent of the Local Education Agency (LEA) shall participate in the development of a solicitation, selection of a recipient, and/or administration of a contract supported by School Nutrition funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved.
2. Conflicts of interest arise when one of the following has a financial or other interest in the contractor selected for the award or a partner of the contractor selected for the award:
 - a. Any employee, officer, or agent of the LEA.
 - b. Any member of the immediate family of an employee, officer, or agent of the LEA; and/or
 - c. An organization which employs or is about to employ one of the above.
3. Employees, officers or agents of the LEA and SFA shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub-agreements. (*Note: the SFA may establish local policy indicating School Nutrition personnel may accept an unsolicited item of nominal value where the exact value is established and recorded in this procurement plan or participate in a group event where the financial interest is not significant and the event is open to all attendees or participants.)
4. It is acknowledged that the penalty for violation of the Code of Ethics/Conduct may include any of the following:
 - i. Reprimand by Board of Education; or
 - ii. Dismissal by Board of Education; or
 - iii. Any legal action necessary.

B. The Watauga County Schools Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies are shown in Attachment C.

Part II: Procurement Methods used to Purchase Goods and Services using School Nutrition funds

A combination of formal and informal purchasing methods will be used to procure all goods and services on behalf of the non-profit School Food Authority (SFA). Formal purchasing methods will include the use of an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or a Request for Proposal (RFP). As required by 2 CFR 200.317 – 200.326 and NC General Statute, Article 8, Chapter 143, formal purchasing methods will always be used for any purchase that exceeds the lesser of the State's small purchase threshold of \$90,000.00 or the SFA's board-approved small purchase or simplified acquisition threshold. For purchases below the lesser of the State's simplified acquisition threshold of \$90,000 or the board approved simplified acquisition threshold, informal procurement procedures involving a documented Request for Quote (RFQ) will be utilized when seeking competitive pricing. Micro-purchase procedures as defined in 2 CFR 200.320(a)(1) may be used for goods or services reflecting separate or aggregate purchases in an amount equal to or less than \$15,000.00 in aggregate on an annual basis. Non-competitive negotiation or sole source procurement is rare and requires the prior written approval of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) prior to purchase and/or contract execution. Contracts will be awarded only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the base solicitation; consideration will be given to such matters as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance and financial and technical resources. All procurement transactions (formal, informal, sole source and emergency) will be thoroughly documented and available for review and/or audit by Federal, State and local authorities upon request.

The SFA will make all efforts to avoid the acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative items. Where appropriate, an analysis will be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analysis to determine the most economical approach, including purchases made using existing contracts that were competitively procured by the State of North Carolina and in accordance with State General Statute. Where feasible, the SFA will consider the purchase of gently used or surplus equipment in lieu of purchasing new equipment.

Overly prescriptive specifications will be avoided to promote competition. When it is impractical to make a clear, definitive description, a "brand name or equivalent" description will be used as a means to define a product or service. In this case, the specific features of the named brand, which must be met by contractors, must be clearly stated. In order to ensure objective contractor performance, any potential contractor that develops or drafts specifications, requirements, statements of work or other solicitation documents or resources, will be excluded from competing for such procurements. All solicitation documents will identify the specific requirements which the contractor must fulfill and any other factors that will be considered when evaluating quotes, bids, or proposals.

A. Formal Procurement Methods

Formal methods of procurement including an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or a Request for Proposal (RFP) will be used for any and all purchases in excess of the SFA's simplified acquisition (or small purchase) threshold OR the State simplified acquisition (or small purchase) threshold of \$90,000.00, whichever is less.

The SFA's Simplified Acquisition Threshold is \$90,000; this amount will be used to determine whether formal or informal purchasing methods will be used.

Formal procurement methods will be applied on the basis of a/an:

- ☒ Centralized or administrative office purchase
- ☒ Individual school purchase
- ☒ Multi-School system purchases
- ☒ Previously competitively procured State contract, provided Uniform Grants Guidance is included in the terms and conditions of SFA's solicitation/contract
- ☒ Combination of above
- ☐ Other

An IFB will be used when the sole criteria for awarding a contract to the most responsive, responsible bidder is the cost of goods or services. An RFP will be used when other factors, objective and subjective, will be used to award the contract. When using an RFP, cost will be a significant factor in the contract award along with other evaluation criteria. The specific evaluation criteria will be provided as part of the original solicitation to enable all potential contractors to clearly understand the basis of the award.

Given the potential to purchase more than products and services above the SFA's Simplified Acquisition Threshold of \$90,000 in goods and services using school nutrition funds, it will be the responsibility of the Director of School Nutrition or designee to document the specific cost of a procurement to determine and document which formal procurement method will be used and the justification for doing so.

The Director of School Nutrition or designee will perform a cost analysis for every procurement action in excess the SFA's small purchase threshold where formal procurement methods will be used; the documentation of the cost analysis will be kept on file with other procurement documents and will be subject to review and/or audit.

When a formal procurement method is required, the following procedures shall apply:

1. A public advertisement is required to solicit bids or proposals for all purchases over the Local Education Agency's (LEA) simplified acquisition (or small purchase) threshold of \$90,000. The public announcement will contain a general description of items to be purchased; specific procedures for submission of a bid or proposal; deadline for submission of sealed bids or proposals, and the address where complete specifications and bid/proposal instructions may be obtained and the contact person to whom questions may be addressed.

An announcement of an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or a Request for Proposal (RFP) will be placed on the IPS website and school district website to publicize the intent of the School Food Authority to purchase needed items. The announcement will run for the duration of the bid/proposal from release date until opening date, or a minimum of (10) days prior to bid/proposal opening date.

2. In an IFB or RFP, each vendor will be given an opportunity to submit a bid or proposal using the same complete, adequate and realistic specifications.
3. Specifications will be developed and provided to all potential contractors desiring to submit bids or proposals for the products or services requested. Vendors will be selected to receive the solicitation using the following methods:
 - a. Prior acceptable service with the SFA
 - b. Vendor availability of product or service
 - c. Anticipated student acceptance of product or service
 - d. Reputation of potential vendor

Any party that assists the SFA in the development of the written specifications, product descriptions or services to be provided, will be disqualified from submitting bids or proposals for such products or services. Potential vendors are prohibited from developing or assisting in the development of specifications, product descriptions or services to be provided.

4. If any potential vendor is in doubt as to the true meaning of the specifications or purchase conditions, an interpretation will be provided by the Director of School Nutrition or designee. If a single vendor requests clarification on an item in an IFB, RFP, or other solicitation, a response will be provided to all potential vendors that originally requested and/or received the solicitation.
5. The IFB or RFP will clearly define the purchase conditions. The following shall be addressed in the solicitation and final contract documents:
 - a. Intent of the procurement activity
 - b. Contract period
 - c. SFA is responsible for all contracts awarded (statement)
 - d. Date, time and location of pre-bid or pre-proposal meeting (if any)
 - e. Date, time and location of bid opening and bid/proposal submission procedures with SFA contact information
 - f. How the vendor is to be informed of bid/proposal acceptance or rejection
 - g. Type of contract (i.e., fixed price with firm price for delivery, etc.)
 - h. Specific requirements potential contractors must fulfill in order for the bid or proposal to be evaluated
 - i. Statement indicating any and all bids or proposals may be rejected at the discretion of the SFA
 - j. Benefits to which the SFA will be entitled if the contractor cannot or will not perform as required in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract
 - k. Statement regarding any contract extension or "rollover" options based upon the mutual agreement of both parties
 - l. Statement concerning any intent for piggybacking should a reasonable need emerge
 - m. Statement regarding the return of rebates, discounts and other purchase incentives to the SFA's non-profit school nutrition account
 - n. Historically Underused Businesses (HUB) Statement to involve minority businesses, where possible
 - o. Remedy for non-performance/termination of contract; termination provisions and the basis for any settlement for all purchases and service contracts over \$10,000.00
 - p. Non-collusion statement
 - q. Assurance of ethical practices statement
 - r. Bid/proposal protest procedures
 - s. Instrument to be used for obtaining goods or services (such as a purchase order or other system of ordering) to be described by the SFA in detail, including how the contractor will be notified using the purchase instrument
 - t. Escalation/de-escalation clause for future contract renewal periods (should such be allowed) based on appropriate standard or cost index
 - u. Statement of assurance of protection under Civil Rights laws
 - v. Provision requiring access by duly authorized representatives of the SFA, State agency, United States Department of Agriculture, or Comptroller General to any books, documents, papers and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to all negotiated contracts
 - w. Method of payment (invoices, statements, etc.)
 - x. Method of shipment or delivery upon contract award
 - y. Delivery schedule and delivery requirements

- z. Provision requiring contractors to maintain all required records for three years plus the current year (and any contract periods open as a result of unresolved matter) after final payment and all other pending matters are closed for all negotiated contracts
 - aa. Bid/proposal Certification form
 - bb. Specifications that are sufficient to obtain the exact goods or services needed, but not so detailed as to restrict competition
 - cc. Product/service specifications to include approved brand or equivalent, quantity, quality, packaging, pricing (unit and extended), procedures for documenting/pre-approving of any substitutions or deviations
 - dd. Provision requiring the contractor to recognize mandatory standards and policies related to energy efficiency which are contained in the State Energy Plan
 - ee. Provision requiring the contractor to recognize mandatory standards and policies related to energy efficiency which are contained in the State Energy Plan issued in compliance with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (PL 94-163)
 - ff. All contracts over \$100,000.00 will require compliance with the Clean Air Act issued under Section 306, Executive Order 11738
 - gg. Signed Certificate of Lobbying for all contracts over \$100,000.00
 - hh. Signed Statement of non-collusion
 - ii. Signed Debarment/Suspension Certificate or statement included in contract or copy of Excluded Parties List System (EPLS)
 - jj. Provision requiring "Buy American" as outlined in 7 CFR Part 1787, which includes specific instructions for prior approval of any and all of non-domestic products
 - kk. Provision requiring the Contractor to abide with the Jessica Lunsford Act (sample language is attached with this document)
 - ll. Provision requiring the entity conducting the procurement to abide with the Iran Divestment Act of 2015 (as modified).
6. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for publicly advertising and coordinating the procurement process for all purchases using school nutrition funds. This person will also be responsible for receiving and securing all bids, proposals, quotes and other collateral documents if indicated as part of the solicitation process.
7. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible to ensure all SFA procurements are conducted in compliance with applicable Federal regulations, State General Statutes or policies of the local Board of Education and that the Procurement Checklist shown at the end of this document will be completed for each formal procurement, signed and dated by the person named above and maintained on file with the original procurement documents.
8. The following criteria will be used to award contracts (based on bids or proposals):
- a. Price _____
 - b. Prior contract performance (quality, service, etc.) _____
 - c. Vendor reputation and responsiveness _____
 - d. Anticipated student acceptance of product or service _____
9. In awarding RFP, a set of award criterion in the form of a weighted objective evaluation tool will be provided to each potential vendor in the initial solicitation documents/materials. Price alone will not be the sole basis for award but remains the primary consideration when awarding the contract. Following evaluation and competitive negotiations, a firm fixed-price contract will be awarded to the successful vendor.

10. Contracts will be awarded to the most responsible bidder/proposer whose bid or proposal is most responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the SFA, price, and other factors considered. Any and all quotes, bids or proposals may be rejected at the discretion of the SFA and/or LEA or appropriate governing body.
11. The Director of School Nutrition or designee is required to sign the bid tabulation of competitive, sealed bids or the evaluation criterion score form of competitive proposals signifying a fair and impartial review and approval of the successful bidder/proposer.
12. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will annually review the SFA's written procurement plan in the context of current local, State and Federal regulations to ensure compliance with applicable laws. This individual will also be responsible for updating the School Nutrition Procurement Plan as often as required to reflect current Federal, State and local procurement policies.
13. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for documentation that the actual product(s) or service(s) specified are received.
14. Any time a previously agreed-upon item is not available, the Director of School Nutrition or designee will review, select and approve the acceptable alternate. The contractor must inform the Director of School Nutrition or designee no later than one (1) business day prior to shipment arrival that a product is not available and that a substitute item may be considered. The Director of School Nutrition or designee shall review and approve all product/service substitutions in advance and in writing to the contractor. No product or service shall be used in the School Nutrition program that was not approved, in writing, in advance by the Director of School Nutrition or designee. In the event a non-domestic agricultural product is to be provided to the SFA, the contractor must obtain, in advance, the written approval of the product from the School Nutrition Administrator. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will oversee compliance with the *Buy American Provision*.
15. Full documentation as to the reason an accepted item was unavailable, and to the procedure used in determining acceptable alternates, will be available for audit and review. The person responsible for preparing and maintaining this documentation is the Director of School Nutrition or designee.
16. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for maintaining all documentation of the procurement process and making documents available for review during announced and unannounced program reviews.
17. When appropriate and approved by the Director of School Nutrition or designee, the SFA will exercise its option to purchase items that were previously competitively procured by the North Carolina Department of Administration, Purchase and Contract Division, using a duly awarded, active State Term Contract, provided Uniform Grants Guidance is included in the terms and conditions of the SFA's solicitation/contract.

B. Informal Procurement Procedures

1. When the cost of products or services is less than the LEA's small purchase threshold of \$90,000 or the Federal micro-purchasing threshold of \$15,000, informal purchasing procedures including the Request for Quotes (RFQ) and Micro-purchasing Procedures (MPP) will be utilized.
2. When using an RFQ, the following procedures will apply:
 - a. Clearly written specifications will be prepared and provided to each potential vendor; the SFA's approved terms and conditions will also be provided to each potential vendor.

- b. Each vendor will be contacted and given an opportunity to provide a price quote on the same specifications. A minimum of three (3) vendors shall be contacted.
- c. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for communicating with potential vendors when price quotes are required.
- d. Price quotes will receive appropriate confidentiality before awarding a contract.
- e. Quotes will be awarded by the Director of School Nutrition or designee. Quotes awarded will be to the lowest and best quote based upon quality, service, availability, price, vendor reputation, and prior service.
- f. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for documentation of procedures to show selection of vendor, reasons for selection, names of all vendors contacted, price quotes from each vendor, and written specifications.
- g. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for documentation that the actual product(s) or service(s) specified is received.
- h. Any time an accepted item is not available, the Director of School Nutrition or designee will select and approve an acceptable alternative. Full documentation will be made available as to the selection of the acceptable item.
- i. Bids will be awarded on the following criteria:
 - a. Price
 - b. Prior contract performance (quality, service, etc.)
 - c. Vendor reputation and responsiveness
 - d. Anticipated student acceptance of product or service
- j. The Director of School Nutrition or designee is required to sign all quote tabulations, signifying a fair and equitable review and approval of the selections.
- k. Quotes from an adequate number of qualified sources will be obtained. Where only one (1) quote is received, the district will provide written documentation as to why there were fewer than three (3) qualified quotes.
- l. When appropriate and approved by the Director of School Nutrition or designee, the SFA will purchase items that were previously competitively procured by the North Carolina Department of Administration, Purchase and Contract Division, using a duly awarded, active State Term Contract, provided Uniform Grants Guidance is included in the terms and conditions of the SFA's solicitation/contract.

3. When using MPP, the following will apply:

- a. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will determine whether the aggregate amount of purchases for goods and/or services does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold of (equal to or less than) \$15,000, a micro-purchasing procedure may be utilized. In so doing, the Director of School Nutrition or designee, will be responsible to ensure that, under no condition, will purchases be sub-divided into amounts of \$15,000 or less in order to circumvent the formal and informal purchasing requirements.

- b. Purchase orders may be solicited without quotes if the Director of School Nutrition or designee determines such practice is consistent with micro-purchasing regulations and consistent with the SFA's written Procurement Plan.
- c. The Director of School Nutrition or designee may purchase products and services (similar or dissimilar, purchased at once, as a single, collective unit whose aggregate cost is less than or equal to \$15,000 in a single transaction, without obtaining competitive quotes as long as the Director of School Nutrition or designee determines the price to be reasonable.
- d. The Director of School Nutrition or designee shall ensure competition is achieved by distributing purchase transactions equitably among qualified sources where the price is reasonable. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will document all micro-purchases on a *Micro-purchase Tracking Form*.
- e. For purposes of micro-purchasing, a transaction shall be defined as "an occurrence in which two (2) or more entities exchange goods, services or money between or among them under an agreement formed for their mutual benefit."
- f. The Director of School Nutrition or designee agrees to contact the State agency with any questions about allowable/unallowable micro-purchases, and further agrees to maintain all documentation to substantiate micro-purchases including the following:
 - i. Rationale for using micro-purchasing.
 - ii. Estimated cost of the item/service to be procured (indicating a one-time purchase of \$15,000 or less);
 - iii. Name and address of the vendor;
 - iv. Documentation that purchases are made from a variety of potential vendors as opposed to a single vendor for the majority of micro-purchases;
 - v. All micro-purchases were approved by the Director of School Nutrition or designee prior to the initiation of a single micro-purchase.
- g. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for the documentation of records to fully explain the decision to use micro-purchasing and to document the micro-purchasing process and outcomes. Such records will be available for audit and review.
- h. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for documentation that the actual product or service as specified or required was purchased and received.

C. Sole Source of Non-competitive Procurement

When it is determined and documented that a product or service is available only from a single source and when the award of a contract is not feasible under small purchase, sealed bid or competitive negotiation, sole source or non-competitive negotiation procedures will be used, and the following procedures shall apply:

1. Written specifications for the product or service will be prepared by the SFA.
2. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible to prepare and issue a Request for Information (RFI) or other information collection tool to objectively determine whether the product or service, as described in the written specification, is available from one or more sources.
3. The Director of School Nutrition or designee determines the product or services specified qualifies as a sole source procurement, they will be responsible for reviewing the procedures to ensure all requirements for using sole source or non-competitive negotiations are met; this individual shall also be responsible for preparing appropriate documents to fully explain the decision to use the sole source procurement

process, including evidence indicating the goods or services were not available from other sources. The records will be available for audit and review.

4. A member or representative of the local Board of Education will approve, in advance, all procurements, with the exception of product testing purchases, that result from a sole source or non-competitive negotiation.
5. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for obtaining prior written State agency approval of the sole source or non-competitive negotiation before entering into the purchase of a good or service and will also be responsible for maintaining such documentation on file.
6. Sole source procurement may be used for one-time purchases of new food for product testing for which there is no brand equivalent in order to obtain product samples for conducting student taste acceptance. A record of non-competitive negotiation purchase shall be maintained by the Director of School Nutrition or designee. The record of non-competitive purchases shall include, at a minimum, the following:
 - i. Item name
 - ii. Dollar amount
 - iii. Vendor name and address, and
 - iv. Written justification for non-competitive procurement
7. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will be responsible for documentation that the actual product or service specified was received.

D. Emergency or "Pressing Need" Purchases

If it is necessary to make a one-time emergency procurement as a result of a serious, unforeseen event that requires an immediate response in order to obtain goods or services to continue meal service, protect students, personnel or SFA resources, for other purposes that support program accountability and integrity, an emergency purchase shall be made and a log of such purchases will be maintained by the Director of School Nutrition or designee. The following emergency procedures shall be followed:

1. All emergency procurements shall be approved by the Director of School Nutrition or designee. At a minimum, the following emergency procurement procedures shall be documented:
 - a. Reason for the emergency
 - b. Goods or services required
 - c. Cost (all costs to be included, shipping, installation, warranty, etc.)
 - d. Vendor name and address
 - e. Approval of the LEA official, only if required.
2. If it is necessary, in the course of a pressing need, to make an emergency purchase by means of "piggybacking" on the solicitation of another SFA, the following conditions must exist, and approved procedures must be followed and appropriately documented as follows:
 - a. The SFA that originated the solicitation must have included a "piggyback provision" in the original solicitation;
 - b. Documentation that a "pressing need" exists that requires piggybacking on another SFA's bid will be obtained;
 - c. Approval from the SFA's governing board will be obtained and documented;
 - d. Approval from the SFA that originated the IFB will be obtained and documented;
 - e. Approval from the vendor that was awarded the Contract (as a result of the IFB) will be obtained and documented;

- f. A public notice of the district's *"Intent to Waive Competitive Bidding"* will be issued at least ten (10) days prior to the regularly scheduled board meeting;
- g. Approval of piggyback will be obtained and documented from the board during a regularly scheduled meeting following the public notice;
- h. Notification to the vendor of final approval will be issued; and
- i. A contract with the vendor will be developed.

Part III: Purchasing Cooperatives

The SFA shall be a voluntary participant in the North Carolina School Nutrition Procurement Alliance (NCPA). In doing so, the SFA shall agree to the terms and conditions established and subsequently modified by the NCPA's elected Board of Directors. The original signed agreement between the SFA and the NCPA shall remain on file in the office of the School Nutrition Director or designee.

Watauga County Schools is a member of the Mountain Purchasing Cooperative. This organization includes the counties of Alleghany, Ashe, Avery and Wilkes County Schools. Usage for the cooperative members is combined to increase purchasing power and to obtain the most competitive pricing. School Nutrition Directors and designees from the participating counties within the cooperative share bidding duties with a single director taking the lead for a particular bid. Products considered for bid as a cooperative may or may not include fresh bakery items, dairy items, juice, water, high school beverages, ice cream and vending.

Part IV: Additional Procurement Provisions

1. In order to evaluate a new product, the following methods will be used:
 - a. Attendance and participation in state and national food show events
 - b. NCPA student taste testing for new products as assigned by the NCPA
 - c. Student and/or staff feedback
2. Payment will be made to the contractor when all terms and conditions of the contract have been met and verified as stipulated in the contract. (If value added features are available, payment will be based on the mutually agreed upon value added feature. For example, if prompt payment is made, discounts, etc. are allowable.)
3. Specifications will be updated by the Director of School Nutrition or designee as products change.
4. If a product or service is not received as specified, the following procedure will be implemented:
 - a. Verbal conversation with the vendor to resolve the situation
 - b. Written communication with the vendor stating the consequences of non-compliance and date of expected compliance as necessary
 - c. Written communication with 30-day notice of contract termination with the vendor
5. If the SFA chooses to use the services of an entity to maximize allowable rebates, the following procedures will be implemented:
 - a. N/A

6. The Director of School Nutrition or designee will oversee the process of managing rebates provided by a third-party participant and will track all interactions with and rebates provided by said third party:
 - a. Provide written documentation to the third-party rebate provider that all rebates must accrue to the non-profit school nutrition account. All rebate checks must be made payable to the SFA's school nutrition account.
 - b. Document the deposit of all rebates into the non-profit school nutrition account.
7. The SFA will designate an individual to monitor each contract to ensure the Contractor and the SFA adhere to all terms and conditions of the contract.
8. All contracts shall result in a fixed, firm price contract and/or cost-plus fixed fee contract.

Part V: Documentation and Records Retention

In all transactions except micro-purchases, the contractor shall agree to retain all invoices, records and other documents relating to the contract for a period of three (3) years after final payment plus the current year. The SFA, its authorized agents, and/or USDA auditors shall have full access to and the right to examine any of said materials during said period.

The SFA shall agree to retain all books, journals, records and other documents relating to the award of the contract agreement for three (3) years after final payment. Specifically, the SFA shall maintain, at a minimum, the following documents:

- a. Written rationale for the method of procurement;
- b. A copy of the original solicitation;
- c. The selection of contract type;
- d. The bidding and negotiation history and working papers;
- e. The basis for contractor selection; and/or rejection;
- f. Approval from the State agency to support a lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained;
- g. The basis for award where cost or price is not the primary factor for the decision;
- h. The terms and conditions of the contract;
- i. Any and all contract amendments or modifications;
- j. Billing and payment records;
- k. Any history of any contractor claims; and
- l. Any history of any contractor breaches.

The SFA will complete the most current *School Nutrition Procurement Checklist* for all purchases using school nutrition funds. The checklist should remain on file with the district's procurement documents as an indicator the SFA has taken all reasonable efforts to procure goods and services in a manner that is consistent with Federal regulations and policy. The checklist is shown in Attachment B.

Part VI: Other Procurement Requirements

- a. All contractors must agree to abide with the terms and conditions of the Jessica Lunsford Act. The vendor acknowledges that N.C. General Statute 14-208.18 prohibits anyone required to register as a sex offender under Article 27A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes from knowingly being on the premises of any school. This prohibition applies to persons required to register under Article 27A who have committed any offense in Article 7A of Chapter 14 or any offense where the victim of the offense was under the age of 16 years at the time of the offense.

- b. The SFA will make all reasonable efforts to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises and labor surplus area firms are engaged in solicitations and awarded contracts when possible.
- c. The SFA and its contractors shall comply with section 6002 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The requirements of Section 6002 include procuring only items designated in guidelines of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at 40 CFR part 247 that contain the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable, consistent with maintaining a satisfactory level of competition, where the purchase price of the item exceeds \$10,000 or the value of the quantity acquired during the preceding fiscal year exceeded \$10,000; procuring solid waste management services in a manner that maximizes energy and resource recovery; and establishing an affirmative procurement program for procurement of recovered materials identified in the EPA guidelines.
- d. All Contractors must agree to abide with the requirement for Criminal Background Checks. The vendor shall conduct criminal background checks on each of its employees who, pursuant to this Agreement, engage in any services on Watauga County Schools property or at any Watauga County Schools events. The Contractor shall provide documentation that criminal background checks were conducted on each of its employees prior to hiring and shall refuse employment to any person convicted of a felony or any other crime, whether misdemeanor or felony, that indicates the person poses a threat to the physical safety of students, school personnel or others. Such check shall include an annual check of the State Sex Offender and Public Protection Registration Program, the State Sexually Violent Predator Registration Program, and the National Sex Offender Registry. The vendor shall not assign any employee or agent to provide services pursuant to this contract if (1) said worker appears on any of the listed registries; (2) said worker has been convicted of a felony; (3) said worker has been convicted of any crime, whether misdemeanor or felony, involving sex, violence, or drugs; or (4) said worker has engaged in any crime or conduct indicating that the worker may pose a threat to the safety or well-being of student or school personnel. Watauga County Schools reserves the right to prohibit any individual employee of the vendor from providing services on Watauga County Schools property or at any Watauga County Schools events if Watauga County Schools determines, in its sole discretion, that such employee poses a threat to the safety or well-being of students, school personnel or others.
- e. All entities conducting procurement must agree to abide with the IRAN DIVESTMENT ACT found in Article 6E of Chapter 147 or the NC General Statutes.

Part VII: Contract Oversight

- a. The Director of School Nutrition shall designate an individual by name and/or title who will oversee each contract using School Nutrition funds to ensure all terms, conditions and deliveries are adhered to in a manner that is consistent with the contract.
- b. Each contract will be monitored on a frequency that is established at the beginning of the contract period; any failure of the contractor to abide with the terms and conditions of the contract will be reported to the School Nutrition Administrator immediately and a documented corrective action will be required and/or contract termination proceedings will begin.
- c. The SFA alone will be responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgment, for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements using school nutrition funds. These issues include, but are not limited to, source evaluation, protests, disputes and claims. These standards do not relieve the SFA of any contractual responsibilities under its contracts.

- d. It is understood by the SFA and LEA that neither the US Department of Agriculture nor the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will substitute their judgment for that of the SFA and LEA unless the matter is primarily a Federal or State concern. Violations of law will be referred to the local, State, or Federal authority having proper jurisdiction.
- e. Should the Watauga County Schools BOE determine it is in the best interest of the SFA to outsource the preparation of meals to a qualified catering company, the SFA agrees to notify the department before procuring the services of a catering company and to use the NC Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) RFP Template/Contract to solicit, evaluate, negotiate and contract with the successful vendor.
- f. Should the Watauga County Schools BOE determine it is in the best interest of the SFA to seek a for-profit Management Company to operate its non-profit School Nutrition Program, Watauga County Schools shall notify the NCDPI of its intent to outsource the program no later than six (6) months prior to the desired date of the contract. Further, the LEA agrees to use the solicitation/contract template required by the NCDPI and shall comply with the State and Federal guidelines for contracting with Management Companies. The BOE further agrees to appoint a qualified employee of the LEA to monitor the contract between the LEA and the Management Company on daily basis.

Attachment A

Specific Procurement Procedures for the purchase of all goods and services by the SFA.

Category of Items to be Purchased	Procurement Method to be Used	Method of Award (line item, bottom line, market basket etc.)	Frequency of Purchase
Food and Non-Food Supplies (over small purchase threshold)	NCPA IFB	Line Item	Annually
Food and Non-Food Supplies (under small purchase threshold)	RFQ	Bottom line	As needed
Fresh Produce	NCPA IFB	Market Basket	Weekly, quarterly or as needed
Fresh Bakery Dairy Ice Cream HS Beverages (Soda, Juice, Water, Isotonic)	IFB	Bottom Line	Annually with option to renew based on mutual consent of all parties
Locally grown food items (limited quantities)	RFQ	Bottom Line	As needed
Smart Snack-compliant Vended Snacks and Beverages	Request for Proposal (RFP) formal	Commission % Service Equipment Offering (Based on pre-established evaluation tool w/numeric scores and awarded by RFP committee)	Annually with option to renew based on mutual consent of all parties
Personal Pizza Products (WHS)	RFP	Cost Service Equipment provided Other pertinent factors specific to product (Based on pre-established evaluation tool w/numeric scores and awarded by RFP committee)	Annually with option to renew based on mutual consent of all parties

Chemicals for Cleaning (over small purchase threshold)	IFB	Bottom Line	Annually with option to renew based on mutual agreement of both parties
Chemicals for Cleaning (under small purchase threshold)	RFQ/State Term Contract	Bottom Line	Annually or as needed
Commodity Processing	NCPA IFB	Line Item	Annually
Computer Hardware	RFQ obtained and suggested by WCS Technology Dept. in order to comply w/WCS Technology directives	Bottom Line	As needed
Technology Service and Support	RFQ or IFB if over \$90k or Sole Source which must be approved, in advance, by the State agency	Based upon pre- established evaluation tool with numeric scores; awarded by an evaluation committee	Annually or as often as required for operations/maintenance of contract or license
Equipment Replacement Parts	Emergency purchasing procedures in emergency situations. If non- emergency, micro- purchasing procedures if a one- time purchase of less than \$15k.	Immediate or quick availability Local pick-up	As needed
Equipment Repair	Request for Quote (RFQ)	Bottom Line	As needed
Uniforms	Micro-purchasing procedures if a one- time purchase of less than \$15k; if purchase is greater than micro- purchase threshold and less than SAT use RFQ.	Bottom Line (if using RFQ)	As needed

Note: All categories of purchases used by the SFA must be included in the table shown above.

Attachment B

Procurement Checklist

Goods/Services to be procured: _____

Procurement date: _____

Person overseeing procurement process: _____

This checklist will be used when preparing solicitation documents, conducting informal and formal procurements, evaluating bids and proposals and executing contracts that involve the use of School Nutrition Funds.

Procurement Plan:

- Written procurement plan
- Authorized purchaser(s) specified
- Detailed procurement methods to be used (quotes, IFB, RFP, micro-purchasing, non-competitive negotiation) including detailed procedures for each purchasing method
- Advertising procedures
- Award method clearly described (i.e., line item, bottom line, market basket analysis or written evaluation of product/service)
- Vendor notification of award/non-award of contract
- Code of ethics/conflict of interest policy
- Instructions for documentation and record-keeping
- Assignment for Contract oversight
- Assurance of compliance with all Federal procurement policies
- Assurance of compliance with all State procurement policies
- Other local requirements

Procurement Procedures:

- Letter of invitation
- Intent of procurement activity
- Contract time-period
- Bid/proposal/quote submission procedures (i.e. sealed bid, written, etc.)
- Pre-bid/proposal meeting date/time/location (if applicable)
- Bid opening date/time/location, Proposal regarding opening procedures
- Contact information
- Civil Rights Statement
- Other local requirements

Terms and Conditions:

- Certification regarding disclosure of lobbying (\$100,000+)
- Debarment/suspension certification form (\$25,000+)
- Non-collusion statement
- Assurance of ethical practices

Procurement Checklist (continued)

- Escalation/de-escalation clause
- Price determination statement (fixed, fixed with firm price for delivery, etc.)
- Contract Extension or “roll-over” clause if warranted
- Buy American statement and instructions
- Bid/proposal protest procedures
- Remedy for non-performance/termination of contract
- HUB statement to involve minority business where possible
- “Equal Employment Opportunity” compliance statement (\$10,000+)
- Energy Policy and Conservation Act statement
- Clean Air/Water Act statement (\$100,000+)
- Civil Rights Act statement
- Jessica Lunsford Act requirements
- Return of Discounts, Credits and Rebates to SFA statement
- Record retention and record access requirements (records maintained for three years (plus the current year) from final payment of contract and/or renewal; all base solicitations must be maintained for three years after the final payment on the contract)
- Method of shipment/delivery requirements
- Method of payment, invoices, statements, etc.
- Purchase instrument to be used and how vendors will receive purchase orders
- Compliance with Jessica Lunsford Act
- Bid certification form
- Other State or local requirements
- Specifications that are sufficiently detailed to get what is needed but not so specific as to restrict competition
- Product specifications (approved brand and/or equivalent)
- Quantity
- Quality
- Packaging
- Pricing (unit and extended)
- Procedure for documenting/pre-approving any substitutions and/or deviations
- Other local requirements

Documentation and Records:

All IFBs/RFPs/RFQs with appropriate documentation and signatures of authorized purchasers maintained on the original solicitations

Comparison charts and documenting procurement decisions and contract awards

Record of public bid openings and/or proposal openings if proposals are publicly opened

Copies of contract award/non-award letters

Copies of advertisements for solicitation of good/services

Determination/document of correct procurement method used

Evaluation of escalation/de-escalation clause

Evaluation of Contract Extension/Amendment (roll-over clause)

Procurement Checklist (continued)

- Evaluation/documentation of contract re-negotiations/changes to original contract at the timelines and under the same conditions specified in the original solicitation document
- Evaluation of return of discounts, credits and rebates (as applicable) and detailed procedure indicating how/when the discounts, rebates and credits would be assigned to the SFA by the contractor
- Evaluation of whether procurement methods/activities are consistent with the SFA's approved written procurement plan
- Evaluation of procedures for ensuring records retention requirements are met and where/how all documents pertaining to the solicitation and contract/contract amendments will be maintained
- Non-competitive purchases (sole source, emergency, etc.) are appropriately documented and have received approval from State agency or governing board prior to award, including purchases through means of *piggybacking* onto another SFA's solicitation document
- Invoices/payments for items purchased with school nutrition funds
- Documentation of any contractor performance or breach of contract from vendors
- Provision requiring the entity conducting the procurement to abide with the Iran Divestment Act of 2015.
- Other local requirements

Attachment C

Code of Ethics and/or Conflict of Interest Policies of the Watauga County Schools Board of Education

Policy #1320 – Code of Ethics for School Board Members

Policy #7300 – Staff Responsibilities

Policy #7305 – Professional Standards of Conduct and Performance for Teachers

Policy #1321 – Board Member Conflict of Interest

Policy #7730 – Employee Conflict of Interest

CODE OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Policy Code: **1320**

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes that, collectively and individually, all members of the board must adhere to a code of ethics as required by G.S. 160A-86 and G.S. 115C-47(57).

A. BOARD MEMBER ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

Members of the board shall strive to improve public education and to that end the following standards will guide each board member in the performance of his or her official duties:

1. the need to obey all applicable state and federal laws regarding official actions taken as a board member;
2. the need to uphold the integrity and independence of the board member’s office;
3. the need to avoid impropriety in the exercise of the board’s and board member’s official duties;
4. the need to perform faithfully the duties of the office; and
5. the need to conduct the affairs of the board in an open and public manner, complying with all applicable laws governing open meetings and public records.

B. SPECIFIC BOARD MEMBER COMMITMENTS

In order to implement the above standards, each member of the board commits to do the following:

1. attend all regularly scheduled board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
2. endeavor to make policy decisions while always keeping in mind the objective of providing students the opportunity to receive a sound basic education and only after full discussion at publicly held board meetings;
3. attempt to make decisions only after full discussion of available facts at a public meeting, and in terms of the best interests or the educational welfare of children;
4. render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
5. recognize that authority rests with the whole board and that individual board members have no legal status to act for the board outside a meeting;

6. model civility and integrity to students, employees and all elements of the community by encouraging the free expression of opinion by all board members; engaging in respectful dialogue with fellow board members on matters being considered by the board; and complying with all board policies that set expectations for conduct, regardless of whether the policies expressly require compliance by board members;
7. respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law and refrain from unauthorized disclosure of matters discussed in closed session;
8. work with other board members to establish effective board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent;
9. communicate to other board members and the superintendent expressions of public reaction to board policies and school programs;
10. learn about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by the state and national school boards associations;
11. comply with North Carolina General Statute 115C-50 by earning the required 12 hours of training every two years;
12. comply with G.S. 160A-87 by earning two hours of ethics education within 12 months of election or appointment to the board;
13. support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school employees and avoid allowing personal relationships and biases to influence decision making;
14. support the regular and impartial evaluation of all personnel;
15. support school personnel in the performance of duties;
16. refrain from investigating or attempting to resolve complaints received personally, but instead direct the complainant to follow the board's complaint or grievance process to resolve concerns;
17. avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest and refrain from using the board member's position on the board for personal or partisan gain;
18. as stated in board policy 1321, Board Member Conflict of Interest, refrain from participating in, deliberating on, voting on, or attempting to influence any person with respect to any matter pertaining to the employment with the board of the board member's spouse, including but not limited to hiring, transfer, promotion, demotion, suspension, discipline, performance evaluation, or review or

investigation of a complaint of any kind;

19. refuse to represent special interest or partisan politics or to use the schools for personal gain;
20. take no private action that will compromise the board or administration;
21. seek systematic communication between the board and the school community;
and
22. remember always that a board member's first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

All newly elected board members are expected to sign a code of ethics statement that includes these provisions at the organizational meeting of the board.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -47(1), -47(57), -50; 160A-86, -87; *Leandro v. State*, 346 N.C. 336 (1997)

Cross References: Board Member Conflict of Interest (policy 1321), Board Member Opportunities for Development (policy 1323)

Adopted: October 12, 2015

Replaces: Board policy 1.01.10, Code of Ethics for Board of Education Members

Revised: January 28, 2016; March 8, 2021; May 8, 2023

For students to succeed, all school employees must approach their responsibilities conscientiously, always remembering that the ultimate responsibility of the school system is to provide students with the opportunity to receive a sound basic education. The standards shall apply to all school employees and shall be the basis for review of the performance of school employees. These standards shall establish prohibitions and mandatory requirements for all employees. Violation of these standards shall subject an employee to investigation and disciplinary action by the Watauga County School System and/or the State Board of Education.

All employees, student teachers, and volunteers shall adhere to the standards of professional conduct contained in this policy. Any act or omission that violates these standards is prohibited and is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

A. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All school employees shall:

1. be familiar with, support, comply with and, when appropriate, enforce all applicable Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") policies, administrative procedures, school rules and applicable laws;
2. attend to the safety and welfare of students, including the need to provide appropriate supervision of students;
3. demonstrate integrity, respect and commitment to the truth through attitudes, behavior and communications with others;
4. address or appropriately direct any complaints concerning school employees, the school program or school operations;
5. develop, promote, and maintain courteous and professional working relationships with other staff members, students, parents, and visitors;
6. avoid confrontations with co-workers, including but not limited to engaging in actions or conversations which the employee knows or should know will result in a disruption;
7. direct all complaints regarding the work environment to the appropriate supervisors and/or file grievances and avoid any actions that may undermine the work or the authority of co-workers and supervisors;
8. not create or post any inappropriate online content that has an impact on their (or any employee's) ability to perform their job, especially if accessible to any student(s), and bear in mind that content created or posted online apart from the WCS network may be viewed by anyone, including students, parents, and other

members of the community;

9. use the Watauga County Schools network only in a professional manner as described in policy 7335, Employee Use of Social Media, and 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use;
10. be respectful in all conduct and communications with students as set forth in policy 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations, and shall not abuse or exploit any student in person or in electronic communication in any manner, including but not limited to the actions listed below. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, chat rooms, blogging, websites, and social media.
 - a. any use of language that is considered profane, vulgar, or demeaning;
 - b. any sexual act;
 - c. any solicitation of a sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical;
 - d. any act of child abuse, as defined by law;
 - e. any act of sexual harassment, as defined by law; and
 - f. any intentional solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student, or any sexual contact with a student. The term "romantic relationship" shall include dating any student.
11. comply with all administrative directives in a timely and professional manner, including written directives regarding specific issues or behaviors;
12. attend, participate in, and complete all required professional development activities and meetings;
13. complete and transmit all required reports and other documentation in a timely and professional manner;
14. maintain the confidentiality of records as required by law and more fully set forth in policy 1325/7315, Confidential Information, and 4250/5075/7316, North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program;
15. faithfully account for all funds collected from students, colleagues, or other parties and not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay;
16. arrive at school each day at an appropriate time designated by the principal ready and prepared to complete all assigned duties;

17. exercise proper care and maintenance of school property; and
18. support parents in effectively participating in their child's education and never encourage or coerce a child to withhold information from a parent.
19. refrain from creating any video recording of a student without the parent's prior written consent, unless a) the recording is created by an employee acting in their official capacity within the reasonable and prudent scope of their authority or b) when the recording will be used by the educator or administrator solely for a safety demonstration, an academic or extracurricular activity, classroom instruction, photo identification cards, or security or surveillance of buildings, grounds, or school transportation.

B. NOTICE OF CRIMINAL OFFENSE

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

In addition, all driver education instructors must immediately report to the board any conviction that results in three or more points, and any conviction that could cause suspension or revocation of the driver license in any state. The board will notify the Department of Public Instruction when an instructor loses his or her privilege to drive in North Carolina or any other state. The superintendent or designee shall conduct annual checks of the driving records of all driver education instructors.

Failure by an employee to provide timely notice as described in this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

Legal References: G.S. 114A-20; 115C-47, -307, -308; State Board of Education Policies DRIV-003, DRIV-004

Cross References: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 4022/7231), Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace (policy 7240), Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying (policy 4021/7230), Staff-Student Relations (policy 4040/7310), Confidential Information (policy 1325/7315), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy 4250/5075/7316), Technology Responsible Use (policy 3225/4312/7320), Copyright Compliance (policy 3230/7330), Professional Standards of Conduct and Performance for Teachers (policy 7305), Duty to Report a Criminal Offense (policy 7307), Employee Use of Social Media (policy 7335), Employee Dress and Appearance (policy 7340), Public Records – Retention, Release, and

Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Electronically Stored Information Retention (policy 5071/7351), Extracurricular and Non-Instructional Duties (policy 7405), Employee Conflict of Interest (policy 7730)

Adopted: December 14, 2015

Revised: March 11, 2019; November 6, 2023

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND PERFORMANCE FOR TEACHERS

Policy Code: **7305**

The professional standards of this policy apply for all teachers and other certified personnel in the Watauga County Schools. Teachers and other certified personnel are also responsible for compliance with the standards applicable for all school personnel as specified in policy 7300, Staff Responsibilities.

A. TEACHER CONDUCT

The Watauga County Board of Education is dedicated and committed to providing all teachers with opportunities and resources to further their growth as professional educators. To that end, the performance of every teacher is assessed and the teacher is provided with constructive feedback through a formal evaluation and review process targeted to enhance professional growth. In addition, it is the Board's expectation that all teachers, regardless of their years of experience, are capable of and must adhere to certain minimum professional standards of conduct and performance as set forth in this policy. Therefore, all teachers and certified personnel employed by the Board shall:

1. comply with the Code of Ethics, as well as the Code of Professional Practice and Conduct, both for North Carolina Educators;
2. manage students' classroom behavior to minimize disruption to the educational environment and refer students, when necessary, to the administration for disciplinary action;
3. respond to all parent inquiries, complaints and/or concerns in a timely and professional manner;
4. participate in and complete any required professional development activities;
5. participate in a professional manner in all required staff meetings and student academic meetings, including required meetings for students with special needs;
6. complete and transmit all required reports and other documentation in a timely and professional manner;
7. arrive at school each day at an appropriate time designated by the principal ready and prepared to complete all assigned duties.
8. perform all assigned and/or accepted extracurricular and non-instructional duties in a timely and professional manner;
9. faithfully account for all funds collected from students, colleagues, or other parties and not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursements, expenses, or pay;

10. not create or post any inappropriate online content that has an impact on their (or any employee's) ability to do their job, especially if accessible to any student(s), and bear in mind that content created or posted online apart from the WCS network may be viewed by anyone, including students, parents, and other members of the community;
11. use the Watauga County Schools network only in a professional manner as described in policy 7335, Employee Use of Social Media, and 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use;
12. be respectful in all conduct and communications with students as set forth in policy 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations, and shall not abuse or exploit any student in person or in electronic communication, including but not limited to the actions listed below. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, chat rooms, blogging, websites, and social media.
 - a. any use of language that is considered profane, vulgar, or demeaning;
 - b. any sexual act;
 - c. any solicitation of a sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical;
 - d. any act of child abuse, as defined by law;
 - e. any act of sexual harassment, as defined by law; and
 - f. any intentional solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student, or any sexual contact with a student. The term "romantic relationship" shall include dating any student.

The failure or unwillingness of a teacher to comply with the professional standards of conduct and performance listed herein may result in contract non-renewal or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment. In all matters concerning a teacher's compliance with this policy, consideration shall be given to the impact on the education of a student or group of students and on the overall educational environment of the school.

B. NOTICE OF CRIMINAL OFFENSE

Teachers and all school system employees shall notify the human resources director if they are arrested for, charged with or convicted of a criminal offense (including entering a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere*) other than a minor traffic violation (i.e., speeding, parking or a lesser violation). Notice must be in writing, must include all pertinent facts and must be delivered to the human resources director no later than the next scheduled business day following the arrest, charge or conviction, unless the employee is

hospitalized or incarcerated, in which case the employee must report the alleged violation within 24 hours after his or her release. Upon judicial action in the matter, the employee must report the disposition and pertinent facts in writing to the human resources director no later than the next business day following adjudication.

Failure by an employee to provide timely notice as described above may lead to disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -307, -308; 16 NCAC 6C .0601 and .0602; N.C. General Statute 90-95; Article 14 of G.S. Chapter 126

Cross References: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 4022/7231), Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace (policy 7240), Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying (policy 4021/7230), Staff-Student Relations (policy 4040/7310), Confidential Information (policy 1325/7315), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy 4250/5075/7316), Technology Responsible Use (policy 3225/4312/7320), Copyright Compliance (policy 3230/7330), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Duty to Report a Criminal Offense (policy 7307), Employee Use of Social Media (policy 7335), Employee Dress and Appearance (policy 7340), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Electronically Stored Information Retention (policy 5071/7351), Extracurricular and Non-Instructional Duties (policy 7405), Employee Conflict of Interest (policy 7730)

Adopted: December 14, 2015

Replaces: 3.01.41, Professional Standards of Conduct and Performance for Teachers

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) and each member of the board recognize that they are subject to North Carolina’s criminal laws related to conflicts of interest in public office and that a board member may not use his or her office for personal benefit. The board and each member of the board further recognize that they are subject to the standards established by the federal government for recipients of federal grants as specified in policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration. The board and each member of the board understand that violation of state and federal laws and regulations on conflicts of interest may result in conviction of a crime, may render a contract of the board void, or may result in loss of federal funds. In keeping with the ethical duties specified in policy 2120, Code of Ethics for School Board Members, board members will not let any personal or business interest interfere with their duties as public officials. If a board member has an actual or potential conflict of interest in a matter before the board, the board member should declare that interest as soon as possible and the provisions in policy 1442, Voting Methods will be followed.

All board members will abide by the following conflict of interest rules.

1. A board member will not solicit or receive personal financial gain from the school system by means of intimidation, undue influence, or misuse of school system employees in violation of G.S. 14-234.2.
2. A board member will not derive a personal benefit from a contract with the school system in violation of G.S. 14-234. Specifically, a board member will not:
 - a. obtain a direct benefit from a contract that he or she is involved in making or administering on behalf of the board, unless an exception is allowed pursuant to G.S. 14-234 or other law;
 - b. influence or attempt to influence anyone who is involved in making or administering a contract on behalf of the board when the board member will obtain a direct benefit from the contract; or
 - c. solicit or receive any gift, favor, reward, service, or promise of reward, including a promise of future employment, in exchange for recommending, influencing, or attempting to influence the award of a contract.

For purposes of G.S. 14-234, a board member is involved in administering a contract if he or she oversees the performance of the contract or has authority to interpret or make decisions regarding the contract. A board member is involved in making a contract if he or she participates in the development of the specifications or terms of the contract or participates in the preparation or award of the contract. A board member is also involved in making a contract if the board takes action on the contract, even if the specific board member did not actually participate in that action, unless the contract is approved under an exception to the law under which the board member is allowed to benefit and is prohibited

from voting.

A board member derives a direct benefit from a contract if the board member or his or her spouse does any of the following: (1) has more than a 10 percent ownership or other interest in an entity that is a party to the contract; (2) derives any income or commission directly from the contract; or (3) acquires property under the contract. An exception is allowed for employment contracts between the board and the spouse of a board member. However, the board member involved will not (1) deliberate or vote on the spouse's employment contract; (2) attempt to influence any other person who is involved in making or administering the contract; or (3) participate in, deliberate on, vote on, or attempt to influence any person with respect to any other matter pertaining to the board member's spouse's employment with the school system, including but not limited to hiring, contract renewal, transfer, promotion, demotion, suspension, discipline, performance evaluation, or review or investigation of a complaint of any kind.

3. A board member who is also a director, officer, or governing board member of a nonprofit will not (1) knowingly vote on, participate in deliberations on, or administer any contract with that nonprofit; (2) influence or attempt to influence the deliberation or vote of others on any such contract; or (3) solicit or receive any gift, reward, or other benefit in exchange for recommending, influencing, or attempting to influence the award of such contract in violation of G.S. 14-234.3. Once the board member's recusal is recorded in the minutes of the board, the board may enter into or administer the contract.
4. A board member will not deliberate on, vote on, or otherwise engage in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported in whole or part by federal funds when he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest under federal rules as provided in 2 C.F.R. 200.318(c)(1) and policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration. For purposes of this paragraph, a conflict of interest arises when a board member or his or her spouse, immediate family member, or partner, or the employer or pending employer of any of those persons, has a financial or other interest in or receives a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for the contract. Any such conflict must be disclosed to the awarding agency.

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

5. A board member will not solicit or accept trips, meals, gratuities, gifts, favors, or anything of monetary value from (i) current contractors, subcontractors, or suppliers; (ii) any contractor, subcontractor or supplier that has performed under a contract with the board within the past year; or (iii) any contractor, subcontractor, or supplier that foreseeably may bid on a contract in the future, unless the item is an unsolicited gift of nominal value (\$50 or less) and is one of the following: an advertising item or souvenir that is widely distributed; an honorarium for participating in a meeting; a meal provided

at a banquet; or other item that is clearly permitted by state and federal law.

Multiple permitted items from a single contractor, subcontractor, or supplier may not exceed an aggregate value of \$100 in a twelve-month period.

6. A board member will not solicit or accept any gifts from a current or potential provider of E-rate services or products in violation of applicable federal E-rate program gifting rules.
7. A board member will not misuse information in violation of G.S. 14-234.1. Specifically, a board member will not use knowledge of contemplated board action, or information known to the member in his or her official capacity and not made public, to:
 - a. acquire a financial interest in any property, transaction, or enterprise or gain any financial benefit which may be affected by the information or contemplated action; or
 - b. intentionally aid another to acquire a financial interest or gain a financial benefit.

Legal References: 2 C.F.R. 200.112 and 200.318(c)(1); 47 C.F.R. 54.503; FCC Sixth Report and Order 10-175; G.S. 14-234, -234.1, -234.2, -234.3; 133-32; Attorney General Opinion requested by L.W. Lamar regarding G.S. 133-32, the Applicability to Attorneys and Law Firms Providing Professional Services to Local Boards of Education, dated May 13, 1993

Cross References: Code of Ethics for School Board Members (policy 1320), Voting Methods (policy 1442), Ethics and the Purchasing Function (policy 6401/9100), Employee Conflict of Interest (policy 7730), Federal Grant Administration (policy 8305)

Adopted: October 12, 2015

Replaces: Board policy 3.08.90, Conflict of Interest (in part related to board members)

Revised: January 28, 2016; February 11, 2019; March 8, 2021; September 12, 2022

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

A. CONTRACTS WITH THE BOARD

An employee shall not do any of the following:

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

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

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

B. MISUSE OF INFORMATION

An employee shall not do any of the following:

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

C. NON-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D. RECEIPT OF GIFTS

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

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

E. TRAINING

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

requirements of this policy and applicable conflict of interest laws.

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

F. VIOLATIONS

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

G. DISCLOSURES

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

H. ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

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

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

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

Adopted: December 14, 2015

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

Revised: March 11, 2019; March 11, 2024

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

A. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

or in reliance on information known to the employee in his or her official capacity and not made public, to:

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

B. TRAINING

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

C. VIOLATIONS

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

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

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

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Revised: March 11, 2019; January 16, 2024



Watauga County Schools
Educating for Productive Citizenship & Life-Long Learning
2026-2027 School Calendar

For BOE Approval
12/8/2025

August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- Mandatory Work Days (5)
- Optional Work Days (10)
- Annual Leave (9)
- Holidays (11)
- Early Release Days (6)
- Remote Learning Days TBD

August

11-14.....Mandatory Work Days
 17.....First Day of 180 Day Term

September

7.....Labor Day Holiday
 23.....Early Release/
 Professional Development Day

October

16.....End of First Quarter
 19.....Optional Work Day
 28-29.....Early Release/
 Parent Conferences

November

11.....Veterans Day Holiday
 25.....Optional Work Day
 26-27.....Thanksgiving Holidays

December

18.....Early Release/
 End of 2nd Nine Weeks/End of First
 Semester
 21-22.....Annual Leave
 23-25.....Christmas Holidays
 28-31.....Annual Leave

January

1.....New Year's Day Holiday
 4.....Students Return
 18.....Optional Work Day/
 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February

24.....Early Release/
 Professional Development Day

March

19.....End of Third Quarter
 29-30.....Spring Holidays
 31.....Annual Leave

April

1-2.....Annual Leave

May

25.....Last Day of Fourth Quarter/
 End of Second Semester
 26.....Mandatory Work Day
 27-28.....Optional Work Days
 31.....Memorial Day Holiday

June

1-4,7.....Optional Work Days

**The last day of the 2026-2027 school year
 will be an early release day.**

January 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

WCS Technology

January 2026

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

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

WCS Computing Devices

Chromebooks	5,857
iPad/Tablet	75
Teacher laptops	910
Desktops	373
Total WCS personal devices	7,215

Classroom Technology

2021 Summary

- 59 Interactive Flat Panels
- 234 Smart Boards

2022 Summary

- 141 Interactive Flat Panels
- 204 Smart Boards

2023 Summary

- 185 Interactive Flat Panels
- 171 Smart Boards

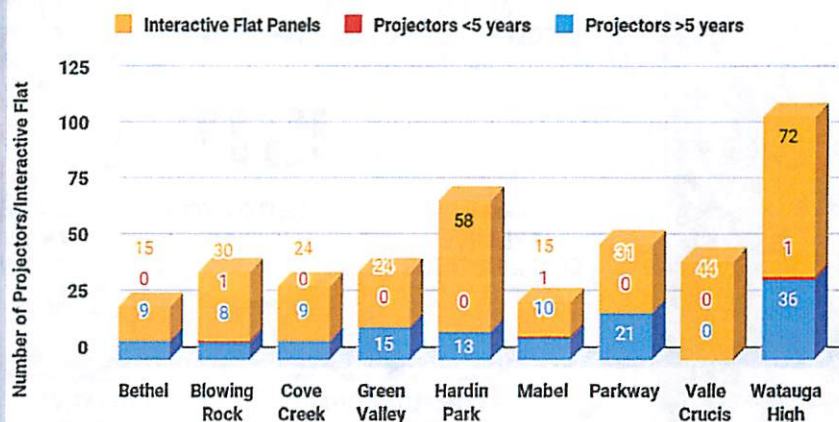
2024 Summary

- 229 Interactive Flat Panels
- 134 Smart Boards

2025 Summary

- 313 Interactive Flat Panels
- 71 Smart Boards

Classroom Technology Landscape

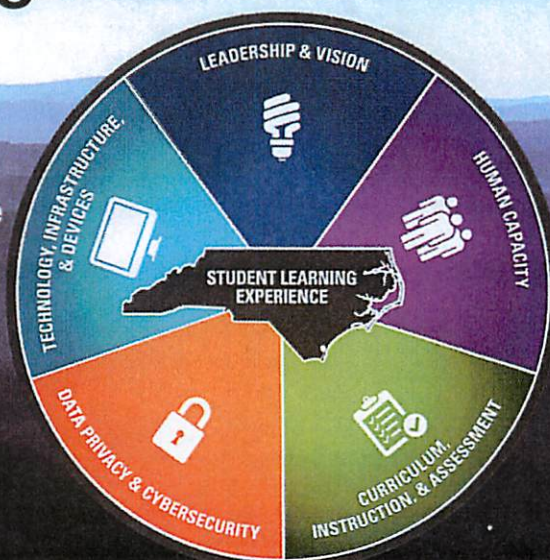


NC Digital Learning Plan

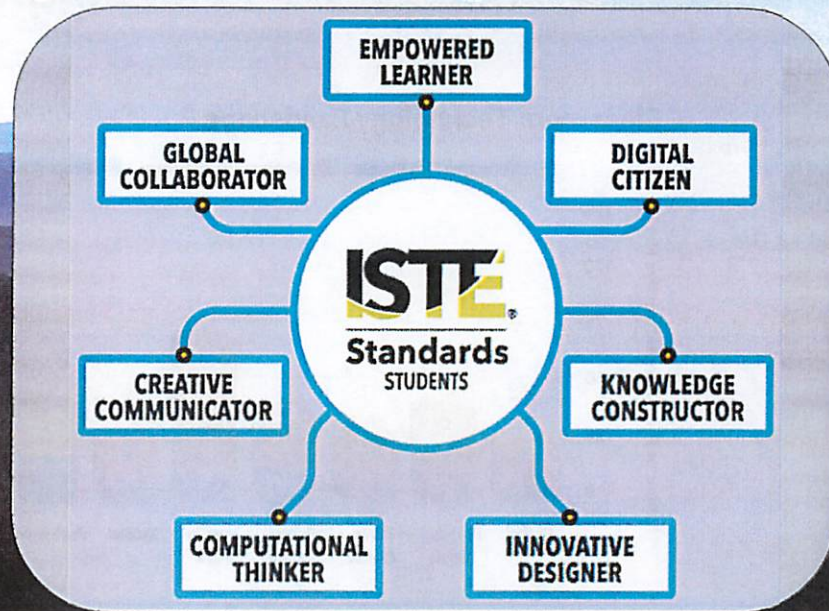
Designed using:

- Evaluation of the Current Landscape in North Carolina
- Future Ready Framework
- ISTE Essential Standards
- CoSN Framework of Essential Skills

Digital Learning Plan



NC Digital Learning Standards



Library Partnership

WCS Media Specialists & WCPL Librarians have worked to enhance opportunities for our students.

- Periodically attend our WCS Media Monthly Meetings
- Shared calendar to encourage collaboration
- Friends of the Public Library providing funding for all 2nd grade classes to visit

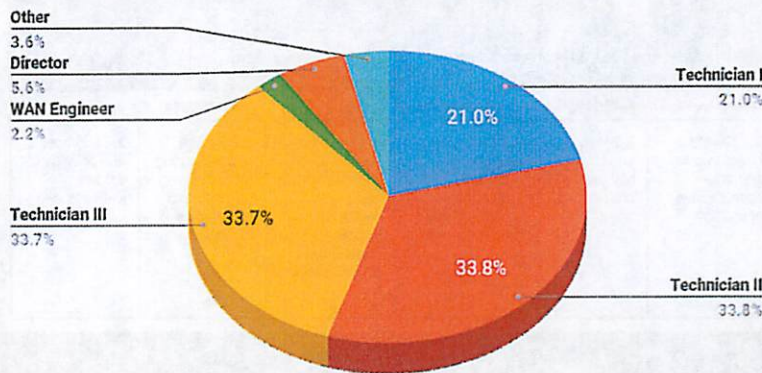
Watauga County Schools Strategic Plan								
Vision: Watauga County Schools will be the best place to learn and work in North Carolina.								
Goal 1			Goal 2			Goal 3		
All WCS graduates <i>prepared</i> for further education, a career, & productive citizenship.			WCS provides students the best possible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

Staffing

- (1) WAN Engineer
- (2) Technician III
- (2) Technician II
- (1) Technician I
- (1) SIS Coordinator
- (10) School Library Media Coordinators
- (10) Data Managers

Technology Staffing/Workload

Workload by Position/Responsibility



Total Tickets

2025-26	2809 (as of 12/25)
2024-25	4050
2023-24	3183
2022-23	2829
2021-22	2636
2020-21	2128
2019-20	1120

Professional Learning

- **NCET** - Educational Technicians
- **NCTIES** - SLMCs
- **NCSLMA** - SLMCs
- **ISTE** - membership provided by DPI
- **CoSN** - membership provided by DPI
- **ASCD** - membership provided by DPI
- **AI Training** - provided by SLMCs

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

Google Account Monitoring

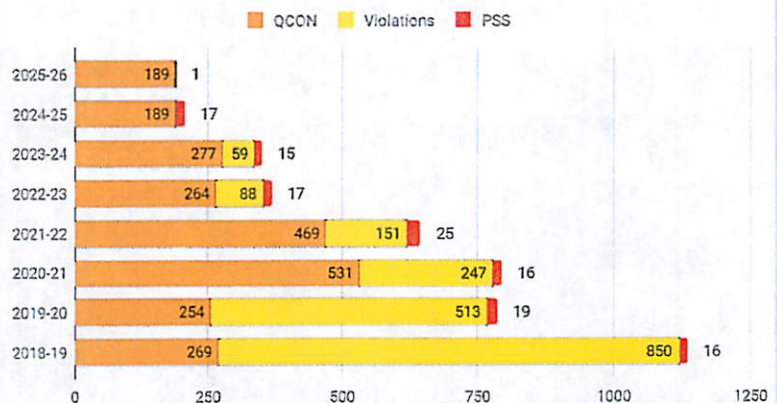
Gaggle statistics:

- Content analysis: files, emails, keystrokes
- Expert review
- Insight and analytics
- Student security

GoGuardian statistics:

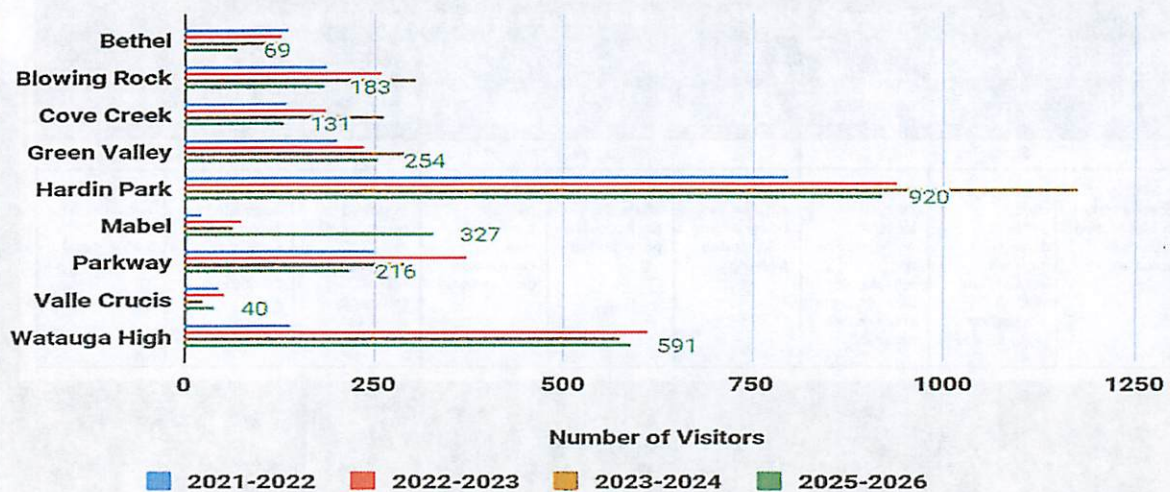
- 193 Smart Alerts

Total Incidents



Visitor Management Systems

Average Monthly Visitors by School

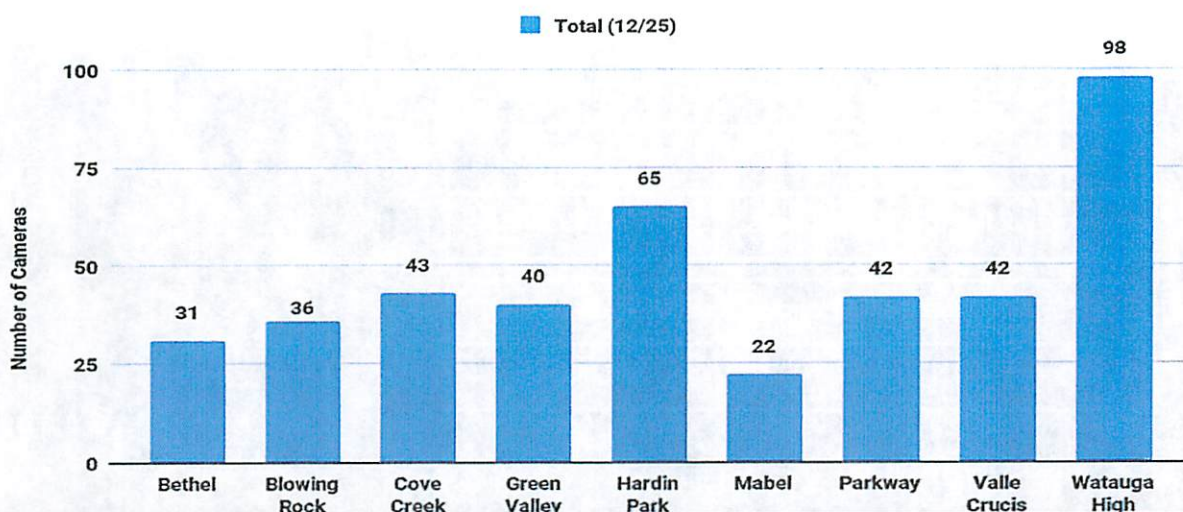


Door Access

- Over 80 Door Access Panels
- 1183 Door Access Cards
- Managed by school contact

Surveillance

Security Camera Count by School



Technology Roadmap

Planning category	One year plan (June 2024)	Three year plan (June 2026)	Five year plan (June 2028)
Staff/student device plans			
Student 1:1 Devices	Refresh cycle for all devices (Local)	Refresh cycle for all devices (Local)	Refresh cycle for all devices (Local)
Staff 1:1 devices	½ staff replacement cycle (Local)	½ (remaining) staff replacement cycle (Local)	½ staff replacement cycle (Local)
Desktop computers	Replaced cafeteria desktops & administrative personnel desktops. (Local)	Maintain existing inventory (Local)	Maintain existing inventory (Local)
Managed print services	Fleet replaced 07/2023 (State)	Ongoing current contract (State)	MPS contract re-bid (State)
School Safety plans			
Visitor Management Systems	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license fees for VMS (Local)	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license fees for VMS (Local)	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license fees for VMS (Local)
Security Camera Upgrade	Replace any remaining analog cameras and upgrade older IP cameras (Local)	Maintain existing inventory (Local)	Maintain existing inventory (Local)
Gaggle filtering services	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license fees for GFS (Local)	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license fees for GFS (Local)	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license fees for GFS (Local)
Google Workspace for Education Plus	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license (Local)	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license (Local)	Ongoing review of selected vendor and maintain license (Local)

E-Rate

2024-2025 Qualified Services	E-Rate funds
Category 1 WAN	\$58,860.00
Category 2 Internal Connections	\$101,592.00
2025-2026 Qualified Services	E-Rate funds
Category 1 WAN	\$58,860.00

WCS Strategic Device Planning

Item	20-21 Current	Year 1: 2021-22		Year 2: 2022-23		Year 3: 2023-24		Year 4: 2024-25		Year 5: 2025-26		Year 6: 2026-27		Year 7: 2027-28	
	Inventory	Device Refresh		Device Refresh		Device Refresh		Device Refresh		Device Refresh		Device Refresh		Device Refresh	
	Number	Number	Budget	Number	Budget	Number	Budget	Number	Budget	Number	Budget	Number	Budget	Number	Budget
Chromebooks	4491	1000	\$259,000.00	1000	\$259,000.00	800	\$207,200.00	800	\$207,200.00	800	\$207,200.00	800	\$207,200.00	800	\$207,200.00
Sleeves		350	\$4,200.00	350	\$4,200.00	350	\$4,200.00	350	\$4,200.00	350	\$4,200.00	350	\$4,200.00	350	\$4,200.00
Carts															
Laptops	750					350	\$245,000.00	150	\$105,000.00						
Sleeve/warranty bundle															
Refresh touch device for K-1 (1:1)	887	100	\$32,900.00	150	\$49,350.00	150	\$49,350.00	150	\$49,350.00	150	\$49,350.00	150	\$49,350.00	150	\$49,350.00
Flat Panels	58	30	\$69,060.00	30	\$69,060.00	30	\$69,060.00	30	\$69,060.00	30	\$69,060.00	30	\$69,060.00	30	\$69,060.00
Projectors	347														
Document Cameras	346	40	\$4,000.00	40	\$4,000.00	40	\$4,000.00	40	\$4,000.00	40	\$4,000.00	40	\$4,000.00	40	\$4,000.00
Subtotal			\$369,160.00		\$385,610.00		\$579,810.00		\$438,810.00		\$333,810.00		\$333,810.00		\$333,810.00
Sales Tax			\$24,918.30		\$26,028.68		\$39,069.68		\$29,619.68		\$22,532.18		\$22,532.18		\$22,532.18
Total			\$394,078.30		\$411,638.68		\$617,879.68		\$468,429.68		\$356,342.18		\$356,342.18		\$356,342.18

Maintaining Inventory:
4000 non-touch student devices
700 touch student devices
500 teacher devices

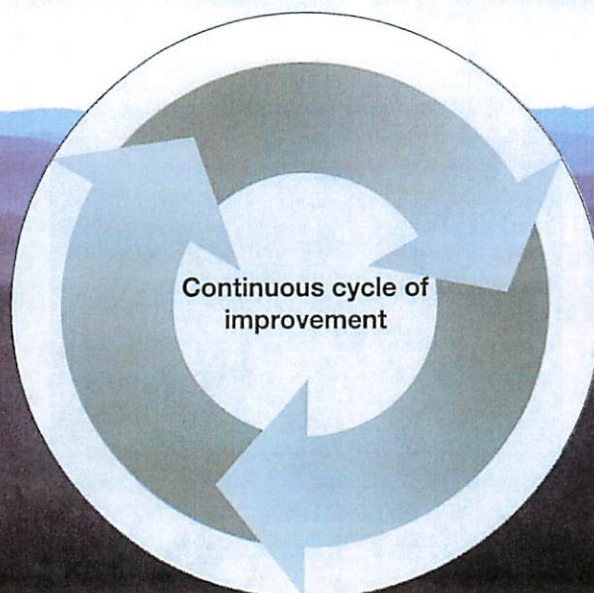
VoIP

Currently

- 9 schools + administrative offices
- Approximately 700 phones
- Bells and Intercoms



Cyber Security-Disaster Recovery



Cyber Security-Disaster Recovery

- Awareness Training - KnowBe4
 - Phishing Campaigns
 - Cyber Awareness Training

Cyber Security-Disaster Recovery

- Web Content Filtering
 - zScaler
 - GoGuardian

Cyber Security-Disaster Recovery

- **Malware Protection & Vulnerability Management**
 - **CrowdStrike**
 - **Rumble**

Cyber Security-Disaster Recovery

- **Firewall**
- **Data backups**
- **Replication Site**

Website Accessibility

- **By April 2026, any public facing communications need to comply with ADA Title II regulations**
- **Using Alt Text and making PDFs accessible**
- **Be sure our content is accessible for people using assistive technology**

PARENTAL INSPECTION OF AND OBJECTION TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Policy Code:

3210

In policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials, the board establishes a process for the selection of instructional materials to meet State Board of Education requirements and the educational goals of the board. That process provides an opportunity for parental input in the selection of materials.

The board recognizes that despite the opportunity to participate in the selection of materials, parents still may have concerns about instructional materials used in the school system. Thus, to further involve parents in the education of their children, the board also provides opportunities for parents to review instructional materials and a process for parents to use when they object to instructional materials.

For purposes of this policy, all references to “parent” include a parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, or other caregiver adult authorized to enroll a student under policy 4120, Domicile or Residence Requirements.

A. PARENTAL RIGHT TO INSPECT MATERIALS

Parents may review all instructional materials, as defined in policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials. Instructional materials do not include academic tests or assessments. Parents who would like to inspect and review instructional materials should make a request in writing to the principal identifying the instructional materials the parent is seeking to inspect. Within 10 business days of receiving the request, the principal shall either (1) provide access to the requested information or (2) provide an extension notice to the parent that, due to the volume or complexity of the request, access to the information will be provided no later than 20 business days from the date of the parent’s request. Access will be provided by supplying the parent with a copy of the materials or by scheduling schedule a mutually agreeable date and time for the parent to come into the school to review the materials. All efforts should be made to schedule the time as soon as possible but no later than 10 business days from the date of the request. All materials used in reproductive health and safety education shall be available for review as provided in policy 3540, Comprehensive Health Education Program.

B. PARENTAL OBJECTION TO MATERIALS

Parents may submit an objection in writing to the principal regarding the use of particular instructional materials. The principal may establish a committee to review the objection. While input from the community may be sought, the board believes professional educators are in the best position to determine whether a particular instructional material is appropriate for the age and maturity of the students and for the subject matter being taught.

If the principal or the committee determines that any material violates constitutional or other legal rights of the parent or student, the principal or the committee shall either remove

the material from instructional use or accommodate the particular student and parent. (For religious-based objections, also see policy 3510, Religious-Based Exemptions from School Programs.) Before any material is removed, the principal or the committee shall ensure that the curriculum is still aligned with current statewide instructional standards and articulated from grade to grade. If an objection made by a parent or student is not based upon constitutional or legal rights, the principal or the committee may accommodate the objection after considering the effect on the curriculum; any burden on the school, teacher, or other students that the accommodation would create; and any other relevant factors. Books and other instructional materials may be removed from the school media collection only for legitimate educational reasons and subject to the limitations of the First Amendment. The decision of the committee or principal may be appealed to the superintendent. The decision of the superintendent may be appealed to the board.

Any request by a student's parent that the student be prohibited from borrowing certain library books will automatically be granted. The request must be made in writing to the principal and identify by title the library book(s) that the student may not borrow. For purposes of this policy, library books are defined as all instructional materials, other than textbooks, that are available at a school, whether in the school library or in a classroom or other space, for independent use by students and school personnel outside of the standard course of study for any grade or course. The titles of all library books at a school may be accessed through a searchable web-based catalog displayed on the homepage of the school's website.

The superintendent shall develop the necessary administrative procedures to implement this policy.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; 20 U.S.C. 1232h; N.C. Const. art. I, § 14; *Board of Educ. v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982); G.S. 115C art. 8 pt. 1; 115C-45, -47, -76.25(a)(5), -76.35(b), -76.40, -98, -98.1, -101

Cross References: Parental Involvement (1310/4002), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Curriculum Development (policy 3100), Selection of Instructional Materials (policy 3200), Religious-Based Exemptions from School Programs (policy 3510), Comprehensive Health Education Program (policy 3540), Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy 4120)

Adopted: April 11, 2016

Revised: April 9, 2018 (Legal references only); November 6, 2023

Replaces: Board policy 4.02.40, Selection of Educational Resources, Sections V and VI

RELIGIOUS-BASED EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Policy Code:

3510

The curriculum of the school system will be based on the current statewide instructional standards. The board and the school administrators will exercise their authority to select appropriate materials and teach the curriculum in an effective manner. The board supports the free exercise of religion and prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion. While students are expected to participate in all required courses and school activities, the board recognizes that at times a student or a student's parents or guardian may object to a specific school course or classroom discussion, activity, or assigned reading. This policy is designed to provide students, parents, and guardians with a process for seeking a religious-based exemption for their child a student from a required school course or specific classroom discussion, activity, or assigned reading. To the extent practicable, students, parents, and guardians will be notified in advance of upcoming classroom discussions, activities, and assigned readings.

If A student, parents, or guardian have religious-based objections to certain programs, they may petition to exempt their student-child from participation in a specific classroom discussion, activity, or assigned reading that the student, parent, or guardian believes would impose a substantial burden on the student's religious beliefs or invade the student's privacy by calling attention to the student's religion. Any request for exemption should be submitted to the superintendent or designee in accordance with the following guidelines.

1. The request must be in writing.
2. The request must specify the discussion, activity, or reading and explain how it activities or studies that would impose a substantial burden on the student's religious beliefs or invade the student's privacy by calling attention to the student's religion violate their religious beliefs and explain how their religious beliefs are violated by the activity.
3. The request may suggest a proposed alternate activity or study.

The superintendent or designee shall review the request in accordance with any constitutional or statutory standards and shall accommodate the request as when required to do so by law. If accommodation is not required by law, the superintendent or designee may choose to accommodate such a request after weighing factors, such as the interest of the child, the impact on other students, and the availability of alternative activities or materials. An appeal of the superintendent's decision may be made to the board through the student grievance procedure.

If a student is excused from a classroom discussion, activity, or assigned reading, the student will be provided an alternative activity or assignment aligned with the standard course of study.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; N.C. Const. art. I, § 14; G.S. 115C-36, -47(33b)

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Curriculum Development (policy 3100)

Adopted: August 3, 2015

A student who is domiciled within the geographic area served by the school system, who is under age 21 (22 for students entitled to special education services), who has not completed the prescribed courses for high school graduation and who otherwise qualifies for admission, is entitled to be admitted without payment of tuition. Under certain circumstances specified by law, a student who resides in the area served by the school system and who otherwise qualifies for admission to its schools also is entitled to be admitted without payment of tuition. In addition, students who are homeless or in foster care may be entitled to continue attending their school of origin without payment of tuition regardless of a change in their domicile or residency status.

Children with disabilities are required to meet state domicile requirements to be entitled to admission to school without payment of tuition unless they are “grandfathered” into the system under subsection C.6, below, or unless they otherwise meet one of the circumstances that entitle them to admission without payment of tuition. (See Section C, below.)

A. DOMICILE AND RESIDENCE DEFINED

Domicile requires the intent to abandon one’s prior home and remain in the new location as a permanent home for an indefinite period. In contrast, a residence need not be one’s exclusive home and does not require an intention that the residence be the permanent home.

B. MEETING DOMICILE REQUIREMENTS

1. Domicile of Students Generally

The domicile of a student under 18 years of age is presumed to be the domicile of his or her parents, legal guardian, or legal custodian as defined by the General Statutes of North Carolina.

2. Domicile of Emancipated Students

If a student is at least 18 years of age, is married, or has been abandoned by his or her parents, or if the court declares a student to be emancipated, the student may establish a domicile independent from that of his or her parents, legal guardian, or legal custodian. A student who establishes domicile as a result of being emancipated is a domiciliary of the school system and is entitled to the same rights and privileges of other students domiciled in the school system.

3. Domicile of Students with Divorced or Separated Parents

Domicile for the purpose of school admission and assignment will be determined by the following criteria.

- a. In the event that a student's parents are divorced or separated and physical custody has been given to only one parent, the student's domicile follows that of the parent who has been granted physical custody.
- b. If physical custody has not been determined or has been granted jointly to both parents, or if the custodial parent wishes the student to attend school in the non-custodial parent's system of residence, then the parents must jointly agree on which residence will be used to determine the student's domicile. The selected residence must be submitted in writing to the superintendent.
- c. The selection may not be changed during the school year unless the parents satisfy the board's policies on transfers and releases.
- d. In the event that the parents cannot agree on which residence will be used to determine the student's domicile for school assignment purposes, school officials shall assign the student according to the residence of the parent with physical custody of the student at the beginning of each school year.

C. MEETING RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

A student who resides in the system in any of the following circumstances will be admitted without payment of tuition.

1. The student is homeless as defined in state and federal law and policy 4125, Homeless Students. A student living with a friend or relative is not a homeless student unless he or she lives there due to conditions that constitute homelessness under state and federal statutes. A homeless student will be assigned in accordance with policy 4125, Homeless Students.
2. The parent, guardian, or legal custodian residing in the school system attendance area is a student, employee, or faculty member of a college or university or is a visiting scholar at the National Humanities Center.
3. The student resides in a group home, foster home, or other similar facility or institution.
4. The student resides in a pre-adoptive home following placement by a county department of social services or a licensed child-placing agency.
5. The parent, guardian, or legal custodian residing in the school system attendance area is on active military duty and is assigned by official military order to a military installation or reservation in North Carolina.
6. The student is considered a child with a disability by the General Statutes and the North Carolina *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities* and the

child was (a) enrolled in the school system on the last day of school for the 2006-07 school year or (b) enrolled in and attending a school in the school system on August 1, 2007, for the 2007-08 school year, so long as the child lives within and is continuously enrolled in the system.

7. The student resides with an adult who is a domiciliary of the school system as a result of any of the following.
 - a. The death, serious illness, or incarceration of the child's parent or legal guardian.
 - b. The abandonment by the child's parent or legal guardian of the complete control of the student as evidenced by the failure to provide substantial financial support and parental guidance.
 - c. Abuse or neglect by the parent or legal guardian.
 - d. The physical or mental condition of the parent or legal guardian is such that he or she cannot provide the student with adequate care and supervision.
 - e. The relinquishment of physical custody and control of the student by the student's parent or legal guardian upon the recommendation of the department of social services or the Division of Mental Health.
 - f. The loss or uninhabitability of the student's home as the result of a natural disaster.
 - g. The parent or legal guardian is one of the following: (1) a member or veteran of the uniformed services who is severely injured and medically discharged or retired (but only for a period of one year after the medical discharge or retirement of the parent or guardian); or (2) a member of the uniformed services who has died while on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty (but only for a period of one year after the death of the parent or guardian). Assignment under this subsection is only available if some evidence of the medical discharge, retirement, or death is tendered with the affidavits required under G.S. 115C-366.
 - h. The parent or legal guardian is on active military duty, not including periods of active duty for training for less than 30 days, and the commanding officer of the parent or legal guardian provides in a signed letter that the parent or legal guardian's military orders prevent him or her from physically residing with the student. Assignment under this subsection is only available if the signed letter from the commanding officer is included with the affidavits required under G.S. 115C-366, and the commanding officer indicates the time period that such military orders will be in effect.

In order to be admitted under this provision, the student may not be currently under a term of suspension or expulsion from a school for conduct that could have led to a suspension or an expulsion from the local school administrative unit, unless the student is identified as eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400, *et seq.*, and evidence of such eligibility is tendered with the affidavits described below.

The adult with whom the student resides and the student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, if available, must complete and sign separate affidavits available from the superintendent's office attesting to information required by G.S. 115C-366(a3). If it is found that a person willfully and knowingly provided false information in the affidavit, the maker of the affidavit will be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and will pay to the board an amount equal to the cost of educating the student during the period of enrollment. Repayment will not include state funds.

D. REMOTE ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES

A student who is not domiciled in the school system attendance area is permitted to enroll by remote means, including electronic means, prior to commencement of the student's residency in the school system attendance area if all of the following apply.

1. The student's parent or legal guardian (a) is on active military duty and is transferred or pending transfer pursuant to an official military order to a military installation or reservation in North Carolina or (b) will be separating from active military duty within a 12-month period.
2. Upon request by the school system, the parent or legal guardian provides a copy of (a) the official military order transferring to the military installation or reservation, (b) the official separation orders, or (c) an official military document showing the anticipated date of separation or date of projected permanent change of station.
3. The parent or legal guardian completes and submits the school system's enrollment forms and documentation, other than~~except that~~ proof of residency and documentation related to disciplinary actions required under policy 4115, Behavior Standards for Transfer Students, ~~will not be required until the student transfers into the school system.~~
4. The parent or legal guardian submits to the school system the proof of residency and documentation related to the disciplinary actions upon the student commencing attendance. If the proof of residency has not yet become available because the parent or legal guardian and student are residing in temporary housing, the student will be permitted to enroll and begin attending school based on the anticipated domicile: (a) for a period up to one year either (1) from the parent or legal guardian's reporting-for-duty date, separation date from active military duty, or anticipated separation date from active military duty or (2) through the end of the

school year; or (b) through high school graduation for a student who is enrolling as a high school junior or senior.

The school system will make available to a student who registers to enroll pursuant to this section the same opportunities available to a domiciled student, such as requesting or applying for school assignment, registering for courses, and applying for any other programs that require additional request or application. ~~A student enrolled pursuant to this section may not attend school until proof of residency is provided.~~

E. PARTICIPATION IN JROTC BY HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS

A home school student who resides within the assignment area of a school that maintains a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) unit shall be permitted membership in the JROTC unit of the school without regard to domicile if the student is otherwise qualified for membership but for lack of enrollment in the school.

F. STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE NORTH CAROLINA ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

In determining whether a student meets the domicile or residence requirements of this policy, school personnel shall consider the actual address of a participant in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program established by G.S. Chapter 15C, but such address will remain confidential in accordance with law and policy 4250/5075/7316, North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program.

G. APPEAL OF ADMISSION DECISIONS

Within 10 working days of receiving all of the information required under this policy, the superintendent or designee shall provide a written decision to the applicant for admission to the school system. The superintendent's decision regarding admission of the student may be appealed to the board in accordance with subsection E.5 in policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.

Legal References: 10 U.S.C. 2031(f); Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 6303 *et seq.*; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 300; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431 *et seq.*; *Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care*, U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (June 2016); *Non-Regulatory Guidance on Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program*, U.S. Department of Education (July 2016); G.S. 7B art. 35; 35A art. 6; 15C-8(i); 50-13.1 to -13.3; 115C-106.2, -106.3, -107.6, -108.1(a), -366, -407.5; *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000, available at <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/policies/nc-policies-governing-services-for-children-with-disabilities>

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Behavior Standards for Transfer Students (policy 4115),

Homeless Students (policy 4125), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy 4250/5075/7316)

Adopted: November 10, 2014

Replaces: Policy 5.02.50, Student Assignments (in part) and Policy 5.02.60 (in part)

Revised: September 11, 2017; October 5, 2020; February 14, 2022; June 30, 2022; November 12, 2024

USE OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Policy Code:

4318

The board recognizes that cellular phones and other wireless communication devices ~~have become~~ are an important tool through which parents communicate with their children and through which students gather information. The board also understands that excessive use of wireless communication devices may pose significant health and social risks for students. Therefore, to balance these interests and the needs of students, parents, and the school community, the board limits the use of wireless communication devices as provided in this policy. ~~Therefore, students are permitted to possess such devices on school property so long as the devices are not activated, used, displayed or visible during the instructional day or as otherwise directed by school rules or school personnel.~~ Wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to, cellular phones, electronic devices with internet capability, paging devices, two-way radios and similar devices.

A. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

1. "Instructional time" is the time during which students are assigned to a teacher for the primary purpose of instruction.
2. A "wireless communication device" is any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties, including but not limited to cellular telephones, tablet and laptop computers, paging devices, two-way radios, and gaming devices.

A.B. AUTHORIZED USE DURING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Students are permitted to possess wireless communication devices on school property so long as the devices are not turned on, used, or displayed during instructional time or as otherwise directed by school rules or school personnel.

~~Administrators may authorize. Additionally, individual students to may use wireless communication devices for personal purposes when there is a reasonable need for such communication as required by the student's Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan or to manage the student's health care in accordance with a documented medical condition.~~ Teachers and administrators may authorize individual students to use the devices for instructional purposes, provided that they supervise the students during such use, or in the event of an emergency.

C. AUTHORIZED USE DURING NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

~~Although use generally is of wireless communication devices is generally permitted during non-instructional time and before and after school, the principal may establish additional limitations on the use, possession, or display of such devices consistent with this policy.~~

~~Use of cellular phones and other wireless communication devices~~ may be prohibited on school buses when noise from such devices interferes with the safe operation of the buses. In addition, elementary and middle school students who participate in after-school programs are prohibited from using wireless communication devices during such programs.

B.D. CONSEQUENCES FOR UNAUTHORIZED USE

School employees may immediately confiscate any wireless communication devices that are on, used, or displayed or visible in violation of this policy. In general, the confiscated device will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. However, an administrator may require a student's parent to recover a confiscated device if the student has repeatedly violated this policy. Absent compelling and unusual circumstances, confiscated wireless communication devices will be returned only to the student's parent.

The disciplinary consequences for violations of this policy shall be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for violations of this policy.

The following factors should be considered when determining appropriate consequences: whether the wireless communication device was used (1) to reproduce images of tests, obtain unauthorized access to school information or assist students in any aspect of their instructional program in a manner that violates any school board policy, administrative regulation, or school rule; (2) to bully or harass other students; (3) to send illicit text messages; (4) to take and/or send illicit photographs; or (5) in any other manner that would make more severe disciplinary consequences appropriate.

C.E. SEARCH OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

In accordance with policy 4342, Student Searches, a student's wireless communication device and its contents, including, but not limited to, text messages and digital photos, may be searched whenever a school official has reason to believe the search will provide evidence that the student has violated or is violating a law, board policy, the Code of Student Conduct, or a school rule. The scope of such searches must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the nature of the suspected infraction.

D.F. LIABILITY

Students are personally and solely responsible for the security of their wireless communication devices. The school system is not responsible for the theft, loss, or damage of a ~~cellular phone or other~~ personal wireless communication device.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -76.100, -390.2

EMERGENCY EPINEPHRINE DELIVERY SYSTEMSAUTO-INJECTOR DEVICES

Policy Code: 5024/6127/7266

Anaphylaxis is a severe systemic allergic reaction from exposure to allergens that is rapid in onset and can cause death. Many severe allergies are undiagnosed, and students or others may experience their first severe allergic reaction while at school. Epinephrine delivery systems~~auto-injector devices~~ can be used to administer epinephrine to provide rapid, convenient first aid for persons suffering a potentially fatal anaphylactic reaction. This policy addresses the use of emergency epinephrine auto-injector devices~~delivery systems~~ administered under a non-patient specific prescription. Student-specific orders for epinephrine delivery systems~~auto-injector devices~~ are addressed in policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students.

Designated trained school personnel are authorized to use emergency epinephrine delivery systems~~auto-injector devices~~ to deliver emergency medical aid to any person suffering from an anaphylactic reaction during the school day or at a school-sponsored event on school property. The superintendent shall ensure that at least two emergency epinephrine delivery systems~~auto-injector devices~~ are located at each school for this purpose and are stored in secure, but unlocked and easily accessible, locations.

Each school principal shall designate one or more school personnel, as part of the medical care program under G.S. 115C-375.1, to receive initial training and annual retraining from a school nurse or qualified representative of the local health department regarding the storage and emergency use of epinephrine delivery systems~~auto-injector devices~~. Only such trained personnel are authorized to administer epinephrine to persons believed to be having an anaphylactic reaction. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify other school staff members as to which employee(s) has received this training in order to facilitate a prompt emergency response.

The principal, in collaboration with appropriate school personnel, shall create an emergency action plan for the use of epinephrine delivery systems~~auto-injector devices~~ that complies with all state law requirements. Principals are encouraged to include in the plan school-wide employee training in recognizing symptoms of anaphylaxis.

Epinephrine delivery systems~~auto-injector devices~~ provided by the school are intended for unforeseen emergencies. Students known to have medical conditions requiring the availability of an epinephrine delivery system~~auto-injector device~~ are expected to provide such devices~~a delivery system~~ for their use at school. Parents of students with known life threatening allergies and/or anaphylaxis should provide the school with written instructions from the students' health care provider for handling anaphylaxis and all necessary medications for implementing the student specific order in accordance with policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students. Students who meet the conditions established in policy 6125 may possess and self-administer their own medication.

This policy does not require emergency epinephrine delivery systems~~auto-injector devices~~ to be available at activities held off school grounds during or after the school day, including field trips

or off-site athletic events, or during transportation to or from school, except as may be required pursuant to an individual student's IEP, Section 504 Plan, or health or emergency plan.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-375.1, -375.2A

Cross References: Administering Medicines to Students (policy 6125)

Adopted: February 9, 2015

PUBLIC RECORDS – RETENTION, RELEASE, AND DISPOSITION

Policy Code: **5070/7350**

The board is committed to providing access to public records and public information. All employees shall comply with the public records law and this policy.

A. PUBLIC RECORD DEFINED

Any record, in any form, that is made or received by the board or its employees in connection with the transaction of public business is a public record that must be made available to the public, unless such record is protected from disclosure by federal or state law or is otherwise exempted from the public records law, G.S. 132-1 through 132-9. (See policy 5071/7351, Electronically Stored Information Retention, for specific information regarding public records in electronic form.)

Though the school improvement plan is a public record, the school safety components of the plan are not public records subject to public records law. Schematic diagrams, as described in G.S. 115C-105.53 and -105.54, and emergency response information, as described in G.S. 115C-47(40) and -105.54, are also not considered public records subject to public records law.

The official records of students are not public records subject to inspection and examination. (For additional information regarding the release of information about students, see policy 4700, Student Records.) Further, any written material containing the identifiable scores of individual students on any test taken pursuant to the state testing program described in Chapter 115C, Article 10A of the North Carolina General Statutes is not a public record. Any test that is developed, adopted, or provided as part of the state testing program is not a public record until the State Board of Education designates that the test is released.

Any report received from the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System pursuant to G.S. 135-8(f)(2)(f) is not a public record and will be treated as confidential.

Information in school system employee personnel files is protected from disclosure in accordance with G.S. 115C-319, except that the following employee information is public record.

1. Name.
2. Age.
3. The date of original employment or appointment.

4. The terms of any past or current contract by which the employee is employed, whether written or oral, to the extent that the board has the written contract or a record of the oral contract in its possession.
5. Current position.
6. Title.
7. Current total compensation from all funding sources, including at least salary (including pay, benefits, incentives, supplements, bonuses, deferred compensation, and all other forms of compensation paid to the employee) and reimbursements and allowances (including travel-related reimbursements and allowances).
8. The date and amount of each increase or decrease in ~~salary~~ total compensation with the board.
9. The date and type of each promotion, demotion, transfer, suspension, separation, or other change in position classification with the board.
10. The date and general description of the reasons for each promotion with the board.
11. The date and type of each dismissal, suspension, or demotion for disciplinary reasons taken by the board. If the disciplinary action was a dismissal, a copy of the written notice of the final decision of the board setting forth the specific acts or omissions that are the basis of the dismissal.
12. The office or station to which the employee is currently assigned.

The name of a participant in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program is not a public record and must be redacted from any records released. As necessary, school personnel may combine public and confidential records to meet the business needs of the system. However, if a record contains confidential information as well as public information, school officials must provide the requested public record with the confidential information removed or redacted.

B. DESIGNATION OF RECORDS OFFICER

The superintendent shall designate a records officer or otherwise ensure that the duties of a records officer are met.

1. Duties of the Records Officer

The duties of the records officer include the following:

- a. determining whether records are public or confidential by law, with assistance from the local board attorney as necessary;
- b. determining the most cost-effective means of storing and retrieving public records that include confidential information;
- c. providing training, consultation, and guidelines to school officials who respond to or are otherwise involved in public records requests;
- d. determining the actual cost of providing copies of public records in various forms, such as paper or electronic media, in which the school system is capable of providing the records;
- e. determining the cost of a request for copies of public records when a special service charge is applicable or when the school system is voluntarily creating or compiling a record as a service to the requester; and
- f. reviewing appeals of any denial of a request for public records.

2. Other Duties

A designated electronic records officer, or other employee(s) as determined by the superintendent, shall review all electronic data-processing systems created by the school system or being considered for acquisition through lease, purchase, or other means, to ensure they are designed and maintained in a manner that:

- a. will not impede the school system's ability to permit public inspection and examination of public records; and
- b. provides a means of obtaining copies of such records.

C. REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC RECORDS

All requests for examining or obtaining copies of public records should be in writing or recorded by school system personnel. This policy, administrative guidelines, information on the actual cost of producing public records, information on how to reach the records officer, information about how to appeal a denial of a public records request, and information regarding any computer database indexes must be made available to individuals requesting public records.

Public records must be released in accordance with the law. Any denial of a public records request must be made in writing and must include the basis for the denial. The superintendent or designee may issue additional guidelines consistent with this policy to further clarify the process for requesting public records.

D. FEES FOR COPIES OF PUBLIC RECORDS

Persons requesting copies of public records will be charged any applicable fees as determined by the records officer (see subsections B.1.d and B.1.e above). The school system shall not charge any fees for separating confidential information that is commingled with public records.

E. ELECTRONIC MAIL LISTS

A school employee may be authorized by the superintendent or designee to maintain an electronic mail list of individual subscribers. Such a list may be used only: (1) for the purpose for which the subscribers subscribed to it; (2) to notify subscribers of an emergency to public health or public safety; or (3) in the event of deletion of the list, to notify subscribers of the existence of any similar lists. Although such electronic mail lists of individual subscribers shall be available for public inspection in either printed or electronic format to the extent permitted by law, school officials shall not provide anyone with copies of such lists. Release for public inspection of any subscriber list must be consistent with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) if the list contains personally identifiable information from student education records. See policy 4700, Student Records.

F. DESTRUCTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS

To the extent required by law, school personnel shall maintain public records in accordance with the applicable records retention and disposition schedule(s) issued by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The superintendent may establish regulations for the destruction of records in accordance with the approved schedules.

Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 14-113.8(6); 115C-47(40), -105.27(a2), -105.53, -105.54, -109.3, -174.13, -319 to -321, -402; 132-1 to -9; 135-8(f)(2)(f); *Program Records Schedule: Local Public School Units*, N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (2021), available at <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/documents/local-education-agencies-schedule>; *General Records Schedule: Local Government Agencies*, N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (2021), available at <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/retention-schedules/local-government-schedules/general-records-schedule-local-government>

Cross References: Use of Personal Technology to Conduct School Business (policy 3228/7323), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy 4250/5075/7316), Student Records (policy 4700), Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information (policy 4705/7825), News Media Relations (policy 5040), Electronically Stored Information Retention (policy 5071/7351), Personnel Files (policy 7820)

Adopted: June 8, 2015

Revised: January 28, 2016; September 10, 2018; February 10, 2020; March 8, 2021; June 28,

The board recognizes that students may need to take medication during school hours. School personnel may administer medication prescribed by a health care practitioner upon the written request of a student's parent. In limited circumstances, a student may be authorized to self-administer medications. To minimize disruptions to the school day, students should take medications at home rather than at school whenever feasible. School officials may deny a request to administer any medication that could be taken at home or when, in the opinion of the superintendent or designee in consultation with school nursing personnel, other treatment options exist and the administration of the medication by school personnel would pose a substantial risk of harm to the student or others.

For purposes of this policy, all references to "parent" include parents, legal guardians, and legal custodians. In addition, for purposes of this policy, the term "health care practitioner" is limited to licensed medical professionals who are legally authorized to prescribe medications under North Carolina law, such as doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathic medicine, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.

Unless otherwise indicated, the terms "medication" and "medicine" include any substance intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of any disease. The term includes all prescription medications and all such substances available over-the-counter without a prescription, such as drugs, herbs, alternative medicines, and supplements (hereinafter "over-the-counter drugs"). The administration of any prescription or over-the-counter drug to students by school employees is prohibited except when performed in accordance with Section A. The self-administration of any prescription or over-the-counter drug by students at school is prohibited and constitutes a violation of policy 4325, Drugs and Alcohol, except in the limited circumstances described in Section C.

The administration, including by parents, school employees, or self-administration, of any substance containing cannabidiol (CBD) or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) at school is prohibited unless the CBD or THC product is available by prescription only and has been approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and all requirements of this policy are met.

A. MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

1. Conditions for Administering Medication

Authorized school employees may administer medication to students when all of the following conditions are met. These conditions apply to all medications, including those available over-the-counter without a prescription.

- a. **Parental Consent:** The student's parent must make a signed, written request that authorizes school personnel to administer the medication to the student.

- b. Medication Authorization/Order: A health care practitioner must prescribe the medication for use by the student and provide explicit written instructions for administering the medication.
- c. Certification of Necessity: The student's health care practitioner must certify that administration of the medication to the student during the school day is necessary to maintain and support the student's continued presence in school.
- d. Proper Container/Labeling: If the medication to be administered is available by prescription only, the parent must provide the medication in a pharmacy-labeled container with the child's name, the name of the medication, the exact dose to be given, the time/frequency the medication is to be given, the route of administration, the number of doses in the container, and the expiration date of the medication. If the medication is available over-the-counter, it must be provided in the original container or packaging, labeled with the student's name.
- e. Proper Administration: The employee must administer the medication pursuant to the health care practitioner's written instructions provided to the school by the student's parent, and in accordance with professional standards.

The board of education and its employees assume no liability for complications or side effects of medication when administered in accordance with the instructions provided by the parent and health care practitioner.

2. Procedures for Administering Medications

The superintendent shall develop procedures for the implementation of this policy. The procedures and a copy of this policy must be made available to all students and parents each school year. The superintendent's procedures should be developed according to the guidelines listed below.

- a. The health and welfare of the student must be of paramount concern in all decisions regarding the administration of medication.
- b. Procedures for medication administration must be consistent with recommendations of the School, Adolescence and Child Health Unit of the Whole Child Health Section of the Division of Child and Family Well-Being of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, as described in the *North Carolina School Health Program Manual*.
- c. Students with special needs are to be afforded all rights provided by federal and state law as enumerated in the *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*. Students with disabilities also are to be afforded all rights

provided by anti-discrimination laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- d. Except as permitted by this policy, no student may possess, use, sell, deliver, or manufacture any drug or counterfeit drug prohibited by policy 4325, Drugs and Alcohol, nor be under the influence of any drug in violation of that policy.
- e. The board generally encourages school personnel to administer medication from a centralized location. However, in all instances, whether administered from a centralized location or multiple locations, any medications kept at school for a student must be kept in a locked and secure place. An exception to the requirement for locked storage may be made for emergency medications that must be immediately accessible. Access to controlled substances should be limited to the school nurse, school staff person authorized to administer medication, and the principal or designee.
- f. All school personnel who will be administering medications must receive appropriate training.
- g. Only medications clearly prescribed for the student may be administered by school personnel. At the time a parent brings a medication to school for administration, if school personnel have concerns regarding the appropriateness of the medication or dosage for a student, a confirmation should be obtained from the student's health care practitioner or another health care practitioner prior to administering the medication or allowing a student to self-administer the medication.
- h. Although efforts should be made not to disrupt instructional time, a parent has the right to administer medication to his or her child at any time while the child is on school property, unless otherwise prohibited by this policy.
- i. Written information maintained by school personnel regarding a student's medicinal and health needs is confidential. Parents and students must be accorded all rights provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and state confidentiality laws. Any employee who violates the confidentiality of the records may be subject to disciplinary action.

B. EMERGENCY MEDICATION

Students who are at risk for medical emergencies, such as those with diabetes, asthma, or severe allergies, must have an emergency health care plan developed for them to address emergency administration of medication. Students must meet the requirements of subsection A.1, above, including providing authorization and instructions from the health care practitioner and written consent of the parent, in order for emergency medication to

be administered by school personnel while the student is at school, at a school sponsored activity, and/or while in transit to or from school or a school-sponsored event.

C. STUDENT SELF-ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS

The board recognizes that students with certain health conditions like diabetes or asthma, or an allergy that could result in an anaphylactic reaction, may need to possess and self-administer medication on school property in accordance with their individualized health care plan or emergency health care plan.

Students are prohibited from self-administering medication at school unless (1) the medicine has been prescribed for the treatment of diabetes, asthma, or anaphylactic reactions, including insulin or a source of glucose, a prescribed asthma inhaler, or a prescribed epinephrine ~~auto-injector~~delivery system; (2) the medicine is administered in accordance with the student's individualized health care plan or emergency health care plan and any relevant administrative regulations; and (3) the requirements of this section are met. The superintendent shall develop procedures for the possession and self-administration of such medication by students on school property during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, and/or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored events.

1. Authorization to Self-Administer Medication

Before a student will be allowed to self-administer medication pursuant to this subsection, the student's parent must provide to the principal or designee all of the documents listed below:

- a. written authorization from the student's parent for the student to possess and self-administer the medication;
- b. a written statement from the student's health care practitioner verifying that:
 - 1) the student has diabetes or asthma, or an allergy that could result in anaphylactic reaction;
 - 2) the health care practitioner prescribed the medication for use on school property during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored events; and
 - 3) the student understands, has been instructed in self-administration of the medication, has demonstrated the skill level necessary to use the medication and any accompanying device, and has been determined to be competent for self-administration;

- c. a written treatment plan and written emergency protocol formulated by the prescribing health care practitioner for managing the student's diabetes, asthma, or anaphylaxis episodes and for medication use by the student;
- d. a statement provided by the school system and signed by the student's parent acknowledging that the board of education and its employees and agents are not liable for injury arising from the student's possession and self-administration of the medication; and
- e. any other documents or items necessary to comply with state and federal laws.

Prior to being permitted to self-administer medication at school, the student also must demonstrate to the school nurse, or the nurse's designee, (1) the skill level necessary to use the medication and any device necessary for its administration; and (2) sufficient knowledge and maturity to be independent in the management of the medication with no oversight from school staff.

The student's parent must provide to the school backup medication that school personnel are to keep in a location to which the student has immediate access in the event the student does not have the required medication.

All information provided to the school by the student's parent must be reviewed by the school nurse and kept on file at the school in an easily accessible location. Any permission granted by the principal or designee for a student to possess and self-administer medication will be effective only for the same school for 365 calendar days. Such permission must be renewed each school year.

2. Responsibilities of the Student

A student who is authorized in accordance with this policy to carry medication for self-administration must carry the medication in the original labeled container with the student's name on the label.

3. Consequences for Improper Use

A student who uses his or her medication in a manner other than as prescribed or who permits another person to use the medication may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the school disciplinary policy. However, school officials shall not impose disciplinary action on the student that limits or restricts the student's immediate access to the diabetes, asthma, or anaphylactic medication.

The board does not assume any responsibility for the administration of medication to a student by the student, the student's parent, or any other person who is not authorized by this policy to administer medications to students.

Legal References: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12134, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; 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. 115C-36, -307(c), -375.1, -375.2, -375.2A, -375.3; *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), Drugs and Alcohol (policy 4325), Emergency Epinephrine Auto-Injector Devices ~~Delivery Systems~~ (policy 5024/6127/7266)

Other Resources: *North Carolina School Health Program Manual* (N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Div. of Child and Family Well-Being, School, Adolescence and Child Health Unit, 2023), available at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/child-and-family-well-being/whole-child-health-section/school-adolescent-and-child-health/school-nursing-support#SchoolHealthProgramManual-4324>

Adopted: April 11, 2016

Revised: August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); July 9, 2018; April 8, 2019; June 8, 2020; September 13, 2021; May 8, 2023; June 17, 2024

Replaces: Board policy 5.03.10, Medication Administration

TRANSPORTATION SERVICE/VEHICLE CONTRACTS

Policy Code:

6340

The board may enter into contracts with public or private carriers in accordance with G.S. 115C-253, State Board of Education policy, any other applicable law, and this policy. Any contracts also must comply with policy 6450, Purchase of Services. Before acting as a driver pursuant to a contract under G.S. 115C-253, an individual must submit to a criminal history check as described in policy 7100, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel.

The superintendent or designee shall develop safety standards for contracted commercial bus transportation services used to transport students to school-related activities. The standards must comply with the requirements established by the State Board. The superintendent or designee shall develop a list of companies or individuals that meet these standards and are approved to provide student transportation services. If appropriate, the superintendent shall recommend that the board enter into interlocal cooperation agreements to assist in developing the standards and list of approved entities required under this paragraph. The superintendent shall ensure that the school system contracts for commercial bus transportation services for school-related activities only with entities on the approved list.

The board may purchase or lease student transportation vehicles in accordance with law and board policy, including policy 6430, Purchasing Requirements for Equipment, Materials, and Supplies and policy 6425, Continuing Contracts. Any such vehicle must meet federal safety standards and state requirements.

All titles will be issued to the board of education. Sufficient liability coverage must be maintained in accordance with policy 8340, Insurance.

The board will consider requests for providing transportation services to a charter school. Such consideration will take into account any factors required by law.

Legal References: 49 U.S.C. 30125, 30165; G.S. 115C-42, -47(25), -239, -240, -247, -249, -249.1, -253, -255, -332; *North Carolina School Transportation Fleet Manual*, State Board of Education Policy TRAN-005; State Board of Education Policies TRAN-009, -010, -011; *School Charter Transportation Recommended Guidelines and Procedures*, available at <http://www.ncbussafety.org/motorcoach/index.html>

Cross References: Continuing Contracts (policy 6425), Purchasing Requirements for Equipment, Materials, and Supplies (policy 6430), Purchase of Services (policy 6450), Recruitment and Selection of Personnel (policy 7100), Insurance (policy 8340)

Adopted: April 11, 2016

Revised: August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); May 21, 2018; November 8, 2021

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Policy Code:

7100

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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

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

B. RECRUITMENT

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

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

C. CRIMINAL HISTORY

1. Reporting Arrests, Charges, and Convictions

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

to the assistant superintendent of human resources no later than the next business day following adjudication.

2. Criminal History and Sex Offender Registry Checks of Candidates for Employment

A criminal history check and a check of sex offender registries must be conducted on all final candidates for employment with the school system. Criminal history checks must be conducted in accordance with state law and any procedures established by the superintendent. The board will pay for costs associated with criminal history checks of candidates for employment. School officials shall not require candidates to disclose expunged arrests, charges, or convictions and shall not ask candidates to voluntarily disclose such information without first advising that disclosure is not required. The superintendent or designee shall report to the State Board of Education any licensed individual who is found to have a criminal history, as required by State Board policy.

Special requirements are described in Section D of this policy for criminal history checks of candidates for certain positions working with pre-school children or working in afterschool or developmental day programs.

3. Criminal History and Sex Offender Registry Checks for Contractors

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

Any individual contracted under G.S. 115C-253 to provide transportation services to students must also undergo a criminal history check before acting as a driver under the contract. The terms of the contract may require the individual to pay for the cost of the criminal history check. A new criminal history check will not be required if the board receives the results of a criminal history check performed on the individual by another North Carolina school system within the past three years in accordance with the requirements of G.S. 115C-332(k).

4. Exclusion from Hiring Based on Criminal Conduct

A final candidate for employment or for hiring as an independent contractor will be excluded from hiring on the basis of criminal conduct only when doing so is job-related and consistent with business necessity. If a final candidate is found to have been convicted (including entering a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of a criminal offense, other than a minor traffic violation, the superintendent shall determine whether the individual is qualified for employment despite the criminal history by considering, among other things, whether the individual poses a threat to the safety of students or personnel or has demonstrated that he or she does not have the integrity or honesty to fulfill the duties of the position. The following factors will be considered in making this determination: (1) the nature and gravity of the offense

or conduct; (2) the time that has passed since the offense or conduct and/or completion of the sentence; and (3) the nature of the job sought. Before the superintendent may exclude a final candidate based on his or her past criminal convictions, the superintendent must give the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate that the exclusion does not properly apply to him or her. The requirements of this paragraph do not apply to a child care provider who is determined to be disqualified by the Division of Child Development and Early Education on the basis of a criminal history check conducted pursuant to G.S. 110-90.2, 42 U.S.C. 9858f, and 45 C.F.R. 98.43. (See Section D of this policy).

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

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

D. CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

For purposes of this section, a "child care provider" is:

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

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

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

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

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

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

E. SELECTION

1. Qualifications

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

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

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

2. Nepotism

- a. For purposes of this subsection, the following definitions apply.
 - i. "Immediate family" means spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild. The term includes the step, half, and in-

law relationships.

- ii. "Central office staff administrator" includes directors, supervisors, specialists, staff officers, assistant superintendents, area superintendents, superintendents, and principals.
- b. Before any immediate family of any board of education member or central office staff administrator is employed by the board or engaged in any capacity as an employee, independent contractor, or otherwise, (1) the board member or central office staff administrator must disclose the familial relationship to the board and (2) the prospective employment or engagement must be approved by the board in a duly called open session meeting.
 - i. An employee who knowingly fails to disclose a familial relationship to the board as required will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
 - ii. Notification by the employee to the assistant superintendent of human resources will be deemed disclosure to the board. The assistant superintendent of human resources is responsible for conveying the disclosure to the board before the board takes action on the prospective employment or engagement.
- c. When making recommendations for the selection and assignment of personnel, the superintendent shall attempt to avoid situations in which one employee occupies a position in which he or she has influence over the employment status, including hiring, salary, and promotion, of another employee who is a member of the first employee's immediate family.
- d. No administrative or supervisory personnel may directly supervise a member of his or her immediate family.

3. Employment Procedures

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

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

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

Legal References: Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. 621 *et seq.*; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*; Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1703; Equal Pay Act of 1963, 29 U.S.C. 206; Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*; Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, 42 U.S.C. 2000ff *et seq.*; Military Selective Service Act, 50 U.S.C. Appx. 453; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794; Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e *et seq.*; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. 4301 *et seq.*; 8 U.S.C. 1101 *et seq.*; 42 U.S.C. 9858f; 45 C.F.R. 98.43; *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 590 U.S. 644, 140 S. Ct. 1731 (2020); *Green v. Missouri Pacific Railroad*, 523 F.2d 1290 (8th Cir. 1975); *Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (April 25, 2012), available at http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm; G.S. 14-208.18; 15A-153; 110-90.2; 115C-12.2, -36, -47, -253, -276(j), -332; 126-7.1(i), -16; 127A-202.1 *et seq.*; 127B-10, -12, -14; 143B-421.1, -1209.11; *Leandro v. State*, 346 N.C. 336 (1997); 10A N.C.A.C. 09 .0102, .2701, .2702, .2703; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0313; State Board of Education Policy BENF-009

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

Adopted: February 9, 2015

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

Revised: January 28, 2016; August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); November 13, 2018; September 9, 2019; May 11, 2020; July 26, 2021 (Legal references only); November 8, 2021; March 11, 2024; May 12, 2025

Personnel files, which may consist of paper or electronic records, will be maintained in the human resources office for all employees as provided by law. The superintendent and all supervisors are directed to ensure that all appropriate employment-related information is submitted to the files. Employees will be provided with all procedural protections as provided by law.

The superintendent has overall responsibility for granting or denying access to personnel records consistent with this policy.

A. RECORDS MAINTAINED

The following records must be maintained in the personnel file:

1. evaluation reports made by the administration;
2. commendations for and complaints against the employee (see Section C);
3. written suggestions for corrections and improvements made by the administration;
4. certificates;
5. employee's standard test scores;
6. employee's academic records;
7. application forms;
8. any request to the State Board of Education to revoke the employee's teaching license; and
9. other pertinent records or reports.

B. CERTAIN EMPLOYEE RECORDS MAINTAINED SEPARATELY

The following employee information must be kept separate from the employee's general personnel information, in accordance with legal and/or board requirements.

1. Pre-Employment Information

Letters of reference about an employee obtained before his or her employment and, for teachers, any other pre-employment information collected, must be filed separately from the employee's general personnel information and must not be made available to the employee.

2. Criminal Record Check

Data from a criminal history check must be maintained in a locked, secure location separate from the employee's personnel file. The superintendent shall designate which school officials have a need to know the results of the criminal history check. Only those officials so designated may obtain access to the records.

3. Medical Information

Employee medical information, including the following, must be kept in a separate confidential file and may be subject to special disclosure rules:

- a. health certificates (see policy 7120, Employee Health Certificate);
- b. drug test results, except that drug use or alcohol use contrary to board policy or law also may be documented in the employee's personnel file (see policy 7241, Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators);
- c. information related to an employee's communicable disease/condition or possible occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens (see policies 7260, Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens, and 7262, Communicable Diseases – Employees);
- d. medical information related to leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (see policy 7520, Family and Medical Leave); and
- e. genetic information, as defined by the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008.

4. Complaints/Reports of Harassment or Discrimination

The superintendent or designee shall maintain records of all reports and complaints of harassment and discrimination and the resolution of such complaints. Allegations of harassment or discrimination must be kept confidential to the extent possible. Employees involved in the allegations will be identified only to individuals who need the information to investigate or resolve the matter, or to ensure that due process is provided to the accused employee (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 1735/4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited).

If the allegations are substantiated through investigation, the superintendent or designee shall ensure that the provisions of Section C, below, are followed to the extent that they do not conflict with the rights of any individual.

C. PLACEMENT OF RECORDS IN PERSONNEL FILE

All evaluations, commendations, complaints, or suggestions for correction or improvement must be placed in the employee's central office personnel file after the following requirements are met:

1. the comment is signed and dated by the person who made the evaluation, commendation, complaint, or suggestion;
2. if the comment is a complaint, the employee's supervisor has attempted to resolve the issue raised therein and documentation of such efforts is attached with the supervisor's recommendation to the superintendent as to whether the complaint contains any invalid, irrelevant, outdated, or false information; and
3. the employee has received a copy of the evaluation, commendation, complaint, or suggestion five days before it is placed in the file.

All written complaints that are signed and dated must be submitted regardless of whether the supervisor considers the complaint to be resolved.

The supervisor is expected to use good judgment in determining when a document should be submitted to the file immediately and when a delay is justified, such as when there exists a plan of improvement that is frequently revised. However, all evaluations, commendations, complaints, or suggestions for correction or improvement should be submitted by the end of the school year or in time to be considered in an evaluation process, whichever is sooner. The supervisor or principal should seek clarification from the associate superintendent of human resources as necessary to comply with this policy.

The employee may offer a denial or explanation of the evaluation, commendation, complaint, or suggestion, and any such denial or explanation will become part of his or her personnel file, provided that it is signed and dated.

The superintendent may exercise statutory authority not to place in an employee's file a letter of complaint that contains invalid, irrelevant, outdated, or false information, or a letter of complaint when there is no documentation of an attempt to resolve the issue.

As provided in policy 7900, Resignation, if a career employee who has been recommended for dismissal under the applicable state law resigns without the written consent of the superintendent, then: (1) the superintendent shall report the matter to the State Board of Education; (2) the employee shall be deemed to have consented to the placement of the written notice of the superintendent's intention to recommend dismissal in the employee's personnel file; and (3) the employee shall be deemed to have consented to the release to prospective employers, upon request, of the fact that the superintendent has reported this employee to the State Board of Education. For purposes of this provision, "career

employee” means (1) a teacher or an administrator with career status, or (2) an administrator or a non-career status teacher during the term of his or her contract.

D. ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILE

1. Every employee has the right to inspect his or her personnel file, including any portions of the file maintained in electronic format only, during regular working hours, provided that three days’ notice is given to the human resources office.
2. The following persons may be permitted to access a personnel file without the consent of the employee about whom the file is maintained:
 - a. school officials involved in the screening, selection, or evaluation of the individual for employment or other personnel action;
 - b. members of the board of education, if the examination of the file relates to the duties and responsibilities of the board member;
 - c. the board attorney;
 - d. the superintendent and other supervisory personnel;
 - e. the hearing officer in a demotion or dismissal procedure regarding the employee; and
 - f. law enforcement and the District Attorney to assist in the investigation of a report made to law enforcement pursuant to G.S. 115C-288(g) or regarding an arson; an attempted arson; or the destruction of, theft from, theft of, embezzlement from, or embezzlement of any personal or real property owned by the board. Five days’ written notice will be given to the employee prior to such disclosure.
3. No other person may have access to a personnel file except under the following circumstances:
 - a. when an employee gives written consent to the release of his or her records, which specifies the records to be released and to whom they are to be released;
 - b. pursuant to a subpoena or court order;
 - c. when the board has determined, and the superintendent has documented, that the release or inspection of information is essential to maintaining the integrity of the board or the quality of services provided by the board; or

- d. the superintendent or designee determines that disclosure to a court of law, or a state or federal administrative agency having a quasi-judicial function, is necessary to adequately defend against a claim filed by a current or former employee against the board or a school official or employee for any alleged act or omission arising during the course and scope of his or her official duties or employment. Such disclosures will be limited to those confidential portions of the personnel file of the employee who filed the claim and only to the extent necessary for the defense of the board.
4. Each request for consent to release records must be handled separately.
5. It is a criminal violation for an employee or board member to do either of the following:
 - a. knowingly, willfully, and with malice, permit any unauthorized person to have access to information contained in a personnel file; or
 - b. knowingly and willfully examine, remove, or copy a personnel file that he or she is not specifically authorized to access pursuant to G.S. 115C-321.

E. INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING TITLE I SCHOOLS

The following information about a student's teacher(s) or paraprofessional(s) providing services to a student must be provided upon request to the parent of a student attending a Title I school:

1. whether the teacher has met North Carolina qualification and licensing criteria for the grade level(s) and subject area(s) in which the teacher provides instruction;
2. whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which North Carolina qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
3. whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification; and
4. the qualifications of any paraprofessional providing services to the student.

F. PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. The following information contained in an employee's personnel file must be open to inspection upon request by members of the general public:
 - a. name;
 - b. age;

- c. the date of original employment or appointment;
 - d. the terms of any past or current contract by which the employee is employed, whether written or oral, to the extent that the board has the written contract or a record of the oral contract in its possession;
 - e. current position;
 - f. title;
 - g. current total compensation from all funding sources, including at least salary (including pay, benefits, incentives, supplements, bonuses, deferred compensation, and all other forms of compensation paid to the employee) and reimbursements and allowances (including travel-related reimbursements and allowances);
 - h. the date and amount of each increase or decrease in total compensation salary with the board;
 - i. the date and type of each promotion, demotion, transfer, suspension, separation, or other change in position classification with the board;
 - j. the date and general description of the reasons for each promotion with the board;
 - k. the date and type of each dismissal, suspension, or demotion for disciplinary reasons taken by the board, and if the disciplinary action was a dismissal, a copy of the written notice of the final decision of the board setting forth the specific acts or omissions that are the basis of the dismissal; and
 - l. the office or station to which the employee is currently assigned.
- 2. The name of a participant in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program is not a public record, is not open to inspection, and must be redacted from any records released.
 - 3. Volunteer records are not considered public records.
 - 4. Under no circumstances will the following be released pursuant to a public records request or as part of any employee directory:
 - a. personal identifying information, as defined in policy 4705/7825, Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information; or
 - b. the name, address, or telephone number of a participant in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program.

G. WEBSITE PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

For purposes of this policy, a central office employee means a superintendent, assistant superintendent, associate superintendent, director or coordinator, supervisor, finance officer, personnel member categorized as a central office employee by the Department of Public Instruction or by the school system, and permanent employee of the school system or employee of a third-party contractor with the school system who is not assigned to a school campus.

The following information will be published and updated annually on the school system website:

1. for each central office employee:
 - a. the total compensation from all funding sources, including at least salary (including pay, benefits, incentives, supplements, bonuses, deferred compensation, and all other forms of compensation paid to the employee) and reimbursements and allowances (including travel-related reimbursements and allowances);
 - b. the position title;
 - c. the position description;
 - d. the date the position was created; and
 - e. the department, unit, or office of the school system in which the position is located;
2. the title of each central office employee position in the school system and the number of positions associated with that title; and
3. for each department, unit, or office of the school system:
 - a. the number of central office employees located in that department, unit, or office; and
 - b. the number of central office employees for each position title.

G.H. REMOVAL OF RECORDS

An employee may petition the board to remove any information from his or her personnel file that the employee deems invalid, irrelevant, or outdated.

Legal References: Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, 42 U.S.C. 2000ff *et seq.*; Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 6312(e)(1)(A); 34 C.F.R. 200.61; G.S. 115C-36, -47(18), -209.1, -288(g), -319 to -321, -325(b) and (o) (applicable to career status teachers), -325.2 and -325.9 (applicable to non-career status teachers); 143B-1209.11; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0313

Cross References: 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), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 1735/4329/7311), Confidential Information (policy 2125/7315), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy 4250/5075/7316), Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information (policy 4705/7825), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Employee Health Certificate (policy 7120), Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators (policy 7241), Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens (policy 7260), Communicable Diseases – Employees (policy 7262), Family and Medical Leave (policy 7520), Petition for Removal of Personnel Records (policy 7821), Resignation (policy 7900)

Adopted: January 11, 2016

Revised: November 13, 2017; February 10, 2020 (Legal references only); December 13, 2021; December 11, 2023 (Legal references only); May 12, 2025

Replaces: Policy 3.05.40, Personnel File-Certified Personnel, and policy 3.05.50, Personnel File-Classified Personnel

ATTENDANCE – HIGH SCHOOL

Regulation: 4400-R(1)

Watauga High school recognizes the positive correlation between regular school attendance and achievement. Regular attendance, therefore, shall be required. The primary responsibility for attendance rests with students and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

In accordance with Compulsory Attendance Law, established attendance policies of the State Board of Education and Watauga County Board of Education, Watauga High School will code absences as excused for the following reasons *when valid documentation is provided within ~~two~~ three days of the absence*:

<u>Reason for Absence</u>	<u>Required Documentation</u>
Illness or injury, death of an immediate family member, or religious observance	A signed and dated parent note will be valid documentation
Court or administrative proceedings, quarantine, or medical/dental appointment	Only official documentation from the court or administrative officer, or the medical/dental professional will be valid documentation; parent note is not sufficient
Department of Motor Vehicle Appointment	Parent Note

Educational Opportunity for Family Travel or College Visits: Prior approval form must be completed and approved within established time frame in order to serve as documentation. College visits require additional documentation from the college visited.

Student visits with a parent who is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by policy ~~5.02.50~~ 4050, Children of Military Families, who has been called to duty, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, at the discretion of the superintendent or designee. (Prior approval is required)

School releases and days assigned for ISS do not count as absences.

Days assigned for OSS are coded as a suspension. These absences will not count ~~against loss of credit~~ towards the 10% absence limit.

Students who reside on a road that has been defined by the Watauga County Transportation Director as a limited bus route and who are absent on days when limited routes are run and who furnish a written excuse from parent or guardian citing dangerous road conditions within the ~~second~~ third day of attendance following the absence will be excused.

In all situations, students are responsible for acquiring, completing and turning in assignments and/or acquiring and responding appropriately to any information given in a missed class. Students are required to make up all work missed for all absences, excused or unexcused.

Students have one day for each day absent to turn in work. This begins the day after returning from the absence. Teachers have the option of extending deadlines, but they are not required to

do so. Work assigned prior to an absence is due the first day back to class.

~~In order to obtain credit in a course a student may have no more than 8 absences in that course. More than 8 absences will result in no credit being given for the course. ALL absences count towards the 8 day limit. If a student is absent from a class more than 8 days, the student will receive a grade of FF (Failure Due to Attendance) and has a right to appeal to the Attendance Advisory Committee.~~

In order for a student to obtain credit in a course, the student must receive a passing grade. A grade of FF may be used for a student who does not have a passing grade based on content for the course and has been absent for 10% of more of the classes for the course. All absences, excused and unexcused, count towards the 10% absence limit.

Procedures for Appeal Process for Excessive Absences:

- ~~—The principal will appoint an Attendance Advisory Committee that will determine local protocols for working with students who have excessive absences in any given course. These procedures may include, but are not limited to, preemptive attendance meetings with students and/or parents/guardians, mentor opportunities, loss of off-campus class privileges, loss of parking privileges, and periodic notifications home regarding their absences, etc. All student-athletes will adhere to North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) attendance policies in order to maintain eligibility for practices and athletic competitions. to hold a hearing in order to determine whether circumstances for each student who has exceeded the 8 day limit warrant a waiver of no credit for the course. The Attendance Advisory Committee will notify the student and his or her parents or guardians concerning the time and place of the hearing and indicate that parental presence is encouraged. The Attendance Advisory Committee will forward its recommendation to the principal.~~
- ~~—At the 9th absence in any given course, parents will receive a Loss of Credit notification letter~~
- ~~—Students whose course credit will be denied due to violation of the attendance policy have the right to appeal. In cases of extreme hardship (i.e.: extended hospitalization or serious illness) the principal may decide to award course credit.~~
- ~~—If a parent/guardian chooses to appeal for a waiver of the loss of credit, they must indicate their intention through submission of the appeal for or during an attendance meeting. The loss of credit appeal form may be obtained in the main office and must be returned by the specified due date near the end of each semester.~~
- ~~—The principal has the authority to overturn or overrule any recommendations from the Attendance Advisory Committee.~~

~~The Attendance Advisory Committee will consider the following when reviewing the loss of credit appeal by a student:~~

~~Academic achievement~~

~~Circumstances of the absences (any record of skipping, extreme illness, etc.)~~

~~Number of Absences~~

~~Extent to which the student completed missed work~~

~~Course and Exam Grades (if available)~~

~~Appeal Form submitted by parent(s)/guardians~~

~~Recommendation Form from teacher for course credit to be granted~~

~~Parents and students will be notified of the final decision in writing within one week of the conclusion of final exams.~~

Unexcused Absence Policy

Watauga High school will comply with state compulsory attendance law, GS-115C-378 which establishes that: Every parent, guardian or other person in this State having charge or control of a child between the ages of seven and 16 years shall cause such child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the child is assigned shall be in session. The parent, guardian, or custodian of a child shall notify the school of the reason for each known absence of the child, in accordance with local school policy.

The principal or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of his child's excessive absences after the child has accumulated three unexcused absences in a school year. After not more than six unexcused absences, the principal shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian by mail that he may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the State and local boards of education. After 10 accumulated unexcused absences in a school year the principal or the principal's designee shall review any report or investigation prepared under G.S. 115C-381 and shall confer with the student and the student's parent guardian, or custodian, if possible, to determine whether the parent guardian, or custodian has received notification pursuant to this section and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. If the principal determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal shall notify the district attorney and the director of social services of the county where the child resides. Upon receiving notification by the principal, the director of social services shall determine whether to undertake an investigation under G.S. 7B-302. (1955, c. 1372, art. 20, s. 1; 1956, Ex. Sess., c. 5; 1963, c. 1223, s. 6; 1969, c. 339; c. 799, s. 1; 1971, c. 846; 1975, c. 678, s. 2; c. 731, s. 3; 1979, c. 847; 1981, c. 423, s. 1; 1985, c. 297; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 769, s. 2; 1998-202, s. 13(aa); 2001-490, s. 2.38; 2003-304, s. 3.)

Legal Ref: G.S. 115C: 378-383; GS: 115C-391,115C-407.5
NC Administrative Code #0104

Revised: August 10,1987; August 8,1988; March 8,1993; July 20,1993; July 16,1996; November 12,1996; March 8,1999; August 9, 1999; July 16, 2001; January 14, 2002; July 15,2002; January 12, 2009; April 28,2009; August 12,2013; February 9, 2015; June 12, 2017; April 8, 2019; October 9, 2023; DATE

An evaluation system of students' academic performance is necessary to help ensure that all students are succeeding within the framework of the educational goals and objectives of the board. The Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") believes that the formal issuance of student evaluations on a regular basis promotes continuous assessment of a student's performance; informs the student, his or her parents or guardians, and the school staff about the student's performance and progress; and provides a system of notice that allows intervention strategies to be implemented if necessary to improve the student's performance. The board encourages teachers and principals to pursue innovative methods of evaluating progress.

The superintendent or designee shall establish an evaluation system for assessing an individual student's academic achievement and progress relative to benchmarks set for students at that instructional level. The evaluation system should provide for regular communication with parents so that they may be informed and involved in their child's education.

Teachers shall evaluate student performance and keep accurate records in order to substantiate a grade or assessment given in a course. In evaluating student performance, each teacher shall make use of all available information, including but not limited to:

1. Formative, Benchmark, and Summative Classroom assessments and grades
2. North Carolina Ready End-of-Course tests (EOC)
3. North Carolina Ready End-of-Grade tests (EOG)
4. Writing Assessments
5. VoCATS
6. Other standardized tests
7. Teacher observation of student performance
8. Assistance of resource personnel

All high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools ~~may~~will use the following grading scale.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	< 59

The following letter grades also may be used as applicable.

FF	FF may be used for a student who does not have a passing grade based on content and also has been absent for at least 10% of the classes for the course.
INC	If a student has extenuating circumstances, such as a medical condition, the superintendent, principal, or other designee may approve the temporary use of incomplete (INC).
P	Pass (P) may be used for elective courses but may not be awarded for non-elective graduation requirements, <u>unless a student transfers from an unaccredited or international school.</u>
WP	Withdraw (WP) may be used for courses from which a student withdraws during the current semester and receives no course credit.
CDM	Credit by demonstrated mastery (CDM) will be used to reflect earning credit for a course through the CDM process.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47; State Board of Education Policy GRAD-009

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 4002), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Grading and Reporting (regulation 3400-R), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Parental Involvement (policy 4002)

Adopted: July 11, 2016

Revised: March 15, 2018 (Legal references only); August 11, 2025; DATE

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them to be career and college ready and productive members of society.

In order to graduate from high school, students must meet the following requirements:

1. successful completion of all State Board of Education course unit requirements as described in Section A;
2. successful completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation instruction and pass a skills test; and
3. successful completion of all other requirements mandated by the board, as provided in this policy.

Principals shall ensure that students and parents are aware of the number and nature of credits required for high school graduation, the potential to complete high school graduation requirements in three years, and the availability of early graduate college scholarships.

A. COURSE UNITS REQUIRED

As described in State Board of Education Policy GRAD-004, all students must fulfill the course unit requirements of the Future-Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. The table in subsection A.1 below lists the course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study applicable to students who entered ninth grade for the first time before 2020-21. Students should consult their school counselor to determine applicable course unit requirements for graduation.

In accordance with policy 3101, Dual Enrollment, and State Board of Education requirements, students may earn high school credit for college courses completed. In addition, students may earn credit for certain high school courses in the Future-Ready Core Course of Study completed prior to grade 9, as authorized by the State Board of Education. Students also have the opportunity to meet course unit requirements without completing the regular period of classroom instruction by demonstrating mastery of the course material in accordance with policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability, and State Board of Education requirements. Watauga High School students may earn one or two units of credit upon successful completion of a course, depending on how the course is offered.

School counseling program staff shall assist students in selecting high school courses to ensure that students are taking all required units and selecting electives consistent with their postgraduation plans.

For students who have transferred to the school system during high school or who, for other reasons, have completed course work outside of the school system, the principal shall determine what course work will be applied as credit toward graduation. See policy 3420 for information regarding receiving credit toward graduation for courses taken abroad.

All awards of high school course credit must be consistent with State Board of Education requirements. Any inconsistency between board policy and State Board graduation requirements will be resolved by following the State Board requirements. While the board endeavors to keep its policy up to date with current State Board of Education graduation requirements, students should verify current requirements with their school counselors when planning course schedules or making other decisions based on graduation requirements. Watauga High School students may graduate and receive a high school diploma when a combination of the following state and local requirements are met:

1. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required

Types of Courses	State Requirements/ Local Recommendations
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 plus two additional courses identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and an earth/environmental science course)
Social Studies	4 (including American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics; American History Parts I and II; and World History)****
Health/P.E.	1 beginning for the Class of 2025/ 2- one in Health; one in P.E. for Class of 2021-Class of 2024
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)
Total Credits	22***** beginning with the Class of 2025 23 for Class of 2021- Class of 2024

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

** Students entering ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2014-15 school year have alternate math course options. See SBE Policy GRAD-004.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts->

[schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/standard-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources](#)

**** American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by an AP/IB/CIE course, dual enrollment, or any other course that does not fully address the NCSCOS, except as provided in SBE Policy GRAD-008. See also SBE Policies CCRE-001 and GRAD-004.

*****Students may earn course credit for the successful completion of courses through a university, community college, or distance learning. (See Watauga County Board of Education Policy 3101: Dual Enrollment and Policy 3102: Online Instruction)

2. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Types of Courses	State Requirements/ Local Recommendations
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management)
Science	2 (including Applied Science** and Biology)
Social Studies	2 (including American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics; and American History I or American History II)
Health/P.E.	1 beginning for the Class of 2025/ 2- one in Health; one in P.E. for Class of 2021-Class of 2024
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)
Occupational Preparation	6 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III, and IV, which require 150 hours of school-based training, 225 hours of community-based training, and 225 hours of paid employment*)
Electives	0
Other Requirements	• Completion of IEP objectives • Career Portfolio
Total Credits	22*** beginning with the Class of 2025 23 for Class of 2021- Class of 2024

* Paid employment is the expectation; however, when paid employment is not available, 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship experience, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community service hours may substitute for 225 hours of paid employment.

**** Applied Science is no longer an option starting with students entering the ninth grade in the 2025-2026 school year.

***Students may earn course credit for the successful completion of courses through a university, community college, or distance learning. (See Watauga County Board of Education Policy 3101: Dual Enrollment and Policy 3102: Online Instruction)

B. HIGH SCHOOL FINAL EXAMS AND END-OF-COURSE TESTING

High school students must take all end-of-course (EOC) tests and Career and Technical Education (CTE) State Assessments required by the State Board of Education and pursuant

to policy 3410, Testing and Assessment Program. Students shall attain passing scores on exit standards adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education and administered by Watauga County Schools.

C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Honor Graduates

Honor graduates may be designated by principals on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent. Recognition of honor graduates may be included in graduation programs.

2. Students with Disabilities

Graduation requirements must be applied to students with disabilities to the extent required by state and federal law and State Board policy.

3. Children of Military Families

In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of military families, as defined in policy 4050, Children of Military Families, school officials shall comply with the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5), G.S. 115C-407.12, and the following requirements.

a. Waiver Requirements

Specific course work required for graduation will be waived for children of military families if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another school system. If a waiver is not granted, school administrators shall provide the student with reasonable justification for the denial. If a waiver is not granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the superintendent or designee shall provide the student with an alternative means of acquiring the required course work so that the student may graduate on time.

b. Testing Requirements for Graduation

The superintendent shall accept from children of military families the following in lieu of any local testing requirements for graduation: (1) the end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; (2) national norm-referenced achievement tests; or (3) alternative testing. If these alternatives are not feasible for a student who has transferred in his or her senior year, subsection c below will apply.

c. Transfers During Senior Year

If a child of a military family who has transferred at the beginning of or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the school system after all of the alternatives listed above have been considered and the student meets the graduation requirements at his or her sending school, then school officials from the school system shall collaborate with the sending school system to ensure that the student will receive a diploma from the sending board of education.

4. Early Graduation

Students have the option of graduating early by completing the State Board of Education minimum graduation requirements on an accelerated three-year pathway. Students choosing to use an accelerated pathway must follow the process required for early graduation as described in State Board Policies GRAD-001 and GRAD-006.

5. Graduation Certificates, Transcripts, and Participation

Graduation certificates will be awarded to eligible students in accordance with the standards set forth in State Board policy.

Transcripts may be issued to all students receiving a diploma or certificate. The transcript shall provide all information required by State Board of Education policy GRAD-009 and/or other State Board policies as appropriate.

Participation in graduation and baccalaureate ceremonies is optional. Students who have completed all graduation requirements, have paid all fees, and have the approved graduation attire and diploma may participate in graduation exercises.

Exceptional Children who have satisfactorily completed the course of study prescribed in their Individual Education Plans are eligible to participate in graduation exercises.

6. Diploma Endorsements

Students have the opportunity to earn diploma endorsements as described in State Board Policy GRAD-007. No endorsement is required to receive a diploma.

7. Grade Replacement

Students are permitted to repeat a course for credit when they have failed a course. Students are permitted to repeat a passed course for grade replacement. The repeated course must be a seated class taken during the normal school day and must be taken within one year of initial completion of the course in question.

Legal References: G.S. 115C- 47, -81.25(c)(10)(c), -81.45(d), -81.65, -81.90(c), -83.31, - 83.32, -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5, -407.12; GS 116-11(10a); 16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0309, .0503, .0506, 0510; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, GRAD-004, GRAD-006, GRAD-007, GRAD-008, GRAD-009, GRAD-010, TEST-003

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Dual Enrollment (policy 3101), Online Instruction (policy 3102), Testing and Assessment Program (policy 3410), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Citizenship and Character Education (policy 3530), Children of Military Families (policy 4050)

Adopted: September 14, 2015

Revised: November 9, 2015; October 10, 2016; August 14, 2017; June 11, 2018; September 10, 2018; October 5, 2020; March 8, 2021; July 26, 2021; December 13, 2021; June 30, 2022; March 13, 2023; July 11, 2024; April 15, 2025: DATE

Replaces: Policy 4.04.50, Exit Documents at Graduation; policy 4.04.70, Graduation Requirements; policy 4.03.35 Accountability Standards (in part)

In its effort to provide a rigorous expanded curriculum that will adequately prepare students for future educational and workplace endeavors, the Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") will support high school students who also wish to enroll in classes taught by a college, university, community college or other approved entity in accordance with the requirements of this policy, state law and State Board of Education policy.

A. CAREER AND COLLEGE PROMISE

The Career and College Promise program is designed to offer qualified high school students structured dual enrollment opportunities that provide both entry-level job skills as well as pathways leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree.

The board, in collaboration with local community colleges, may provide for dual enrollment of a qualified high school student in community college courses through (1) a Career and Technical Education Pathway leading to a job credential, certificate, or diploma aligned with one or more high school Career Clusters, ~~or~~ (2) a College Transfer Pathway leading to college transfer credits, or (3) a Career and College Ready Pathway providing opportunities for college remediation.

The board may also partner with institutions of higher education to establish cooperative innovative high school programs that enable a student to concurrently obtain a high school diploma and (1) begin or complete an associate degree program, (2) master a certificate or vocational program, or (3) earn up to two years of college credit within five years. Students are eligible for these programs beginning in ninth grade.

The board will implement the Career and College Promise program in accordance with a Career and College Promise Partnership Agreement developed as required by State Board of Education Policy CACP-000 and revised annually. The superintendent shall develop any necessary procedures consistent with the partnership agreement, this policy, state law and State Board policies.

B. OTHER COLLEGE COURSES

The superintendent shall develop procedures and requirements for awarding high school credit toward graduation upon request to students who self-enroll in courses taught by a college, university, community college, or other approved entity. Credit toward graduation will be granted only for courses that are consistent with the policies and standards of the school system and State Board requirements, including the requirements of State Board of Education Policy CCRE-001, which defines "Course for Credit." The principal must approve the course in advance. Prior to granting approval, the principal shall determine whether the course is eligible for credit toward graduation in accordance with the procedures and requirements developed by the superintendent.

The parent or guardian of the student must give permission for the student to take the course, and the student must complete any forms required by the school system.

Enrollment of a student in a course is the responsibility of the student and the student's parent or guardian. Unless otherwise provided, all special fees and charges and any special transportation needs are the responsibility of the student and the student's parent or guardian.

For a student to receive credit toward high school graduation, the school at which the course is offered must provide such essential information as is generally included in official transcripts of school records. This information must include:

- (1) a description of the content and subject matter covered by the course;
- (2) the number of clock hours of instruction in the course; and
- (3) the student's achievement or performance level in the course.

In addition, a syllabus that includes course goals, course objectives, course activities and grade requirements must be provided.

The student also must meet any other requirements established by the superintendent.

Legal References: G.S. 115C art. 16 pt. 9; 115C-36, -47; 115D-5(b), ~~20(4)~~ 30.1, 30.10, 39.5(a); S.L. 2011-145 sec. 7.1A(a), 7.1A(b), 7.1A(c), 7.1A(k); State Board of Education Policies CACP-000, CACP-001, CCRE-001, GRAD-004

Cross References: Curriculum Development (policy 3100)

Adopted: August 3, 2015

Revised: August 14, 2017 and March 15, 2018 (Legal references only); September 9, 2019; July 25, 2023; DATE

Replaces: Board Policy 4.04.30, Dual Enrollment Policy

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes the unique circumstances faced by children of military families who are often required to transfer to a new school system because their parents or guardians have a new military assignment. The board also recognizes that children whose immediate family members are deployed by the military may be at increased risk of emotional, psychological, or other harm. The board is committed to supporting these children in the school system and undertaking to serve their unique needs.

A. IDENTIFICATION OF MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

Each principal shall annually identify all military-connected students enrolled in the school and shall develop a means for serving their unique needs. For purposes of this section, a military-connected student is defined as a student who has a parent, step-parent, sibling, or any other person who resides in the same household serving in the active or reserve components of the United States, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, or National Guard.

The identification of military-connected students is not a public record subject to public records law.

B. PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES

The board strives to promote flexibility and cooperation among the school system, parents and guardians, and children of military families, to promote the children’s well-being, and to assist these children in achieving educational success when transitioning to their new schools. To achieve these goals, the board has adopted policies consistent with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (hereinafter “Compact”) and G.S. 115C-407.12 to facilitate the enrollment of children of military families and to provide continuity in their educational services, including in the areas of education records, immunizations, age requirements for initial entry, course and education program placement, special education services, and extracurricular activities. The superintendent shall adopt procedures necessary to implement the policies and to otherwise comply with the Compact and G.S. 115C-407.12 and to educate employees about the unique needs of children of military families.

1. Definitions

The following definitions apply to all policies and procedures adopted in compliance with the Compact and G.S. 115C-407.12.

a. Active Duty

Active duty is full-time duty status in the active uniformed service of the United States, including members of the National Guard and Reserve on

active duty orders pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 12301 *et seq.* and 10 U.S.C. 12401 *et seq.*

b. Children of Military Families

Children of military families are school-aged children, enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade, in the household of one of the following:

- (1) a member of the uniformed services on active duty
- (2) a member or veteran of the uniformed services who is severely injured and is medically discharged or retired, for a period of one year after medical discharge or retirement;
- (3) a member of the uniformed services who died on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty, for a period of one year after death; and
- (4) an inactive member, but only if (1) the inactive member is required to move to perform military service-related responsibilities, (2) the move results in a transfer of school systems for the child, and (3) the inactive member presents a copy of the official military transfer order to the school from which services for the child are requested. If the move results in an interstate transfer of the child between the school system and another school system in a different state, the superintendent shall direct school officials to attempt to coordinate with the out-of-state school system on behalf of the child but cannot require the receiving school system to provide specific services.

c. Deployment

Deployment is the period one month prior to the service members' departure from their home station on military orders through six months after their return to their home station.

d. Education Records

Education records are those official records, files and data directly related to a student and maintained by the school or school system, including but not limited to records encompassing all the material kept in the student's cumulative folder, such as general identifying data, records of attendance and of academic work completed, records of achievement and results of

evaluative tests, health data, disciplinary status, test protocols, and individualized education programs.

e. Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are voluntary activities sponsored by the school or school system or an organization sanctioned by the school system. Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, preparation for and involvement in public performances, contests, athletic competitions, demonstrations, displays, and club activities.

f. Inactive Member

An inactive member is a member of the National Guard or Reserve of any branch of the uniformed services, who is inactive and not on active duty orders pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 12301 *et seq.* or 10 U.S.C. 12401 *et seq.*

g. Member State

A member state is a state that has enacted the Compact.

h. Non-Member State

A non-member state is a state that has not enacted the Compact.

i. Receiving State

The receiving state is the state to which a child of a military family is sent, brought, or caused to be sent or brought.

j. Rule

A rule is a written statement by the Interstate Commission promulgated pursuant to Article XII of the Compact that is of general applicability, implements, interprets or prescribes a policy or provision of the Compact, or an organizational, procedural, or practice requirement of the Interstate Commission, and has the force and effect of rules promulgated under the Administrative Procedures Act as found in Chapter 150B of the North Carolina General Statutes, and includes the amendment, repeal, or suspension of an existing rule.

k. Sending State

The sending state is the state from which a child of a military family is sent, brought, or caused to be sent or brought.

l. Student

The student is the child of a military family for whom the school system receives public funding and who is formally enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

m. Transition

The transition is (1) the formal and physical process of transferring from school to school or (2) the period of time in which a student moves from one school in the sending state to another school in the receiving state.

n. Uniformed Services

The uniformed services are the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, as well as the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Public Health Services.

o. Veteran

A veteran is a person who served in the uniformed services and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

2. Resolution of Issues

The grievance procedure provided in policy 4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure, may be utilized by parents or guardians who disagree with a decision pertaining to education records, enrollment or eligibility for enrollment, placement, attendance, extracurricular activities, or graduation of a child of a military family, or a rule, as defined in this policy. In addition, parents or guardians may seek informal resolution of such decisions at any time by contacting the office of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Military Liaison or the North Carolina Commissioner of the North Carolina State Council for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. Specific contact information may be found online at www.dpi.nc.gov/students-families/student-support/nc-supports-military-children or by calling NCDPI at (984) 236-2100.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-12(18)(f), -288(m), -407.5, -407.12

Cross References: Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Graduation Requirements (policy 3460), Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Age Requirements for Initial Entry (policy 4100), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 4010), Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (policy 4110), Domicile or

Residence Requirements (policy 4120), Assignment to Classes (policy 4155), Attendance (policy 4400), Student Records (policy 4700)

Adopted: February 9, 2015

Revised: June 28, 2021; February 14, 2022; March 13, 2023; DATE

A student who is domiciled within the geographic area served by the school system, who is under age 21 (22 for students entitled to special education services), who has not completed the prescribed courses for high school graduation and who otherwise qualifies for admission, is entitled to be admitted without payment of tuition. Under certain circumstances specified by law, a student who resides in the area served by the school system and who otherwise qualifies for admission to its schools also is entitled to be admitted without payment of tuition. In addition, students who are homeless or in foster care may be entitled to continue attending their school of origin without payment of tuition regardless of a change in their domicile or residency status.

Children with disabilities are required to meet state domicile requirements to be entitled to admission to school without payment of tuition unless they are “grandfathered” into the system under subsection C.6, below, or unless they otherwise meet one of the circumstances that entitle them to admission without payment of tuition. (See Section C, below.)

A. DOMICILE AND RESIDENCE DEFINED

Domicile requires the intent to abandon one’s prior home and remain in the new location as a permanent home for an indefinite period. In contrast, a residence need not be one’s exclusive home and does not require an intention that the residence be the permanent home.

B. MEETING DOMICILE REQUIREMENTS

1. Domicile of Students Generally

The domicile of a student under 18 years of age is presumed to be the domicile of his or her parents, legal guardian, or legal custodian as defined by the General Statutes of North Carolina.

2. Domicile of Emancipated Students

If a student is at least 18 years of age, is married, or has been abandoned by his or her parents, or if the court declares a student to be emancipated, the student may establish a domicile independent from that of his or her parents, legal guardian, or legal custodian. A student who establishes domicile as a result of being emancipated is a domiciliary of the school system and is entitled to the same rights and privileges of other students domiciled in the school system.

3. Domicile of Students with Divorced or Separated Parents

Domicile for the purpose of school admission and assignment will be determined by the following criteria.

- a. In the event that a student's parents are divorced or separated and physical custody has been given to only one parent, the student's domicile follows that of the parent who has been granted physical custody.
- b. If physical custody has not been determined or has been granted jointly to both parents, or if the custodial parent wishes the student to attend school in the non-custodial parent's system of residence, then the parents must jointly agree on which residence will be used to determine the student's domicile. The selected residence must be submitted in writing to the superintendent.
- c. The selection may not be changed during the school year unless the parents satisfy the Watauga County Board of Education's (the "board") policies on transfers and releases.
- d. In the event that the parents cannot agree on which residence will be used to determine the student's domicile for school assignment purposes, school officials shall assign the student according to the residence of the parent with physical custody of the student at the beginning of each school year.

C. MEETING RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

A student who resides in the system in any of the following circumstances will be admitted without payment of tuition.

1. The student is homeless as defined in state and federal law and policy 4125, Homeless Students. A student living with a friend or relative is not a homeless student unless he or she lives there due to conditions that constitute homelessness under state and federal statutes. Subject to the provisions set forth in policy 4125, a homeless student will be assigned to a school in the attendance area where he or she is physically located or wherever the interests of the child are best met.
2. The parent, guardian, or legal custodian residing in the school system attendance area is a student, employee, or faculty member of a college or university or is a visiting scholar at the National Humanities Center.
3. The student resides in a group home, foster home, or other similar facility or institution.
4. The student resides in a pre-adoptive home following placement by a county department of social services or a licensed child-placing agency.
5. The parent, guardian, or legal custodian residing in the school system attendance area is on active military duty and is assigned by official military order to a military installation or reservation in North Carolina.

6. The student is considered a child with a disability by the General Statutes and the North Carolina *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities* and the child was (a) enrolled in the school system on the last day of school for the 2006-07 school year or (b) enrolled in and attending a school in the school system on August 1, 2007, for the 2007-08 school year, so long as the child lives within and is continuously enrolled in the system.
7. The student resides with an adult who is a domiciliary of the school system as a result of any of the following.
 - a. The death, serious illness, or incarceration of the child's parent or legal guardian.
 - b. The abandonment by the child's parent or legal guardian of the complete control of the student as evidenced by the failure to provide substantial financial support and parental guidance.
 - c. Abuse or neglect by the parent or legal guardian.
 - d. The physical or mental condition of the parent or legal guardian is such that he or she cannot provide the student with adequate care and supervision.
 - e. The relinquishment of physical custody and control of the student by the student's parent or legal guardian upon the recommendation of the department of social services or the Division of Mental Health.
 - f. The loss or uninhabitability of the student's home as the result of a natural disaster.
 - g. The parent or legal guardian is one of the following: (1) a member or veteran of the uniformed services who is severely injured and medically discharged or retired (but only for a period of one year after the medical discharge or retirement of the parent or guardian); or (2) a member of the uniformed services who has died while on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty (but only for a period of one year after the death of the parent or guardian). Assignment under this subsection is only available if some evidence of the medical discharge, retirement, or death is tendered with the affidavits required under G.S. 115C-366.
 - h. The parent or legal guardian is on active military duty, not including periods of active duty for training for less than 30 days, and the commanding officer of the parent or legal guardian provides in a signed letter that the parent or legal guardian's military orders prevent him or her from physically residing with the student. Assignment under this subsection is only available if the signed letter from the commanding officer is included with the affidavits

required under G.S. 115C-366, and the commanding officer indicates the time period that such military orders will be in effect.

In order to be admitted under this provision, the student may not be currently under a term of suspension or expulsion from a school for conduct that could have led to a suspension or an expulsion from the local school administrative unit, unless the student is identified as eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400, *et seq.*, and evidence of such eligibility is tendered with the affidavits described below.

The adult with whom the student resides and the student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, if available, must complete and sign separate affidavits available from the superintendent's office attesting to information required by G.S. 115C-366(a3). If it is found that a person willfully and knowingly provided false information in the affidavit, the maker of the affidavit will be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and will pay to the board an amount equal to the cost of educating the student during the period of enrollment. Repayment will not include state funds.

D. REMOTE ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES

A student who is not domiciled in the school system attendance area is permitted to enroll by remote means, including electronic means, prior to commencement of the student's residency in the school system attendance area if all of the following apply.

1. The student's parent or legal guardian (a) is on active military duty and is transferred or pending transfer pursuant to an official military order to a military installation or reservation in North Carolina or (b) will be separating from active duty within a 12-month period.
2. Upon request by the school system, the parent or legal guardian provides a copy of (a) the official military order transferring to the military installation or reservation, (b) the official separation orders, or (c) an official military document showing the anticipated date of separation or date of projected permanent change of station.
- ~~2.3. The parent or legal guardian completes and submits the school system's enrollment forms and documentation, other than ~~except~~ that proof of residency and documentation related to disciplinary actions required under policy 4115, Behavior Standards for Transfer Students, will not be required until the student transfers into the school system.~~
4. The parent or legal guardian submits to the school system the proof of residency and documentation related to the disciplinary actions upon the student commencing attendance. If the proof of residency has not yet become available because the parent or legal guardian and student are residing in temporary housing, the student will be permitted to enroll and begin attending school based on the anticipated

domicile: (a) for a period up to one year either (1) from the parent or legal guardian's reporting-for-duty date, separation date from active military duty, or anticipated separation date from active military duty; or (2b) through the end of the school year; or (3c) through high school graduation for a student who is enrolling as a high school junior or senior.

The school system will make available to a student who registers to enroll pursuant to this section the same opportunities available to a domiciled student, such as requesting or applying for school assignment, registering for courses, and applying for any other programs that require additional request or application. ~~A student enrolled pursuant to this section may not attend school until proof of residency is provided.~~

E. PARTICIPATION IN JROTC BY HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS

A home school student who resides within the assignment area of a school that maintains a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) unit shall be permitted membership in the JROTC unit of the school without regard to domicile if the student is otherwise qualified for membership but for lack of enrollment in the school.

F. STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE NORTH CAROLINA ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

In determining whether a student meets the domicile or residence requirements of this policy, school personnel shall consider the actual address of a participant in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program established by G.S. Chapter 15C, but such address will remain confidential in accordance with law and policy 4250/5075/7316, North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program.

G. APPEAL OF ADMISSION DECISIONS

Within 10 working days of receiving all of the information required under this policy, the superintendent or designee shall provide a written decision to the applicant for admission to the school system. The superintendent's decision regarding admission of the student may be appealed to the board in accordance with subsection E.5 in policy 4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.

Legal References: 10 U.S.C. 2031(gf); Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 6303 *et seq.*; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 300; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431 *et seq.*; *Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability and Success for Students/Children in Foster Care*, U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (June 2016/November 2024), available at <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/non-regulatory-guidance-ensuring-educationalstability-and-success-students-foster-care-november-15-2024-108448.pdf>; *Non-Regulatory Guidance on Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program*, U.S. Department of Education (July 2016), available at

<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/07/160240ehcyguidanceupdated082718.pdf>; G.S. 7B art. 35; 35A art. 6; 15C-8(i); 50-13.1 to -13.3; 115C-106.2, -106.3, -107.6, -108.1(a), -366, -407.5; *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, State Board of Education Policy EXCP-000, available at <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/policies/nc-policies-governing-services-for-children-with-disabilities>

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 4010), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Behavior Standards for Transfer Students (policy 4115), Homeless Students (policy 4125), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy 4250/5075)

Adopted: November 10, 2014

Replaces: Policy 5.02.50, Student Assignments (in part) and Policy 5.02.60 (in part)

Revised: September 11, 2017; October 5, 2020; February 14, 2022; June 30, 2022; DATE

CHILD ABUSE AND RELATED THREATS TO CHILD SAFETY

Policy Code: 4240/7312

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to the other reporting requirements of this policy and in accordance with Section F of policy 7130, Licensure, administrators shall report to the State Board of Education certain misconduct by licensed employees (1) involving physical injury to or sexual contact with a child, (2) justifying automatic revocation of the employee's license, or (3) resulting in certain criminal charges, and resulting when such misconduct results in termination of employment, nonrenewal of an employment contract, suspension without pay, disciplinary action, or resignation in accordance with Section F of policy 7130, Licensure.

E. COOPERATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

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

policy.

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

F. SHARING INFORMATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

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

G. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEX TRAFFICKING TRAINING PROGRAM

In even numbered years, the school system will provide a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking education and awareness training program for teachers, instructional support personnel, principals, and assistant principals. The program will include at least two hours of training related to best practices from the field of prevention, the grooming process of

sexual predators, the warning signs of sexual abuse and sex trafficking, how to intervene when sexual abuse or sex trafficking is suspected or disclosed, legal responsibilities for reporting sexual abuse or sex trafficking, and available resources for assistance. Designated school personnel shall participate in such training as required by law and board policy.

H. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

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

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

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

Adopted: July 14, 2014

Revised: July 9, 2018; September 9, 2019; January 13, 2020; March 12, 2020; August 9, 2021; May 8, 2023; April 16, 2024; July 11, 2024; September 8, 2025; DATE

The policies listed below require the superintendent or other school system employees to report certain information to various external governmental agencies and officials. This list is not exhaustive of all external reporting requirements. In addition to the reporting requirements described in this policy, the superintendent or designee shall make any other reports to external governmental agencies or officials when required by law or regulation or when required as a condition of a federal grant or award (see policy 8305, Federal Grant Administration).

A. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION/DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

1. Reporting Obligations of the Superintendent

The superintendent must ensure that all required data, reports, and other information are submitted to the State Board of Education (SBE)/Department of Public Instruction, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ~~1~~-a. that a licensed individual has been found through a criminal records check to have a criminal history (see policy 7100, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel);
- ~~2~~-b. the reason for the resignation of certain licensed employees if the employee's criminal history is relevant to the resignation (see policy 7900, Resignation);
- ~~3~~-c. that certain licensed employees, who have been recommended for dismissal, have resigned without the superintendent's written consent (see policy 7900, Resignation);
- ~~4~~-d. parental involvement information as required by SBE Policy PRNT-002 and G.S. 115C-76.70 (see policy 4002, Parental Involvement);
- ~~5~~-e. certain crimes occurring on school property or on school sponsored field trips as required by 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0107 (see policy 4335, Criminal Behavior);
- ~~6~~-f. if at least two violent criminal offenses and at least five or more such offenses per 1000 students were committed during each of the two most recent school years, any conditions in the school that may have contributed to the commission of the violent criminal offenses and any plans to eliminate such conditions; and each student transfer made pursuant to SBE Policy SSCH-006 (see policy 4152, Unsafe School Choice Transfer);
- ~~7~~-g. a copy of the Chemical Hygiene Plan (see policy 7265, Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Science Laboratories);

- 8.h. a plan for the literacy interventions the school system will offer in the following school year, as required by G.S. 115C-83.6A (see policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability);
- 9i. the Watauga County Board of Education's determination of how each alternative school will participate in the State Alternative Schools' Accountability Model (see policy 3470/4305, Alternative Learning Programs/Schools);
- 10.j. the comparability testing report assessing the equivalent distribution of state and local resources among schools (see policy 3565/8307, Title I Program Comparability of Services);
- 11.k. mental health and student wellness information required by SBE Policy SHLT-003 (see policy 6120, Student Health Services);
- 12l. a copy of policy 6140, Student Wellness, if requested (see policy 6140, Student Wellness);
- 13m. a report that provides information pertaining to the school system's efforts to comply with policy 6140, Student Wellness, and SBE Policy SHLT-000 (see policy 6140, Student Wellness); and
- 14. ~~a copy of any threat assessment policies, procedures, or protocols when newly approved or revised (see policy 4200/7270, School Safety);~~
- 15. ~~quantitative data on the activities of all threat assessment teams as required by G.S. 115C-105.65(g) and the North Carolina Center for Safer Schools guidance (see policy 4200/7270, School Safety); and~~
- 16n. student disciplinary data (see policy 4345, Student Discipline Records).

2. Reporting by Principals and Central Office Personnel of Certain Misconduct by Licensed Employees

- a. ~~In addition, any administrator~~ 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 ~~dismissal,~~ termination of

employment, nonrenewal of an employment contract, suspension without pay, disciplinary action, or resignation shall report the misconduct to the SBE (see Section F of policy 7130, Licensure).

- a.b. If a licensed employee is dismissed, is demoted, or resigns as the result of conduct that is not covered by the preceding sentence 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 to the SBE (see Section F of policy 7130, Licensure).

B. NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR SAFER SCHOOLS

The superintendent or designee shall send to the Center for Safer Schools a copy of any threat assessment policies, procedures, or protocols when approved or revised (see policy 1510/4200/7270, School Safety). The superintendent shall also ensure that quantitative data on the activities of all threat assessment teams is reported to the Center for Safer Schools as required (see policy 1510/4200/7270, School Safety).

B.C. LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. Sexual Offense, Child Abuse, or Serious Bodily or Physical Injury of a Child

School employees, contractors, and volunteers must report to local law enforcement when they know or reasonably should know that a child has been a victim of a sexual offense or an offense that inflicts serious bodily injury or serious physical injury upon the child by nonaccidental means or an attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit either of those offenses, or misdemeanor child abuse (see policy 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety).

2. Certain Crimes on School Property

Principals must report to law enforcement certain crimes occurring on school property (see policy 4335, Criminal Behavior, and policy 5027/7275, Weapons and Explosives Prohibited, and policy 7240, Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace, and administrative regulation 4200/7270-R, Responding to Bomb Threats).

School administrators and other supervisory personnel also must report to law enforcement when they reasonably believe that a registered sex offender is or has been on school property or at a school event (see policy 5022, Registered Sex Offenders).

The superintendent must provide law enforcement with (1) schematic diagrams of all

school facilities, (2) updates of the schematic diagrams when the school system makes substantial facility modifications, (3) either keys to the main entrance of all school buildings or emergency access to key storage devices for all school buildings, and (4) updated access to school buildings when changes are made to the locks of the main entrances or to the key storage devices (see policies 4200/7270, School Safety, 5120, Relationship with Law Enforcement, and 9220, Security of Facilities).

C.D. LOCAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Appropriate local emergency medical services officials must be notified of the location and most recent placement of AEDs within a reasonable period of time of placement (see policy 5028/6130/7267, Automated External Defibrillator).

D.E. COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

School employees, contractors, and volunteers must report to the county department of social services if they suspect that a child is abused, neglected, dependent, or has died as the result of maltreatment (see policy 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety).

E.F. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

School employees, contractors, and volunteers must report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) if they have cause to suspect that a child in a child care facility has been maltreated by a caregiver or has died as a result of maltreatment occurring in a child care facility (see policy 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety). The assistant superintendent of human resources also must notify DHHS if a child care provider has incurred any pending charges, indictments, or convictions (other than minor traffic offenses) since the last qualification letter was issued by DHHS's Division of Child Development and Early Education (see policy 7100, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel).

In addition, the principal shall provide DHHS with an annual immunization report and a health assessment status report (see policy 4110, Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission).

F.G. COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The principal must report suspected cases of reportable diseases and conditions to the county health department (see policy 4230, Communicable Diseases – Students, and policy 7262, Communicable Diseases – Employees).

Supervisory personnel must report unsafe conduct to the county health department when they have a reasonable concern that such conduct may cause or may have caused the spread of a communicable disease (see policy 7262 Communicable Diseases – Employees).

G.H. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY'S DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The superintendent must provide the Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management with (1) emergency response information it requests for the school risk management plan, (2) updated emergency response information when such updates are made, (3) schematic diagrams of all school facilities, and (4) updates of the schematic diagrams when the school system makes substantial facility modifications (see policies 4200/7270, School Safety, and 9220, Security of Facilities).

H.I. NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR MISSING PERSONS

School officials must report to the Center for Missing Persons any information received indicating that a student transferring into the school system is a missing child (see policy 4700, Student Records).

I.J. DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

The following information must be provided to the Department of Administration: (1) all legally required reports regarding contract bids and contract purchases of goods and services from historically underutilized businesses, disabled business enterprises, and nonprofit work centers for the blind and the severely disabled (see policy 6402, Participation by Historically Underutilized Businesses); and (2) all legally required reports regarding the use of minority businesses in construction work (see policy 9125, Participation by Minority Businesses).

J.K. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The finance officer must provide notice to the board of county commissioners of any report received from the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System containing a list of employees whose retirement in the upcoming year would likely result in an assessment to the board for additional employer contribution (see policy 8510, School Finance Officer).

K.L. SECRETARY OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

The finance officer must submit reports to the Secretary of the Local Government Commission as required by law (see policy 8510, School Finance Officer).

L.M. FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

Designated employees shall report required information regarding school system commercial motor vehicle operators through the federal Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (see policy 7241, Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators).

Legal References: 49 C.F.R. 382.705; G.S. 7B-301; 14-318.6; 110-105.4; 115C-12(27), -76.70, -83.6A, -105.53, -105.54, -105.65, -270.35, -288(g), -325(o)(2) (applicable to career status)

teachers), -325.9(b) (applicable to non-career status teachers), -326.20, -390.4(c), -403, -436, -446; 130A-136, -155, -441; 143-48, -128.3, -131; 10A N.C.A.C. 09 .2703(m); 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0313, .0604, .0608; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0107; 16 N.C.A.C. 6G .0314; State Board of Education Policies PRNT-002, SHLT-000, SHLT-003, SSCH-006

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 4002), School Safety (policy 4200/7270), Responding to Bomb Threats (administrative regulation 4200/7270-R), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Alternative Learning Programs/Schools (policy 3470/4305), Title I Program Comparability of Services (policy 3565/8307), Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (policy 4110), Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety (policy 4240/7312), Student Records (policy 4700), Registered Sex Offenders (policy 5022), Weapons and Explosives Prohibited (policy 5027/7275), Automated External Defibrillator (policy 5028/6130/7267), Relationship with Law Enforcement (policy 5120), Student Health Services (policy 6120), Student Wellness (policy 6140), Participation by Historically Underutilized Businesses (policy 6402), Recruitment and Selection of Personnel (policy 7100), Licensure (policy 7130), Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace (policy 7240), Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators (policy 7241), Communicable Diseases - Employees (policy 7262), Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Science Laboratories (policy 7265), Resignation (policy 7900), Federal Grant Administration (policy 8305), School Finance Officer (policy 8510), Participation by Minority Businesses (policy 9125), Security of Facilities (policy 9220)

Other Resources: *Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management: Best Practice Guidance for North Carolina Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Teams for Harm Prevention*, N.C. Department of Public Instruction Center for Safer Schools (March 2024), available at <http://www.dpi.nc.gov/best-practice-guidance-north-carolina-behavioral-threat-assessment-and-management-teams-harm>; Master Data Calendar, N.C. Department of Public Instruction, available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/data-reports/data-calendar>

Adopted: February 10, 2025

Revised: DATE

STUDENT AND PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Policy Code:

4010

A. OPTIONS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) strives to resolve concerns and complaints of students and parents whenever possible. To this end, the board has provided opportunities for students and parents to express their concerns through processes established in board policies. Policy 5060, Responding to Complaints, identifies these different processes, including a mechanism for resolving complaints in an informal manner.

While the board encourages resolutions of complaints through informal means, it recognizes that, at times, a formal process may be necessary for certain types of complaints or if the informal process did not produce satisfactory results. This policy provides a complaint procedure that may be used as described below.

Any parent or student who has questions about the options for proceeding with a complaint or concern may contact the principal or superintendent for further information and copies of all applicable board policies.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. Days

Days are working days, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, vacation days, or holidays, as set forth in the school calendar. In counting days, the first day will be the first full working day following the receipt of the grievance. After May 1, time limits will consist of all weekdays (Monday – Friday) so that the matter may be resolved before the close of the school term or as soon thereafter as possible.

2. Final Administrative Decision

A final administrative decision is a decision of a school employee from which no further appeal to a school administrator is available.

3. Grievance

A grievance is a formal complaint regarding specific decisions made by school personnel that alleges that such decisions have adversely affected the person making the complaint. A grievance includes, but is not limited to, circumstances such as when a student or parent believes that board policy or law has been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated. The term “grievance” does not include any matter for which the method of review is prescribed by law, for which there is a more specific board policy providing a process for addressing the concern, or upon

which the board is without authority to act.

4. Grievant

The grievant is the parent, student or group of parents or students submitting the grievance.

5. Parent

All references to parent include a student's parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, or another caregiver adult authorized to enroll a student under policy 4120, Domicile or Residence Requirements.

C. TIMELINESS OF PROCESS

The number of days indicated at each step of the grievance process should be considered a maximum, and every effort should be made to expedite the process.

Failure by a school system official at any step to communicate a decision within the specified time limit will permit the grievant to appeal the grievance to the next step unless the official has notified the grievant of the delay and the reason for the delay, such as the complexity of the investigation or report. The official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the grievant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays that interfere with the exercise of the grievant's legal rights are not permitted.

Failure by the grievant at any step of the process to appeal a grievance to the next step within the specified time limit will be considered acceptance of the decision at the current step, unless the grievant has notified the appropriate school system official of a delay and the reason for the delay and the official has consented in writing to the delay.

D. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. No reprisals of any kind will be taken by the board or by an employee of the school system against any grievant or other student or employee because of his or her participation in a grievance filed and decided pursuant to this policy.

2. All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private unless the Open Meetings Law requires that a board meeting or hearing be open to the public (see policies 1420, Compliance with the Open Meetings Law, 1421, Closed Sessions, and 1600, Hearings Before the Board).

2.3. The board and school system officials will consider requests to hear grievances from a group of grievants, but the board and officials have the discretion to hear and respond to grievants individually.

3.4. The grievant may have a representative, including an attorney, at any stage of the

grievance. However, if the grievant intends to be represented by legal counsel, he or she must notify the appropriate school official in advance so that school personnel also will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel. At any meeting or hearing during the grievance process, a student grievant may be accompanied by a parent as well as a representative.

E. PROCESS FOR GRIEVANCE

1. Filing a Grievance

- a. Whenever a student or parent believes that he or she has been adversely affected by a decision of a school employee, the student or parent may file a grievance as provided in this policy.
- b. A grievance must be filed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the grievance. For a grievance submitted after the 30 day period that claims a violation, misapplication or misinterpretation of state or federal law, the superintendent or designee shall determine whether the grievance will be investigated after considering factors such as the reason for the delay; the extent of the delay; the effect of the delay on the ability of the school system to investigate and respond to the complaint; and whether the investigation of the complaint is necessary to meet any legal obligations. However, students and parents should recognize that delays in filing a grievance may significantly impair the ability of the school system to investigate and respond effectively to such complaints.
- c. A student or parent who has a grievance must provide the following information in writing to the principal: (1) the name of the school system employee or other individual whose decision or action is at issue; (2) the specific decision(s) or action(s) at issue; (3) any board policy, state or federal law, state or federal regulation, or State Board of Education policy or procedure that the parent or student believes has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated; and (4) the specific resolution desired. If there is not a specific decision or action at issue and no concern that state or federal law has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated, then the procedure established in policy 5060 is appropriate, and the principal shall address the concern following that policy.
- d. Even if the principal is the employee whose decision or action is at issue, the student or parent must submit the grievance first to the principal in order for the principal to address the issue within the formal process. If, however, the grievance claims that a state or federal law has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated, the student or parent may submit the grievance directly to the superintendent or designee.

- e. If a student or parent wants to initiate a formal grievance regarding a decision by the superintendent that directly and specifically affects the student or parent, the general process described in this policy will be used, except that the grievance will be submitted to the human resources director, who shall forward the grievance to the board chairperson.

2. Investigation

- a. The principal shall schedule and hold a meeting with the grievant within five school days after the grievance has been filed with the principal. Pursuant to D.4. of this policy, at any meeting or hearing during the grievance process, a student grievant may be accompanied by a parent as well as a representative.
- b. The principal shall conduct any investigation of the facts necessary before rendering a decision.

3. Response by Principal

- a. The principal shall provide a written response to the grievance within 10 days of meeting with the grievant. The response will include the principal's decision regarding resolution of the grievance and the basis for the decision. In responding, the principal may not disclose information about other students or employees that is considered confidential by law.
- b. A copy of the grievance and the principal's response will be filed with the superintendent.

4. Response by Superintendent

- a. If the grievant is dissatisfied with the principal's decision, the grievant may appeal the decision to the superintendent. The appeal must be made in writing within five days of receiving the principal's decision.
- b. The superintendent may review the written documents and respond or the superintendent may schedule and hold a conference with the grievant, principal and any other individuals the superintendent determines to be appropriate within five school days after receiving the appeal. Pursuant to D.4. of this policy, at any meeting or hearing during the grievance process, a student grievant may be accompanied by a parent as well as a representative.
- c. The superintendent shall provide a written response within 10 days after receiving the appeal. In responding, the superintendent may not disclose information about other students or employees that is considered confidential by law.

5. Appeal to the Board

If the grievant has alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local board of education policy or procedure, the grievant will have the right to appeal a final administrative decision to the board of education (see subsection E.5.a, Mandatory Appeals, below). If a grievant has not alleged such specific violations, he or she may request a board hearing, which the board may grant at its discretion (see subsection E.5.b, Discretionary Appeals, below).

a. Mandatory Appeals

- 1) If the grievant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's response to his or her grievance and has alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local board of education policy or procedure, the grievant may appeal the decision to the board within five days of receiving the superintendent's response.
- 2) A hearing will be conducted pursuant to the policy for Hearings Before the Board.
- 3) The board will provide a final written decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

b. Discretionary Appeals

- 1) If the grievant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's response to his or her grievance but has *not* alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local board of education policy or procedure, then within five days of receiving the superintendent's response, the grievant may submit to the superintendent a written request for a hearing before the board of education.
- 2) If the full board will be meeting within two weeks of the request for a hearing, the board will decide at that time whether to grant a hearing. Otherwise, the board chairperson will appoint a three-person panel to review the request and determine whether to (1) deny the appeal; (2) review the superintendent's decision on the written record only; or (3) grant a hearing. The panel will report the decision to the board. The board may modify the decision of the panel upon majority vote at a board meeting.

- 3) If the board denies the appeal, the decision of the superintendent will be final and the grievant will be notified within five days of the board's decision.
- 4) If the board decides to grant a hearing, the hearing will be conducted pursuant to the policy for Hearings Before the Board.
- 5) The board will provide a final written decision within 30 days of the decision to grant an appeal, unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

F. NOTICE

The superintendent or designee is responsible for providing effective notice to students, parents and school system employees of the procedures for reporting and investigating grievances.

G. RECORDS

Appropriate records shall be maintained in accordance with state and federal law.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-45(c); 126-16; 150B-43 *et seq.*

Cross References: Responding to Complaints (policy 5060), Compliance with the Open Meetings Law (policy 1420), Closed Sessions (policy 1421), Hearings Before the Board (policy 1600), Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy 4120), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series)

Adopted: April 13, 2015

Revised: April 12, 2021; DATE

It is the policy of the Watauga County Board of Education (the "board"), in keeping with the ultimate goal of serving the educational welfare of children, to develop and practice reasonable and effective methods of resolving difficulties that may arise among employees. The intent is to reduce potential areas of grievances and to establish and maintain recognized channels of communications between staff and administration. The purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible level, equitable solutions to the problems that arise from time to time and affect employees.

A. INFORMAL RESOLUTION

It is desirable for an employee and his or her immediate supervisor to resolve problems through free and informal communication. When informal procedures fail or are inappropriate or when the employee requests formal procedures, a grievance will be processed pursuant to the steps set forth in this policy.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. Days

Days are the working days, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, vacation days or holidays, as set forth in the aggrieved employee's employment calendar. In counting days, the first day will be the first full working day following receipt of the grievance. When a grievance is submitted on or after May 1, time limits will consist of all weekdays (Monday – Friday) so that the matter may be resolved before the close of the school term or as soon thereafter as possible.

2. Final Administrative Decision

A final administrative decision is a decision of a school employee from which no further appeal to a school administrator is available.

3. Grievance

A grievance is a formal written claim by an employee regarding specific decision(s) made by another employee and alleging that such decision(s) have adversely affected the person making the claim. A grievance may include, but is not limited to, the following allegations:

- a. that there has been a violation, misapplication or misinterpretation of state or federal law or regulations, school board policy or administrative procedure;
- b. that an employee's employment status or the terms or conditions of his or

her employment have been adversely affected; or

- c. that there exists a physical condition that jeopardizes an employee's health or safety or that interferes with an employee's ability to discharge his or her responsibilities properly and effectively.

The term "grievance" does not apply to any matter for which the method of review is prescribed by law, for which there is a more specific board policy providing a process for addressing the concern, or upon which the board of education is without authority to act.

4. Grievant

The grievant is the employee(s) making the claim.

5. Parties in Interest

"Parties in interest" refers to the grievant and the person against whom the grievance is filed.

C. TIMELINESS OF PROCESS

Failure by a school system official at any step to communicate a decision within the specified time limit will permit the grievant to appeal the grievance to the next step unless the official has notified the grievant of the delay and the reason for the delay, such as the complexity of the investigation or report. The official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the grievant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays may not impermissibly interfere with the exercise of the grievant's legal rights.

Failure by the grievant at any step to appeal a grievance to the next step within the specified time limit will be considered acceptance of the decision at that step, unless the grievant has notified the appropriate school system official of a delay and the reason for the delay and the official has consented in writing to the delay.

D. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. At all times during the grievance process, all parties in interest and their representatives must conduct themselves in a professional manner, including respecting the confidentiality of personnel matters.
2. The board or an employee of the school system will take no reprisals of any kind against any party in interest or other employee on account of his or her participation in a grievance filed and decided pursuant to this policy.
3. Each decision will be in writing, setting forth the decision and reasons therefore,

and will be transmitted promptly to all parties in interest.

4. All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private unless the Open Meetings Law requires that a board meeting or hearing be open to the public (see policies 1420, Compliance with the Open Meetings Law, 1421, Closed Sessions, and 1600, Hearings Before the Board).
5. The board and administration will consider requests to hear grievances from a group of grievants but have the discretion to hear and respond to grievants individually.
6. The board and administration will cooperate with the grievant and representative in the investigation of any grievance and will furnish the grievant or representative information pertinent to the grievance without cost to the grievant or the employee against whom the grievance is filed.
7. The grievant may have a representative, including an attorney, at any stage of the grievance. However, if the grievant intends to be represented by legal counsel, he or she must notify the appropriate school official in advance so that school personnel also will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel.
8. Should, in the judgment of the superintendent or designee, the investigation or processing of any grievance require the absence of the grievant and/or representative from regular work assignments, such absences will be excused without loss of pay or benefits.

E. PROCESS FOR GRIEVANCE

1. Filing a Grievance
 - a. A grievance must be filed as soon as possible but no longer than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the grievance. For a grievance submitted after 30 days that claims a violation, misapplication or misinterpretation of state or federal law, the superintendent or designee shall determine whether the grievance will be investigated after considering factors such as the reason for the delay; the extent of the delay; the effect of the delay on the ability of the school system to investigate and respond to the complaint; and whether the investigation of the complaint is necessary to meet any legal obligations. However, employees should recognize that delays in filing a grievance may significantly impair the ability of the school system to investigate and respond effectively to such complaints.
 - b. All grievances must be in writing, and the written statement of grievance must remain the same throughout all steps of the grievance procedure. The written grievance must include the following information: (1) the name of the school system employee or other individual whose decision or action is

at issue; (2) the specific decision(s), action(s) or physical condition at issue; (3) any local board policy, state or federal law, state or federal regulation or State Board of Education policy or procedure that the grievant believes has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated; and (4) the specific resolution desired. If there is not a specific decision, action or physical condition at issue or no concern that federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or board policy or procedure has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated, then the procedure established in policy 5060, Responding to Complaints, is appropriate, and the principal or immediate supervisor shall address the concern following that policy.

- c. The employee(s) shall present the grievance in writing to his or her immediate supervisor or the supervisor's designee, unless the grievance alleges that a state or federal law has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated, in which case the grievance may be presented instead to the human resources director (or to the superintendent if the employee's supervisor is the human resources director). The person receiving the grievance hereinafter will be referred to as "official." Any grievance against the superintendent should be filed directly with the board and in accordance with subsection E.4, below.

2. Response by Official

- a. The official shall arrange for a grievance file number to be assigned by the personnel office.
- b. In the event the official determines at the outset that review by the official is inappropriate, the official shall forward the formal grievance to the superintendent who will investigate and respond as provided below in subsection E.3.
- c. The official shall meet with the grievant at a mutually agreed-upon time within five days after receipt of the grievance.
- d. The official shall conduct any investigation of the facts necessary before rendering a decision.
- e. The official shall provide the grievant with a written response to the grievance within 10 days after the meeting.

3. Response by Superintendent

- a. If the grievant is dissatisfied with the official's response, the grievant may appeal in writing the decision to the superintendent for review by the superintendent or designee within five days of receipt of the official's response.

- b. The superintendent or designee shall arrange for a meeting with the grievant to take place within five days of the receipt of the appeal.
- c. The superintendent or designee shall conduct any investigation necessary before arriving at a decision. The superintendent or designee shall provide the grievant with a written decision within 10 days after the meeting with the grievant.

4. Appeal to the Board

If the grievant has alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or board policy or procedure or has alleged that a specific decision of a school official adversely affects the grievant's employment status or the terms or conditions of his or her employment, the grievant shall have a right to appeal a final administrative decision to the board of education (see subsection E.4.a, Mandatory Appeals, below). If the grievant has not alleged such specific violations, he or she may request a board hearing, which the board may grant at its discretion (see subsection E.4.b, Discretionary Appeals, below).

a. Mandatory Appeals

- 1) If the grievant is not satisfied with the superintendent's response (or, if the grievance is against the superintendent, the superintendent's acts or omissions to act) and has alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local board policy or procedure or has alleged that a specific decision of a school official adversely affects the grievant's employment status or the terms or conditions of his or her employment, the grievant may appeal in writing the decision to the board within 10 days of receiving the superintendent's response.
- 2) A hearing will be conducted pursuant to the policy for Hearings Before the Board.
- 3) The board will provide a final written decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

b. Discretionary Appeals

- 1) If the grievant is not satisfied with the superintendent's response (or, if the grievance is against the superintendent, the superintendent's acts or omissions to act) but has not alleged a violation of a specified

federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local board policy or procedure or has not alleged that a specific decision of a school official adversely affects the grievant's employment status or the terms or conditions of his or her employment, the grievant may submit to the superintendent a written request for a hearing before the board of education within 10 days of receiving the superintendent's response.

- 2) If the full board will be meeting within two weeks of the request for a hearing, the board will decide at that time whether to grant a hearing. Otherwise, the board chairperson, in consultation with the board attorney may ~~will~~ appoint an up to three-person Board of Education panel to review the request and determine whether to (1) deny the appeal; (2) review the superintendent's decision on the written record only; or (3) grant a hearing. The panel will report the decision to the board. The board may modify the decision of the panel upon majority vote at a board meeting.
- 3) If the board denies the appeal, the decision of the superintendent will be final and the grievant will be notified within five days of the board's decision.
- 4) If the board decides to grant a hearing, the hearing will be conducted pursuant to the policy for Hearing before the Board.
- 5) The board will provide a final written decision within 30 days of the decision to grant an appeal, unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

F. RECORDS

Appropriate records will be maintained in accordance with state and federal law.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-45(c); 126-16

Cross References: Responding to Complaints (policy 5060), Hearings Before the Board (policy 1600), Compliance with the Open Meetings Law (policy 1420), Closed Sessions (policy 1421).

Adopted: February 9, 2015

Replaces: Policy 3.06.10, Grievance Procedure- Certified Personnel and Policy 3.06.20, Grievance Procedure- Classified Personnel

Revised: June 28, 2021; DATE

Employees and members of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) have an absolute duty to maintain the confidentiality of records as required by law. Employees and board members, by the nature of their positions, are exposed to confidential information that should not be repeated or discussed except with those recognized by law as having a right to the information. Any employee or board member who is not sure whether particular information may be protected by state or federal confidentiality laws should seek clarification from his or her immediate supervisor or the assistant superintendent for human resources (for employees) or from the superintendent or board attorney (for board members). When violations occur, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

A. PERSONNEL FILES

It is a criminal violation for an employee or board member to do either of the following:

1. knowingly, willfully, and with malice permit any unauthorized person to have access to information contained in a personnel file; or
2. knowingly and willfully examine, remove, or copy a personnel file that he or she is not specifically authorized to access pursuant to G.S. 115C-321.

B. STUDENT RECORDS

Employees and board members shall safeguard the confidentiality of student records as provided in policy 4700, Student Records.

C. DATA IDENTIFYING A PERSON AS A SUPPORTER OF A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

Except as otherwise provided in G.S. 55A-18-05, employees and board members shall not: (1) require any person or nonprofit organization to provide personal information or otherwise compel the release of personal information; (2) release, publicize, or otherwise publicly disclose personal information of others; or (3) request or require a current or prospective contractor to provide a list of nonprofit organizations to which the current or prospective contractor has provided financial or nonfinancial support. For purposes of this section only, “personal information” is defined as any list, record, register, registry, roll, roster, or other compilation of data of any kind that directly or indirectly identifies a person as a member, supporter, volunteer, or donor of financial or nonfinancial support to any nonprofit organization. The terms “supporter” and “volunteer” do not include the nonprofit organization’s governing board members, officers, directors, or staff.

~~C.D. HANDLING AND TRANSMITTING PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE~~CONFIDENTIAL

INFORMATION

The superintendent or designee is directed to establish and enforce processes and protocols for the secure handling and electronic transmission of personally identifiable information of students and employees and any other information protected by state or federal confidentiality laws.

Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 55A art. 18:115C-47(18), -321, -402

Cross References: Communicable Diseases – Students (policy 4230), Student Records (policy 4700), Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information (policy 4705/7825), Public Records – Retention, Release and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Personnel Files (policy 7820)

Other Resources: *Transmitting Private Information Electronically: Best Practices Guide for Communicating Personally Identifiable Information by E-mail, Fax, or Other Electronic Means*, available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/best-practices-guide-pii-and-email/download?attachment>

Adopted: May 11, 2015

Revised: December 13, 2021