



**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
February 9, 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 1/12/2026B. 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. DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA | Board Chair |
| 6:05 p.m. | 5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT | Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:10 p.m. | 6. STUDENTS' REPORT | Ms. Athena Elliott
Ms. Rosalyn Rabinowitz |
| 6:15 p.m. | 7. SPECIAL RECOGNITION <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ NCCAT 2026 Burroughs Wellcome Fund
Beginning Teacher of the Year Finalist★ "Bright Ideas" Grant Recipients | Dr. Karen Sumner &
Dr. Terry Worrell
Dr. Leslie Alexander |
| 6:25 p.m. | 8. PUBLIC COMMENT | Board Chair |

6:32 p.m.	9. CONSENT AGENDA A. Approval of the Minutes for 1/12/2026 and 2/2/2026 B. Declaration of Surplus C. 2026-27 Budget Framework D. Personnel Report	Board Chair
6:35 p.m.	10. RISE Caldwell-Watauga	Ms. Tara Brossa & Mr. Joe Furman
6:50 p.m.	11. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR SECOND 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. Tierra Stark
6:55 p.m.	12. POLICIES: SUBSTANTIVE FOR FIRST READ • 3220: Technology in the Educational Program • 3225/4312/7320: Technology Responsible Use • 3226/4205: Internet Safety • 3227/7322: Web Page Development • 4270/6145: Concussion and Head Injury • 6310: Organization of Student Transportation Services • 7910: Retirement	Dr. Tierra Stark
7:20 p.m.	13. BOARD OPERATIONS	Board Chair
7:25 p.m.	14. BOARD COMMENTS	Board Chair
7:30 p.m.	15. ADJOURNMENT	Board Chair



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

DATE: January 12, 2026

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Margaret E. Gragg Education Center

PRESENT:

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

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Board Chair Dr. Gary Childers called the open session to order at 6:01 p.m. He welcomed the teachers, students, and family members in attendance and recognized the presence of the Watauga County Commissioners and Watauga County Manager Deron Geouque. Dr. Childers shared that two former Watauga County Schools educators had recently passed: Barbara Kinsey, who also served on the Board of Education, and Margaret Sigmon. He also acknowledged the recent loss of Board Vice-Chair Alison Idol's husband, Bobby Idol, and expressed condolences to all of the families. Dr. Childers then asked those present to observe a moment of silence.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Dr. Alexander opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair and Vice-Chair. Alison Idol nominated Gary Childers for Board Chair, Adam Hege seconded, and the appointment was approved unanimously. Charlotte Lloyd then nominated Alison Idol for Vice-Chair, Jay Fenwick seconded, and the selection was unanimously approved by all Board members. Charlotte Lloyd praised Dr. Leslie Alexander, Dr. Gary Childers, and Ms. Alison Idol for the outstanding work they do in their leadership roles.

DISCUSSION AND ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA

There was no discussion or adjustment of the agenda.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Dr. Alexander expressed her delight that first-semester testing at Watauga High School was able to begin on schedule for the first time in three years.

- Skyline/SkyBest recently contributed \$5,000 to Watauga County Schools to benefit middle school athletics. We are incredibly thankful for their partnership and their dedication to enriching opportunities for our students. Their generous investment in our students certainly strengthens our athletic program and positively impacts our school community.
- January 19th is *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*, so there will be no school for students that day.

STUDENTS' REPORT

- DECA held its district competition at Watauga High School on November 20. The event provided students with an opportunity to practice and sharpen their presentation and quick-thinking skills. Competitors participated in five events: Apparel and Accessories, Marketing Communications, Quick Serve Restaurant Management, Sports and Entertainment, and Travel and Tourism. Each student completed both a roleplay and a 100-question test, and several Watauga High students earned the top overall scores in their categories. Students will compete at the state competition, February 25–28.
- Watauga High School's band and choir shared their talents with the community through winter concerts in December. The band performed a variety of full ensemble and chamber pieces, concluding with performances by the orchestra and jazz band, highlighting both the musicians' dedication and the leadership of Ms. Taryn Wooten. The choir presented a holiday concert under the direction of Mr. Frankie Lancaster. They also performed at the town's Christmas tree and Menorah lighting at the Jones House. The choir will compete March 6-7 in Biloxi, Mississippi.
- "Mr. WHS," an annual male talent show hosted by Student Council, raised over \$20,000 during its December event to support three local families in need. The successful fundraiser showcased student talent while making a meaningful impact in the community.
- Rehearsals for the spring musical, "*Matilda*," began on January 5. The production features a cast of approximately 50 students and a crew of 15, under the direction of Mr. Zach Walker and Ms. Sarah Miller. The spring musical provides a great opportunity for students to get involved in the performing arts, and community members are encouraged to come out and support the show this spring. This year's production is especially meaningful, as it marks Ms. Miller's final year as a director before her retirement. In addition, the Playmakers recently held auditions for their upcoming production, "*Failure: A Love Story*."
- Exams after Christmas break are necessary to ensure a balanced number of instructional days in each semester. Fall semester exams will take place January 12–15. Students will attend afternoon review sessions for each class the day before their exam to complete final preparations and ask any remaining questions before testing.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

★ School Board Appreciation Month

In celebration of School Board Appreciation Month, Dr. Leslie Alexander expressed her gratitude to the members of the Watauga County Board of Education. She stated, "Your dedication, vision, and tireless advocacy make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students, teachers, and community. The decisions you make, often behind the scenes, shape the educational opportunities and successes of every child in our district." Dr. Alexander then presented each Board member with a token of appreciation in recognition of their distinguished leadership. The members of the Watauga County

Board of Education are Dr. Gary Childers, Dr. Jay Fenwick, Dr. Adam Hege, Ms. Alison Idol, and Ms. Charlotte Mizelle Lloyd.

★ **NC Northwest Region Teacher of the Year**

Dr. Alexander recognized Mrs. Gina Holste, Valle Crucis' Reading Specialist, as the 2025 Northwest Regional Teacher of the Year! Mrs. Holste began her teaching career at Parkway School in 2006 and has built an extraordinary record of service and leadership. She was named Watauga County Schools' Teacher of the Year in 2013–2014 and again in May 2025. Dr. Alexander shared, "Gina exemplifies professionalism, love, and just the biggest heart ever. She is loyal, steady, and kind, and I cannot think of anyone I would be more proud to honor as Teacher of the Year." Mrs. Holste is now one of just nine teachers across North Carolina competing for the 2026 North Carolina Teacher of the Year title.

★ **Resolutions Honoring Achievements**

The Watauga County Board of Education and Watauga County Commissioners jointly honored players and coaches from two Watauga High School sports teams with formal resolutions recognizing their outstanding achievements this season, reflecting the pride the entire county feels for them. County Commissioner Chair Braxton Eggers emphasized that participation in sports teaches valuable life lessons and that parental support plays a key role in their success. County Commissioner Vice-Chair Todd Castle added that athletics helps students learn to "be men both on and off the field."

- Watauga High School Men's Soccer Team, Head Coach Josh Honeycutt, Assistant Coach Chris Hampton, Coaches Vern Collins, Danae Kreiss, Landon Johnson, and Noah Lang, and Athletic Director Dustin Kerley for their exceptional achievement as the 2025 NCHSAA 6A West Regional Champions.
 - David Ganley, Lucas Hamilton, Asher Hampton, Miller Hankins, Quincy Honeycutt, Gavin Lipinski, Gabe Madritch, Evan Mawhinney, Ben Myers, Solomon Triplett, and Noah van Werkhoven were selected for the Northwestern 6A/7A All-Conference.
 - Evan Mawhinney was named the Conference Offensive Player of the Year, Ben Myers was named the Conference Defensive Player of the Year, and Solomon Triplett was named the Conference Player of the Year.
 - David Ganley, Jude Jackson, Evan Mawhinney, Ben Myers, and Solomon Triplett were named All-Region Athletes.
 - David Ganley and Evan Mawhinney were named to the 2025 6A All-State Team.
 - Head Coach Josh Honeycutt was named the NCHSAA 6A Men's Soccer Coach of the Year, and Assistant Coach Chris Hampton was named the NCHSAA 6A Men's Soccer Assistant Coach of the Year.
- Watauga High School Varsity Football Team, Head Coach Ryan Habich, Coach/Athletic Director Dustin Kerley, Coaches Bill Carr, Hamilton Castle, Phillip Hicks, Jason Phelps, Marshall Thomas, Heath Tucker, and Kevin Yandle for their phenomenal achievement as the 2025 NCHSAA 6A State Champions.
 - The team entered the state championship with a 14–0 record, achieving the program's first undefeated season, and ultimately completed a perfect 15–0 season.
 - The team captured a state championship for the first time in 47 years, marking a historic achievement by scoring 47 points in the championship game.

- Evan Burroughs, Cade Keller, and John Wilson Mills were named Watauga's 6A state championship game MVPs, with Evan Burroughs earning Overall Most Valuable Player honors, Cade Keller named Offensive MVP, and John Wilson Mills named Defensive MVP.
- Cade Keller was awarded the North Carolina "Mr. 6A Solomon Award," and Crue Stoddard was honored with the North Carolina Farm Bureau Insurance Sportsmanship Award.
- Coach Ryan Habich, Cade Keller, and Brady Lindenmuth took part in and won the North Carolina East-West All-Star Game as members of the West Team, with Cade Keller being named the Offensive MVP.

Head Coach Ryan Habich expressed his gratitude to the Watauga County Board of Education and County Commissioners for their servant leadership. He shared that the varsity football team was proud to represent Watauga County, playing not just for themselves, but for their teammates, their school, and the entire community. The team, made up of 49 players and 10 coaches, has embraced every challenge this season, learning the true meaning of teamwork, dedication, and resilience.

★ **NBPTS Tamara Stamey Memorial Scholarships**

Four Watauga County Schools educators were surprised in December when they were notified that they had been selected as recipients of the Tamara Stamey Memorial Scholarship, which helps fund the National Board Certification process. Dr. Scott Elliott, former WCS Superintendent and a member of the Tamara Stamey Memorial Scholarship Committee, shared remarks highlighting Mrs. Stamey's impact and the purpose of the scholarship. Mrs. Tamara Stamey began her career with Watauga County Schools in 1996 and retired on December 1, 2022. During her tenure, she served as a Kindergarten teacher, Assistant Principal at Watauga High School, Principal at Parkway School, Director of Elementary Education, and Chief Academic Officer. Throughout her career, Mrs. Stamey devoted significant time and energy to supporting teachers pursuing National Board Certification. Established in January 2023, the Tamara Stamey Memorial Scholarship honors her legacy by assisting local educators in their journey to become National Board Certified Teachers.

Dr. Elliott, along with fellow Selection Committee members Tracy Markland and Sarah Miller, selected four recipients from among the applicants based on the Stamey family's criteria of commitment, professionalism, and the potential financial impact of certification. Dr. Elliott also expressed gratitude to previous Watauga Boards of Education and the Watauga County Commissioners for their continued support of teachers pursuing National Board Certification. As he introduced each recipient, Dr. Elliott shared background information from their applications:

- ❖ Jackie Blow (Watauga High)
- ❖ Carrie Boone (Watauga High)
- ❖ Sunnee Freed (Mabel)
- ❖ Courtney Hicks (Valle Crucis)

★ **2025 National Board Certified Teachers and 2025 National Board Maintenance of Completion**

Ms. Keana Triplett, Academic Instructional Coach and WCS National Board Coordinator, highlighted that National Board Certification is the highest professional credential available to teachers. She noted that the rigorous process requires dedication, perseverance, and reflection on all aspects of teaching—from small-group instruction to whole-class learning—along with mastery of both content and pedagogy. Watauga County Schools is a national leader in National Board Certified Teachers,

consistently recognized as a National Board Accomplished District, and currently employs approximately 95 National Board Certified Educators.

Ms. Triplett expressed heartfelt appreciation to the Watauga County Schools National Board Support Team—Keri Hemrick, Jeanie Hicks, Gina Holste, Barbara Myers, Allyson McFalls, Keana Triplett, and Jamie Wilson—for their tireless guidance and encouragement of candidates. She also thanked the County Commissioners, whose funding reimburses up to twenty teachers each year upon achieving certification, and the Stamey family for their generous support through the Tamara Stamey Memorial Scholarship Fund. Ms. Triplett concluded by recognizing the families of National Board candidates, noting that their support is vital to the teachers' success.

The following educators of the 2025 cohort of initial National Board Certified Teachers successfully completed the rigorous portfolio and assessment process to earn certification:

- Haylee Bare (Watauga High)
- Libby Diehl (Green Valley)
- Terry Gunnell-Beck (Hardin Park) ~ *Tamara Stamey Scholar*
- Shelby Hatton (Valle Crucis)
- Kirsten Hodges (Parkway) ~ *Tamara Stamey Scholar*
- Nick Lavender (Watauga High)
- Natasha Lyons (Valle Crucis)
- Meredith Madison (Watauga High)
- Maura Miller (Bethel)
- Sierra Owen (Green Valley)
- Kelly Rush (Watauga High)
- Danielle Thompson (Valle Crucis)
- Sam Vining (Watauga High) ~ *Tamara Stamey Scholar*

These teachers maintained their National Board Certification in 2025 with additional rigorous portfolio work demonstrating how they had continued to move student learning forward in the past five years:

- Toni Berke (Green Valley)
- Angela Bland (Parkway)
- Corrie Freeman (Hardin Park)
- Carla Greene (Cove Creek)
- Claire Jensen (Hardin Park)
- Sarah Miller (Watauga High)
- Erin Patterson (Parkway)
- Robin Smith (Parkway)
- Amanda Stamper (Watauga High)
- Lara Whiteside (Blowing Rock)
- Kathryn Yanacek (Hardin Park)

Dr. Childers expressed his gratitude to the County Commissioners for their financial support of teachers in this process, which helps them enhance their skills and become even stronger educators.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no citizens who made public comments.

A 10-minute recess was taken.

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

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

WCS TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Dr. Alison Schleede, Director of Technology, provided the annual technology update, highlighting key initiatives and areas of focus for Watauga County Schools. These included computing devices for students and staff, classroom technology integration, the NC Digital Learning Plan and learning standards, library partnerships, technology staffing and workload, professional learning opportunities, Google account monitoring, visitor management systems, door access and surveillance, the district's technology roadmap, E-rate funding, strategic device planning, VoIP systems, and cybersecurity and disaster recovery planning.

Dr. Schleede also emphasized that by April 2026, all public-facing communications must comply with ADA Title II regulations. This includes adding Alt text to images, making PDFs accessible, and ensuring all digital content is compatible with assistive technology,

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

After questions and discussion by the Board, Alison Idol made a motion to approve the policies. Dr. Adam Hege seconded the motion, and all Board members approved.

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 shared the policies for first read, and they will be brought to the February BOE meeting for second read.

BOARD OPERATIONS

- The Board of Education will hold a half-day work session on February 2.
- Dr. Childers will follow up with Board members regarding committee assignments for the year.
- Dr. Alexander, Dr. Childers, and Ms. Idol will provide principals with information at an upcoming CI/DLT meeting regarding how student reassignment decisions are made.

BOARD COMMENTS

There were no additional comments from the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlotte Lloyd made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alison Idol. The motion was approved by all members, and the meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Board of Education Chair

Dr. Leslie Alexander, Superintendent



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: February 2, 2026

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

PLACE: Boone Area Chamber of Commerce

PRESENT:

- Gary Childers, Alison Idol, Jay Fenwick, Adam Hege, Charlotte Lloyd, *BOE Members*
- Dr. Leslie Alexander, *Superintendent*
- Dr. Chris Blanton, *Assistant Superintendent*
- Mr. Joseph Nash, *Chief Financial Officer*
- Dr. Tierra Stark, *Director of Student Services*
- Mr. Chris Campbell, *Board Attorney ~ virtual*

CALL TO ORDER

A special work session was held for Board members to engage in more in-depth collaboration on several important topics. Board Chair Dr. Gary Childers called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m.

HIL CLASSIFIED SALARY STUDY

HIL Consultants conducted a compensation and salary study to provide WCS comparison data, support recruitment and retention efforts, and identify budget implications. Dr. Chris Blanton and Mr. Joe Nash presented findings from the study and provided the Board with a copy of the current Classified Staff Salary/Wage Scale and asked the Board to review the proposed scale in comparison to Living Wage data. HIL Consultants recommended implementation of a 30-step salary/wage scale, noting that while adoption would increase system costs, it would recognize current employees and support recruitment of new staff.

Due to budget constraints, a phased implementation approach was recommended with the goal of fully adjusting all salaries by 2029. Additional recommendations included providing compensation for technology employees who earn certifications, requiring appropriate certifications for maintenance job placements to align with salary adjustments, differentiating certain positions based on school size within the new salary schedules, reclassifying positions and updating job descriptions when salary adjustments are made, establishing a minimum 50% difference between minimum and maximum salaries within the 30-step schedule, and basing cost estimates on longevity years beginning July 1, 2026.

LENGTH OF INSTRUCTIONAL DAY

The purpose of the discussion was to explore the feasibility of extending the instructional day to provide flexibility for optional workdays and remote learning during inclement weather. Dr. Alexander asked the Board of Education to review WCS instructional time compared to high-performing districts and neighboring regions, noting challenges primarily related to transportation and snow. Most schools operate approximately seven hours per day for a total of 1,231 instructional hours annually, while WCS has averaged 1,134 hours per year over the past 20 years, with an actual average of 1,046 hours. WCS currently has the shortest K–8 instructional day in the region at 6.5 hours, has missed an average of 14 days per year due to inclement weather, and has used an average of eight remote learning days per year over the past five years. Extending the instructional day could support DPI requirements for reading and math instruction, reduce remote learning days, provide additional professional development opportunities for teachers, and ensure the added time is used intentionally to support instruction K–12. Dr. Alexander and Dr. Blanton have met with faculty groups at approximately half of the schools to gather feedback, noting that continued planning will need to address transportation considerations.

REMOTE DAY WORK EXPECTATIONS

Dr. Blanton opened the discussion with historical context regarding the introduction of remote work during COVID-19. Currently, remote work is permitted only for teachers on remote instruction days, as many would otherwise be unable to reach their buildings, and allowing remote work ensures continuity of instruction. Consistency was emphasized as a key consideration, particularly regarding the distinction between certified and classified staff and defining which positions are eligible for remote work. The Board's desired outcome is an updated policy, along with a clear local procedure, explicitly stating which groups of employees are allowed to work from home, at the discretion of the Board.

ENROLLMENT & FACILITIES PLANNING

Dr. Alexander asked the Board of Education to review enrollment numbers by grade level, noting that significant funds are directed to schools with low enrollment and that teacher allotments are not fully optimized in schools with small class sizes. She emphasized the importance of demonstrating responsible use of funding as enrollment trends continue to decline. Board Attorney Chris Campbell outlined the process districts follow when addressing declining enrollment. Dr. Alexander will collaborate with Mr. Campbell to provide the Board with guidance as potential recommendations are developed.

2026-2027 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Chief Financial Officer Joe Nash noted that the district will be requesting a 3% increase from the county due to anticipated rises in supplements, salaries, insurance, and Social Security, as well as uncertainty regarding upcoming state decisions. He reviewed the proposed budget requests and highlighted the current fund balance of \$3.5 million, approximately 4% of the operating budget, noting that the target fund balance is 8%. Board Attorney Chris Campbell outlined the statutory process for the budget, including key submission deadlines. All Board members agreed to advance the proposed framework to the February Board meeting for approval.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Jay Fenwick made a motion to adjourn, Dr. Adam Hege seconded, and all Board members approved.
The meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

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

Dr. Leslie Alexander, *Superintendent*

Declaration of Surplus Items - February 2026

Date Approved: _____

Bethel

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
100063	1	PROJECTOR- NP400		1
	1		0	1

Blowing Rock

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
35485	1	CHROMEBOOK- 100e		1
NONE	1	TABLE - SMALL	1	
35293	1	CHROMEBOOK- 100e		1
37550	1	CHROMEBOOK- 100e		1
35321	1	CHROMEBOOK		1
35628	1	CHROMEBOOK		1
	6		1	5

Cove Creek

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

Green Valley

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

Hardin Park

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
NONE	1	TV- VIZIO		1
36274	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
37915	1	CHROMEBOOK HP		1
37489	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
38504	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
38499	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
52252	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
38544	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
38516	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
38506	1	CHROMEBOOK- 300e		1
34949	1	CHROMEBOOK 100e		1
 11			 0	 11

Mabel

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
600714	1	FLOOR MACHINE- SPEEDSHINE		1
NONE	1	RAPTOR BY HAWK	1	
NONE	1	WASHER AND DRYER STACKABLE		1
 3			 1	 2

Parkway

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
33797	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1
28688	1	PROJECTOR- EPSON		1
700433	1	TV		1
700158	1	SMARTBOARD		1
700163	1	SMARTBOARD		1
29883	1	PROJECTOR		1
 6			 0	 6

Valle Crucis

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
36946	1	CHROMEBOOK G9		1
	1		0	1

Watauga High School

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
900810	1	SMARTBOARD		1
900782	1	SMARTBOARD		1
28769	1	PROJECTOR		1
	3		0	3

Central Office

<u>Asset #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Usable</u>	<u>Unusable</u>
28080	1	VIDEO CONF SYSTEM- LOGITECH		1
29142	1	PROBOOK- HP 430		1
NONE	1	LARGE COMPUTER DESK	1	
51273	1	PRINTER- MICRO		1
	4		1	3

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>
NONE	1	Reach Thru Cold		1
NONE	1	Ovens Double Stack	1	
NONE	1	Ovens Double Stack	1	
NONE	1	Warmer	1	
NONE	1	Steamer w/ Kettle		1
NONE	1	Slicer	1	
NONE	1	Slicer	1	
NONE	1	Buffalo Chopper	1	
NONE	1	Buffalo Chopper	1	
NONE	1	Steamer		1
NONE	1	Steamer		1
NONE	1	Reach Thru Cold		1
NONE	1	Double Warmer		1
NONE	1	Slicer	1	
NONE	1	Slicer	1	
NONE	1	Table for Steamers	1	
NONE	1	Cart	1	
NONE	1	Cart	1	
NONE	1	Mixer		1
NONE	1	Cart		1
NONE	1	Salad Spinner		1
NONE	1	Salad Bar Server	1	
NONE	1	Combi Oven		1
	23		13	10



**WATAUGA COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Margaret E. Gragg Education Center
175 Pioneer Trail, Boone, NC 28607

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Watauga County Board of
Education
Dr. Leslie Alexander, Superintendent

FROM: Joseph Nash, CFO

DATE: February 9, 2026

RE: Request for Approval of '26-'27 County Budget Framework

Consideration:

In a follow-up to the information that was presented during the Board of Education workshop on February 2, 2026, we ask the Board of Education to approve the '26-'27 budget framework to be made to the Watauga County Board of Commissioners. The summary framework is presented on the following page. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Joseph Nash, CFO

Categories	26-'27 Framework
Certified Salaries	3,400,278
Classified Salaries	3,272,355
Directors Salaries	345,959
Supplements	1,983,432
Benefits	3,786,245
Total Payroll	12,788,269
Utilities	1,345,891
Insurance	412,036
Legal/Audit/Contractual Services	184,495
Professional Dev. & Travel	119,995
Supplies & Materials	502,864
Facilities Maintenance	636,057
Transportation	137,851
Licenses/Fees/Memberships	71,688
Athletics	132,149
Technology	400,729
Curriculum	170,000
Charter Schools Tuition	473,800
National Board Certifications	25,000
Total Non-Payroll	4,612,554
Total Expected Expenses	17,400,822
County Budget	17,243,822
Fines and Forfeitures	157,000
Total Expected Revenue	17,400,822

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 in 2014-2015 and beyond shall pass the Future-Ready Core Course of Study. ~~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 (bc) 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

TECHNOLOGY IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Policy Code:

3220

In alliance with the North Carolina Digital Learning Plan, the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) is committed to establishing and supporting effective digital teaching and learning practices supported by contemporary information and communications technology systems to foster globally competitive students prepared for modern life. The board recognizes the benefits of digital and technology-enabled and -enhanced teaching and learning resources that provide the ability to make data more accessible, personalize learning, easily customize curriculum, provide access to current information, and enable access to quality materials at a lower cost than traditional materials. To that end, the board supports classroom digital and technology-enabled and -enhanced teaching and learning resources that are aligned with the current statewide instructional standards. In addition, to the extent funding permits, the board will endeavor to ensure that all students have access to personal digital and technology-enabled teaching and learning devices to foster the skills necessary for future-ready learners. The superintendent may establish relationships with businesses and seek grants and other funding sources in an effort to acquire additional technological resources for the educational program and to support continuous out-of-school Internet access for students.

A. INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CURRICULUM

The board expects that information and communications technologies will be integrated seamlessly across the curriculum and used to support increased student achievement, instructional innovation, and to prepare students to be successful in college, in careers, and as globally engaged, productive citizens. The curriculum committee should provide suggestions in the curriculum guides referenced in policy 3115, Curriculum and Instructional Guides, for integrating technological resources (as defined in Section A below) into the educational program. School administrators and teachers are encouraged to develop additional strategies for integrating technological resources across the curriculum and utilizing the power of technology to personalize learning and improve learning outcomes while making more efficient use of resources. The strategies should be included in the school improvement plan if they require the transfer of funds or otherwise relate to any components of the school improvement plan.

The superintendent shall oversee development of the school system’s digital teaching and learning vision as part of the school system’s strategic plan and a yearly action plan that aligns to the vision. The development and ongoing review of the vision and the action plan will include various stakeholders such as curriculum leaders, teachers, administrators, students, parents, and representatives from technology services, instructional technology, finance, and other departments as required. The action plan will include adequate data privacy protections to secure student data and will take into account the level of out-of-school Internet access for students.

~~The superintendent may establish relationships with businesses and seek grants and other funding sources in an effort to acquire additional technological resources for the educational program and to support continuous out-of-school Internet access for students.~~

A.B. SELECTION OF TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Technological resources are information and communications technologies including, but not limited to, the following: (1) hardware, including both fixed and mobile technologies and devices such as desktop computers, laptops, netbooks, tablets, e-readers, smartphones, and gaming devices; (2) software, including cloud-based and web-based applications, programs, and platforms; (3) network and telecommunications systems and services; (4) Internet access; (5) multimedia equipped classrooms; (6) computer classrooms and laboratories; and (7) other existing or emerging mobile communications systems. All technological resources must be purchased and used in a manner consistent with applicable law and board policy, including laws and policies related to copyright, public records, bidding, and other purchase requirements, accessibility for students with disabilities, staff duties, and standards for student behavior. Before acquiring a technological resource, school system officials must evaluate the costs, flexibility, and life cycle associated with the resource using any State Board of Education rules adopted in accordance with G.S. 115C-102.10.

Technological resources also must meet or exceed the following standards before they may be considered for implementation.

1. Technological resources must support the current statewide instructional standards or the programs of the school system.
2. Technological resources must support the current use of learning and instructional management technologies in the school.
3. Technological resources must be compatible with the condition of the network and other infrastructure resources. The technology director shall set minimum standards for technological resources that are purchased or donated. Upgrading, hardware conditions, and similar requirements must be maintained to the highest standards.
4. There must be sufficient staff to operate and maintain the technological equipment, programs, and systems.
5. There must be adequate funds budgeted to implement and support the technological resources and to train instructional staff to use the resources to improve educational outcomes.

Procurement of technological resources should be done in collaboration with teachers and technical support staff, as appropriate. Whenever possible, a pilot period to test the resource should occur prior to full purchase.

B.C. DEPLOYMENT OF TECHNOLOGY TO SCHOOLS

The superintendent shall oversee the development of the school system's technology deployment and refresh plan. The plan will be designed to ensure organized, effective, efficient, and sustainable means of deploying and maintaining technology resources and will establish appropriate refresh/replacement cycles. The superintendent shall develop procedures that outline the strategy of the technology deployment and refresh plan.

C.D. BRING YOUR OWN TECHNOLOGY (BYOT) INITIATIVE

The superintendent is authorized to investigate and develop a plan to allow staff and students the option to use their personal electronic devices in place of or along with their school system assigned devices. The plan should address, at a minimum, the instructional use of personal devices, compatibility requirements, access limitations or requirements, content filtering, security, and other issues as recommended by the technology director. The plan should assign personal responsibility to the user for repair and replacement of damaged or stolen devices and for any data or other charges arising from use of a personal device. The plan should require a written agreement for the use of personal technology devices from each student and staff member who wishes to participate in the BYOT initiative. The plan should ensure that students who are unable to bring in outside technology will be able to access and utilize school equipment so that no student is excluded from instruction due to lack of access to technology.

D.E. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND OTHER COLLABORATIVE TOOLS

The superintendent is authorized to permit instructional personnel to incorporate email, social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, podcasts, video conferencing, online collaborations, instant messaging, texting, virtual learning environments, and/or other forms of direct electronic communications or Web 2.0 applications for educational purposes to the extent the superintendent deems appropriate and in accordance with policy 7335, Employee Use of Social Media. The superintendent shall establish parameters and rules for use of these tools and shall require instruction for students in how to use such tools in a safe, effective, and appropriate way. Instructional personnel shall make all reasonable attempts to monitor student online activity and shall otherwise comply with the requirements of policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use, when using these tools.

E.F. GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is an artificial intelligence tool that responds to a user's input or prompt by generating new text, images, audio, video, or content based on what it learned in its training data set. The board encourages the use of generative AI by school system employees and students to expand their skills and capabilities and to prepare students for a future AI-enhanced world. The superintendent or designee shall develop and maintain guidelines that detail the acceptable and responsible use of generative AI by school system employees and students. See also policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology

Responsible Use.

All school system employees and students should be AI literate, that is, have an understanding of basic AI principles and applications, the skills to recognize when AI is employed, and awareness of its limits. The superintendent or designee shall develop a comprehensive AI literacy training strategy that involves training all employees and students in the effective, ethical, and safe use of generative AI tools. The training should equip employees with the necessary knowledge to effectively employ generative AI in their work while ensuring its safe and responsible integration into classroom instruction.

F.G. TECHNOLOGY-RELATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The superintendent shall plan a program of professional development for digital teaching and learning that prepares administrators, teachers, coaches, school library media coordinators, and technical support staff to utilize digital tools and resources in accordance with the N.C. Digital Learning Competencies for Teachers and Administrators. Professional development shall emphasize technology integration and continuous improvement, including the use of ongoing technology-integrated online-learning activities throughout the course of study and the provision of personalized learning. Professional development shall also address the ethical, legal, and practical issues related to social networking and mobile devices in the classroom and other topics deemed necessary by the superintendent or technology director. In addition, professional development shall involve training on generative AI, including its impact, effective use, capabilities, limitations, concerns, and responsible use. Staff will be trained both to use generative AI professionally and to guide students to effectively and ethically use generative AI as a learning partner. To the extent possible, job-specific professional development opportunities should be made available, as well as professional development that is personalized to meet the needs of individual staff.

School improvement teams should identify any staff development appropriations for technology-related professional development in their school improvement plans. The superintendent and technology director should assist schools in coordinating staff development needs as provided in policy 7800, Professional and Staff Development.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47(70), -102.10, -522, -528; 143B-1341; State Board of Education Policy SBOP-018

Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 7800), Curriculum and Instructional Guides (policy 3115), Technology Responsible Use (policy 3225/4312/7320), Internet Safety (policy 3226/4205), Copyright Compliance (policy 3230/7330), School Improvement Plan (policy 3430), Integrity and Civility (policy 4310), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Network Security (policy 6524), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Employee Use of Social Media (policy 7335), Gifts and Bequests (policy 8220)

Other Resources: North Carolina Digital Teaching and Learning Competencies for Teachers and Administrators, available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/digital-teaching-and-learning/digital-teaching-learning-standards#digital-learning-competencies-for-educators>; The North Carolina Digital Learning Plan (2022), available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/digital-teaching-and-learning/digital-learning-initiative#:~:text=The%20North%20Carolina%20Digital%20Learning%20Plan%20describes%20the,Learning%20Initiative.%202022%20North%20Carolina%20Digital%20Learning%20Plan> North Carolina Generative AI Implementation Recommendations and Considerations for PK-13 Public Schools, available at https://go.ncdpi.gov/AI_Guidelines

Adopted: August 3, 2015

Revised: August 14, 2017 (Legal references only); May 21, 2018; May 8, 2023; July 11, 2024;
DATE

Replaces: Board policy 4.01.35, Media Technology and Advisory Committee

The board provides its students and staff access to a variety of technological resources. These resources provide opportunities to enhance learning, appeal to different learning styles, improve communication within the school community and with the larger global community, and achieve the educational goals established by the board. Through the school system's technological resources, users can observe events as they occur around the world, interact with others on a variety of subjects, and acquire access to current and in-depth information.

The board intends that students and employees benefit from these resources while remaining within the bounds of safe, legal, and responsible use. Accordingly, the board establishes this policy to govern student and employee use of any technological resources owned, leased, maintained, or otherwise controlled by the school system. This policy applies regardless of whether such use occurs on or off school system property, and it applies to all school system technological resources, including but not limited to computer networks and connections, the resources, tools, and learning environments made available by or on the networks, and all devices that connect to those networks.

A. EXPECTATIONS FOR USE OF SCHOOL TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The use of school system technological resources, including access to the Internet, is expected to be exercised in an appropriate and responsible manner. Individual users of the school system's technological resources are responsible for their behavior and communications when using those resources. Responsible use of school system technological resources is use that is ethical, respectful, academically honest, and supportive of student learning. Each user has the responsibility to respect others in the school community and on the Internet. Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette.

General student and employee behavior standards, including those prescribed in applicable board policies, the Code of Student Conduct, and other regulations and school rules, apply to use of school technological resources, including access to the Internet.

In addition, anyone who uses school system computers or electronic devices, accesses the school's electronic storage or network, or connects to the Internet using school system-provided access must comply with the additional rules for responsible use listed in Section B below. These rules are intended to clarify expectations for conduct but should not be construed as all-inclusive.

All students must be trained about appropriate online behavior as provided in policy 3226/4205, Internet Safety.

B. RULES FOR USE OF SCHOOL TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. _____ School system technological resources are provided for school-related purposes only. Acceptable uses of such technological resources are limited to responsible,

efficient, and legal activities that support the educational objectives of the Watauga County Schools. Use of school system technological resources for any non-educational purposes is prohibited, including but not limited to use for commercial gain or profit, for charitable purposes other than school fund-raising, or for amusement or entertainment.

Student personal use of school system technological resources for amusement or entertainment is ~~also~~ prohibited unless approved for special situations by the teacher or school administrator. In addition, student access to social media platforms is prohibited, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes.

Because some incidental and occasional personal use by employees is inevitable, the board permits infrequent and brief personal use by employees so long as it does not interfere with school system business and is not otherwise prohibited by board policy or procedure.

School system Wi-Fi hotspots and/or services may be used off school system property only by students and school staff members who need them. Such use must be primarily for activities that are integral, immediate, and proximate to the education of students.

- 1-2. Unless authorized by law to do so, users may not make copies of software purchased by the school system. Software purchased by the school system may be copied for personal use only when expressly permitted by the terms of a specific software licensing agreement.
- 2-3. Users must comply with all applicable laws, board policies, administrative regulations, and school standards and rules, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and public records. Plagiarism of Internet resources will be treated in the same manner as any other incidents of plagiarism, as stated in the Code of Student Conduct.
- 3-4. Users must follow any software, application, or subscription services terms and conditions of use.
- 4-5. No user of technological resources, including a person sending or receiving electronic communications, may engage in creating, intentionally viewing, accessing, downloading, storing, printing, or transmitting images, graphics (including still or moving pictures), sound files, text files, documents, messages, or other material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive, or considered to be harmful to minors.
- 5-6. Users must not circumvent fire walls. The use of anonymous proxies to circumvent content filtering is prohibited.

6.7. Users may not install or use any Internet-based file sharing program designed to facilitate sharing of copyrighted material.

7.8. Users of technological resources may not send electronic communications fraudulently (i.e., by misrepresenting the identity of the sender).

8.9. Users must respect the privacy of others.

- a. Students must not reveal any personally identifying, private, or confidential information about themselves or fellow students when using email, chat rooms, blogs, or other forms of electronic communication. Such information includes, for example, a person's home address or telephone number, credit or checking account information, or social security number. For further information regarding what constitutes personal identifying information, see policy 4705/7825, Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information.
- b. School employees may disclose student directory information (such as name, photograph, or digital image) on school system websites and web pages unless parents/guardians/eligible students have opted out of the release of directory information pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and in accordance with Policy 4700, Student Records.
- c. Users may not forward or post personal communications without the author's prior consent.
- d. Students may not use school system technological resources to capture audio, video, or still pictures of other students and/or employees in which such individuals can be personally identified, nor share such media in any way, without consent of the students and/or employees and the principal or designee. An exception will be made for settings where students and staff cannot be identified beyond the context of a sports performance or other public event or when otherwise approved by the principal.

9.10. Users may not intentionally or negligently damage computers, computer systems, electronic devices, software, computer networks, or data of any user connected to school system technological resources. Users may not knowingly or negligently transmit computer viruses or self-replicating messages or deliberately try to degrade or disrupt system performance, including by streaming audio or video for non-instructional purposes. Users may not disable antivirus programs installed on school system-owned or issued devices.

10.11. Users may not create or introduce games, network communications programs, or any foreign program, executable program, or software onto any school system

computer, electronic device, or network without the express written permission of the technology director or designee. All school purchases of games and other software addressed by this provision, regardless of the funding source, must be approved in advance by the technology director or designee.

~~11.12.~~ Users are prohibited from engaging in unauthorized or unlawful activities, such as “hacking” or using the computer network to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to other computers, computer systems, ~~or~~ accounts, data, or information.

~~12.13.~~ Users are prohibited from using another individual’s ID or password for any technological resource or account without permission from the individual and from the teacher or other school official. Sharing of an individual’s ID or password is strongly discouraged.

~~13.14.~~ Users may not read, alter, change, block, execute, or delete files or communications belonging to another user without the owner’s express prior permission.

~~14.15.~~ Employees shall not use passwords or user IDs for any data system (e.g., the state student information and instructional improvement system applications, time-keeping software, etc.) for an unauthorized or improper purpose.

~~15.16.~~ If a user identifies or encounters an instance of unauthorized access or another security concern, he or she must immediately notify a teacher, school system administrator, or the technology director or designee. Users must not share the problem with other users. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access.

~~16.17.~~ It is the user’s responsibility to back up data and other important files.

~~17.18.~~ Employees shall make reasonable efforts to supervise students’ use of the Internet during instructional time.

~~18.19.~~ Views may be expressed on the Internet or other technological resources as representing the view of the school system or part of the school system only with prior approval by the superintendent or designee.

~~19.20.~~ Use of social media during instructional hours, and at any time using school technology, is prohibited except when approved and monitored by a teacher or other school official. All school personnel will comply with policy 7335 Employee Use of Social Media.

~~20.21.~~ Users who are issued school system-owned and -maintained devices for home use (such as laptops, Chromebooks, etc.) must adhere to any other reasonable rules or guidelines issued by the superintendent or technology director for the use of such devices.

Exceptions to these rules may be made for employees whose activities are necessary to carry out their job responsibilities and are authorized by law.

C. RESTRICTED MATERIAL ON THE INTERNET

The Internet and electronic communications offer fluid environments in which students may access or be exposed to materials and information from diverse and rapidly changing sources, including some that may be harmful to students. The board recognizes that it is impossible to predict with certainty what information on the Internet students may access or obtain. Nevertheless school system personnel shall take reasonable precautions to prevent students from accessing material and information that is obscene, pornographic, or otherwise age-inappropriate or harmful to minors, including violence, nudity, or graphic language that does not serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose as well as websites, web applications, or software that do not protect against the disclosure, use, or dissemination of a student's personal information. The superintendent shall ensure that technology protection measures are used as provided in policy 3226/4205, Internet Safety, and are disabled or minimized only when permitted by law and board policy. The board is not responsible for the content accessed by using a cellular network to connect a personal device to the Internet.

D. PRIVACY

Students, employees, visitors, and other users have no expectation or right of privacy in anything they create, store, send, delete, receive, or display when using the school system's network, devices, Internet access, email system, or other technological resources owned or issued by the school system, whether the resources are used at school or elsewhere, and even if the use is for personal purposes. Users should not assume that files or communications created, transmitted, or displayed using school system technological resources or stored on servers the storage mediums of individual devices, or on school managed cloud services will be private. Under certain circumstances, school officials may be required to disclose such electronic information to law enforcement or other third parties, for example, as a response to a document production request in a lawsuit against the board, in response to a public records request, or as evidence of illegal activity in a criminal investigation.

School system personnel shall monitor online activities of individuals who access the Internet via a school-owned device. The school system may, without notice, (1) monitor, track, and/or log network access, communications, and use; (2) monitor and allocate filespace; and (3) access, review, copy, store, delete, or disclose the content of all user files, regardless of medium, the content of electronic mailboxes issued by the school system, and system outputs, such as printouts, at any time for any lawful purpose. Such purposes may include, but are not limited to, maintaining system integrity, security, or functionality, ensuring compliance with board policy and applicable laws and regulations, protecting the school system from liability, and complying with public records requests.

By using the school system's network, Internet access, electronic devices, email system, devices, or other technological resources, individuals consent to have that use monitored by authorized school system personnel as described in this policy.

E. USE OF PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY ON SCHOOL SYSTEM PROPERTY

Users may not use private WiFi hotspots or other personal technology on campus to access the Internet outside the school system's wireless network. Personal technology devices (including, but not limited to smart phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) may be used on campus only in accordance with written guidelines approved by the superintendent or designee. Students shall not use such devices to take and/or send pictures of other students, faculty or staff by email or other electronic means unless instructed to do so by a Watauga County Schools employee. Personal technology devices may be used in classrooms only for instructional purposes under the direction of Watauga County Schools faculty. If these devices are used for cheating, the responsible student(s) will be dealt with in accordance to Board policies on student behavior (4300 series). Students' personal devices are also governed by policy 4318, Use of Wireless Communication Devices. Use of personal technology devices is also subject to any rules established by the superintendent under a bring your own device plan authorized by Section C of policy 3220, Technology in the Educational Program, and for employees, policy 3228/7323, Use of Personal Technology to Conduct School Business. The school system assumes no responsibility for personal technology devices brought to school.

F. PERSONAL WEBSITES

The superintendent may use any means available to request the removal of personal websites that substantially disrupt the school environment or that utilize school system or individual school names, logos, or trademarks without permission.

1. Students

Though school personnel generally do not monitor students' Internet activity conducted on non-school system devices during non-school hours, when the student's online behavior has a direct and immediate effect on school safety or maintaining order and discipline in the schools, the student may be disciplined in accordance with board policy to the extent consistent with law (see the student behavior policies in the 4300 series and policy 4021/7230).

2. Employees

Employees' personal websites are subject to policy 7335, Employee Use of Social Media. Employees may not use their personal websites to communicate with students, as prohibited by policy 7335 and policy 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations.

3. Volunteers

Volunteers are to maintain appropriate relationships with students at all times. Volunteers are encouraged to block students from viewing personal information on volunteer personal websites or online networking profiles in order to prevent the possibility that students could view materials that are not age-appropriate. An individual volunteer's relationship with the school system may be terminated if the volunteer engages in inappropriate online interaction with students.

G. USE AGREEMENTS

All students, parents, and employees will be informed annually of the information in this policy and in any applicable generative artificial intelligence (AI) guidelines developed in accordance with policy 3220, Technology in the Educational Program. Prior to using school system technological resources, students and employees must agree to comply with the requirements of this policy and the generative AI guidelines and consent to the school system's use of monitoring systems to monitor and detect inappropriate use of technological resources. In addition, the student's parent must consent to the student accessing the Internet and to the school system monitoring the student's Internet activity and electronic mailbox issued by the school system and must sign a copy of the generative AI guidelines as part of the district's Responsible Use Agreement.

H. CONSEQUENCES

Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, violations of this policy will result in appropriate remedial actions or discipline up to and including long-term suspension for students and dismissal for employees and may result in revocation of user privileges. Willful misuse may also result in criminal prosecution under applicable state and federal law.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5); 47 C.F.R. 54.516; Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2522; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; 17 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.*; 20 U.S.C. 7131; G.S. 115C—47(70), -102.10, -325(e) (applicable to career status teachers), -325.4 (applicable to non-career status teachers); 143-805

Cross References: Curriculum and Instructional Guides (policy 3115), Technology in the Educational Program (policy 3220), Internet Safety (policy 3226/4205), Web Page Development (policy 3227/7322), Use of Personal Technology to Conduct School Business (policy 3228/7323), Copyright Compliance (policy 3230/7330), Student Behavior Policies (all policies in the 4300 series), Student Records (policy 4700), Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information (policy 4705/7825), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Use of Equipment, Materials, and Supplies (policy 6520), Network Security (policy 6524), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Employee Use of Social Media (policy 7335)

Other Resources: North Carolina Generative AI Implementation Recommendations and

Considerations for PK-13 Public Schools, available at https://go.ncdpi.gov/AI_Guidelines

Adopted: June 8, 2015

Revised: November 14, 2016; January 13, 2020; January 10, 2022; July 11, 2024; April 15, 2025;
August 11, 2025; DATE

Replaces: Policy 4.02.50, Responsible Use for Access to Networked Information Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) to: (a) prevent user access via its technological resources to, or transmission of, inappropriate material on the Internet or through electronic mail or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access to the Internet and devices or programs connected to or accessible through the Internet; (c) prevent other unlawful online activity; (d) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (e) comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act.

B. DEFINITIONS**1. Technology Protection Measure**

The term “technology protection measure” means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors.

2. Harmful to Minors

The term “harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file or other visual depiction that:

- a. taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion;
- b. depicts, describes or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- c. taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value as to minors.

3. Child Pornography

The term “child pornography” means any visual depiction, including any photograph, film, video picture or computer or computer-generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, where:

- a. the production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;

- b. such visual depiction is a digital image, computer image or computer-generated image that is, or is indistinguishable from, that of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or
- c. such visual depiction has been created, adapted or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

4. Sexual Act; Sexual Contact

The terms “sexual act” and “sexual contact” have the meanings given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

5. Minor

For purposes of this policy, the term “minor” means any individual who has not attained the age of 17 years.

C. ACCESS TO INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) will be used to block or filter access to inappropriate information on the Internet and World Wide Web. Specifically, blocking will be applied to audio and visual depictions deemed obscene or to be child pornography or harmful to minors as well as to websites or web applications that do not protect against the disclosure, use, or dissemination of students’ personal information. Student access to other materials that are inappropriate to minors will also be restricted. The board has determined that audio or visual materials that depict violence, nudity or graphic language that does not serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose are inappropriate for minors. The superintendent, in conjunction with a school media and technology ~~and media~~ advisory committee (see policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials), shall make a determination regarding what other matter or materials are inappropriate for minors. School system personnel may not restrict Internet access to ideas, perspectives or viewpoints if the restriction is motivated solely by disapproval of the viewpoints involved.

Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled during use by an adult for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

D. INAPPROPRIATE NETWORK USAGE

All users of school system technological resources are expected to comply with the requirements established in policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use. In particular, users are prohibited from: (a) attempting to gain unauthorized access, including “hacking” and engaging in other similar unlawful activities; and (b) engaging in the unauthorized disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identifying information regarding minors.

E. EDUCATION, SUPERVISION AND MONITORING

To the extent practical, steps will be taken to ~~promote~~protect the safety and security of users of the school system's online computer network, especially when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging and other forms of direct electronic communications. It is the responsibility of all school personnel to educate, supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures are the responsibility of the technology director or designated representatives.

The technology director or designated representatives shall provide age-appropriate training for students who use the school system's Internet services. The training provided will be designed to promote the school system's commitment to educating students in digital literacy and citizenship, including:

1. the standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use;
2. student safety with regard to safety on the Internet, appropriate behavior while online, including behavior on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response; and
3. compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Following receipt of this training, the student must acknowledge that he or she received the training, understood it and will follow the provisions of policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use.

The superintendent shall develop any regulations needed to implement this policy and shall submit any certifications necessary to demonstrate compliance with this policy.

Legal References: Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. 254(h); Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. 254(l); Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, 47, U.S.C. 254(h); G.S. 115C-47(70); -102.10

Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 1610/7800), Technology in the Educational Program (policy 3220), Technology Responsible Use (policy 3225/4312/7320), School Improvement Plan (policy 3430), Use of Equipment, Materials and Supplies (policy 6520), Network Security (policy 6524)

Adopted: November 10, 2014

| Revised: DATE

Replaces: Policy 4.02.25, Information Security Awareness

Consistent with policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use, and in an effort to further the school system's objectives, the Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") encourages the use of the Internet as a means of providing accessible, accurate, and timely information for employees, students, parents, and others in the larger community. The Internet affords the school system the opportunity to communicate with its communities by posting pertinent system and school information online. The school system has established its system website online at www.wataugaschools.org and this is the only official website of the school system. In addition to this website, individual schools and departments may create system-related school websites. This policy provides the standards that must be followed for development of all system-related websites. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the removal of a web page or website from the Internet.

A. SYSTEM-RELATED WEBSITE

A "system-related website" is any Internet website that is established in one of the following ways:

1. by school system employees or students on behalf of the system;
2. by any school within the system;
3. by any school-sponsored club or organization within the system; or
4. by students as part of an educational assignment.

Only those websites that are created pursuant to this policy are considered system-related websites. The board does not endorse and is not responsible for websites created by employees, students, or others outside of the standards and guidelines of this policy. Students or employees who create personal websites that result in a substantial and material disruption to the school environment may be subject to disciplinary action.

B. STANDARDS FOR WEB PAGE DEVELOPMENT

1. Non-Public or Closed Forums for Expression

All system-related websites are "non-public" or "closed" forums for expression. This means that the system has control over information on such websites and is not required to allow students, teachers, or others to place material on system-related websites. The purpose of system-related websites is to disseminate curriculum-related information; to present the public with information about the system, its schools, and its programs; and to provide the community with each school or department's mission, contact information, activities, organizational format, and instructional program. System-related websites are analogous to

newsletters from the administration or the individual school. System-related websites are not analogous to a student newspaper or a non-school publication.

2. Administration and Editorial Control

All employees responsible for creating, developing, maintaining, editing, or approving a system-related website shall act legally, responsibly, and ethically in providing educational resources and information to support the mission and curriculum of the school system. Such persons shall abide by the generally accepted rules of website etiquette, board policy, and regulations established by the superintendent.

a. Superintendent Final Authority

The superintendent or designee may delegate authority to place information on a system-related website; however, the superintendent has the final authority to approve or disapprove any information in whatever form on any such system-related websites.

b. School System Official Website

The superintendent or designee has editorial control and responsibility for the content of the school system official website. The superintendent shall appoint a staff member to serve as the web manager/editor of the system website.

c. Individual School Websites

Each school will be provided with the resources and support to publish its own website. All system-related websites will be housed on the system web server or designated external host. Each principal has editorial control and responsibility for the content of his or her individual school's official website, subject to review of the superintendent or designee. The principal may appoint a staff member to serve as the web manager of the school's website and a website committee to advise the web manager and principal regarding the content of the school's website. Individual school websites must comply with the additional guidelines provided below.

d. Teacher and Student Websites

Each teacher has editorial control over and responsibility for the content of his or her official website and for the content of his or her students' authorized websites, subject to review by the principal, the superintendent, and the board. With the knowledge and written consent of a student's parent or guardian, a teacher may allow a student to create a website within or linked from a school's or teacher's website only for the following

instructional purposes: (1) to teach a student how to create or maintain a website or (2) to facilitate a student's work on school assignments or research projects. No student pages may be posted or made accessible to the general public until approved by the principal or designee.

e. Personal Websites

The school system is not responsible for personal websites or web pages created or maintained by members of the board of education, students, employees, parents, groups, or organizations. Personal websites or web pages are not considered system-related websites or web pages and are not covered by the provisions of this policy. (For further information regarding personal websites, see policy 7335, Employee Use of Social Media, and policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use.)

The superintendent may use any means available to request the removal of personal websites or web pages that substantially disrupt the school environment or that utilize school system or individual school names, logos, or trademarks without permission.

3. Website Appearance and Evaluation

Web page content must be kept current and be maintained regularly. All system-related websites must include the name of the web page author, the date produced or revised, and the e-mail address of the author. The superintendent or designee (for the official system website) and the principal or designee (for individual school websites) must review, proof, and evaluate all system-related websites on at least a quarterly basis.

4. Copyright Laws

No information or graphics may be posted on websites in violation of any copyright laws or policy 3230/7330, Copyright Compliance. Copyright permission must be obtained for the use of any copyrighted material unless use is permitted as "fair use" under federal law. The superintendent or designee and each principal or designee is responsible for maintaining copies of permission granted for the use of copyrighted material.

5. Links

a. Internal Links

Each page of a system-related website must include a reference and hyperlink to the school system official website home page. In addition, all system-related websites must include a link to this policy and to policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use.

b. External Links

The superintendent and designee have editorial control over and responsibility for the linking of a system-related website to other sites on the Internet that are appropriate to the mission of the school system. Links to external sites (including externally hosted teacher classroom sites) must be approved by the principal or designee and are subject to written guidelines approved by the superintendent or designee. If required, web managers must obtain permission from external websites before links are established from any system-related website to external websites. To the extent possible, school personnel shall determine the extent to which a secondary site is linked to other sites on the Internet and whether such sites are appropriate for access through the school system websites. Web managers shall periodically check external links for accuracy and appropriateness of content. School employees must report any inappropriate links to the web manager.

Since the school system cannot control the content of other sites on the Internet and their linkages, the following disclaimer statement must be inserted in a prominent position on the official system website, on each school's web page and on other system-related websites that contain links to other websites or web pages that are not system-related websites:

The school system retains control over what links will be placed on system-related websites; however, the linked sites themselves are not under the control of the school system, its agents, or its employees. The school system is not responsible for the contents of any linked site, any link contained in a linked site, or any changes or updates to such sites. The school system provides links as a convenience, and the inclusion of any link does not imply endorsement of the site by the school system. The school system reserves the right to remove or restrict any links.

c. Links to Personal Pages

School websites or web pages may contain links to personal web pages of students or employees or lists of personal web pages only when such pages are purely for instructional use, and subject to written guidelines approved by the principal and/or the superintendent or designee.

6. Behavior Standards

When using the Internet, employees and students are responsible for understanding and complying with board policies and administrative regulations, including policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use; student behavior policies in the

4300 series; and policy 7300, Staff Responsibilities.

7. Accessibility of Website and Web Content

The web manager/editor, in consultation with the technology director, shall ensure that the school system website and web content meet required standards to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

C. GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL WEBSITES

Each school may promote itself by publishing an official school web page on the Internet only via the official school system website. In addition to the standards above, the following standards apply to individual school websites.

1. The content of school web pages must be approved by the school principal prior to uploading.
2. The safety of students and employees must be considered when constructing school web pages. To protect the safety of students and employees, the following precautions must be taken:
 - a. home addresses or telephone numbers will not be listed;
 - b. student e-mail addresses will not be listed;
 - c. photographs of students and student work will be used only with appropriate parental permission and/or as approved for release as directory information under policy 4700, Student Records, and will include only the student's name, class or grade level, and information directly related to the photograph or student work, such as awards given or the activity or project depicted.

The principal or designee is responsible for maintaining records of permission granted for the release of information. The principal should implement other safety precautions, as necessary, to be followed when constructing web pages.

3. To protect a student's rights in his or her intellectual property, if a school or teacher publishes a student's work, a disclaimer should be provided indicating the terms of redistribution or reuse.
4. Schools must provide contact information and other general information about the school on the school website, including the school's name, phone number, fax number, grade levels, and address, the principal's name, and the e-mail addresses of the school administrative team.
5. Graphics used on school websites must be appropriate to the school and should be

of a size that will download quickly into a web browser.

6. Schools must keep information presented on their school's web page current, accurate, and grammatically correct.
7. The principal or designee must approve all revisions and additions to the school website.
8. Failure to comply with these guidelines or the standards of this policy, as determined by the superintendent or designee, may result in the removal of a school's web page from the Internet.

D. DISTRICT DISCLAIMER

The disclaimer below shall appear on all system and school web sites. The disclaimer should be listed as a link on the district web site and on all school sites. The text of the link shall say "Terms of Use."

Terms of Use

Acceptance of terms

The following are terms of a legal agreement between you and Watauga County School System ("WCS"). By accessing, browsing, and/or using this site ("Site"), you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and agree to be bound by these terms and to comply with all applicable laws and regulations. If you do not agree to these terms, do not use this site.

Limitation of Liability

While WCS uses reasonable efforts to include accurate and up-to-date information on this web site, WCS makes no warranties or representations as to its accuracy. WCS assumes no liability or responsibility for any typographical or other errors or omissions in any content on this site. Because of the unpredictable nature of the Internet, WCS cannot be responsible for the content of pages not directly connected to this web site.

Copyright

All materials published on district and school web sites are the property of WCS, or the author, and are protected by copyright. WCS cannot act as an agent for the authors of specific materials. Mirroring, or duplicating, any content on WCS web pages or sites on other servers is not permitted.

Privacy

Watauga County Schools adheres to all local, state, and federal laws and guidelines pertaining to students' right to privacy. No personally identifiable student or employee information will be shared with any outside persons, groups, or organizations without specific written permission from the person(s) involved.

Legal References: U.S. Const. Amend. I; Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12131 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2522; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; 17 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.*; G.S. 115C-325(e) (applicable to career status teachers), -325.4 (applicable to non-career status teachers); 168A-7

Cross References: Curriculum and Instructional Guides (policy 3115), Technology in the Educational Program (policy 3220), Technology Responsible Use (policy 3225/4312/7320), Copyright Compliance (policy 3230/7330), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Student Records (policy 4700), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Employee Use of Social Media (policy 7335), Personnel Files (policy 7820)

Other Resources: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1, Level AA, available at <https://perma.cc/UB8A-GG2F>

Adopted: June 8, 2015

Replaces: Policy 4.02.60, Publication of Materials on the Internet

Revised: January 15, 2018; August 12, 2020 (Legal references only); April 15, 2025; DATE

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) recognizes that concussions and other head injuries may be serious and potentially life threatening and that such injuries may result in serious consequences later in life if managed improperly. The board is committed to practices that reduce the potential for short-term or long-term effects from such injuries. In support of this commitment, the board directs school employees to comply with the concussion safety rules for interscholastic athletic competition adopted by the State Board of Education as required by G.S. 115C-407.57 and initially established in the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act of 2011. The superintendent or designee shall develop plans consistent with state requirements and shall implement and monitor compliance with this policy. The superintendent is authorized to investigate the use of baseline testing for student-athletes and require that student-athletes undergo such testing prior to their participation in any interscholastic athletic competition.

A. DEFINITION OF CONCUSSION

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct or indirect impact to the head that results in disruption of normal brain function, which may or may not result in a loss of consciousness.

B. CONCUSSION EDUCATION VIDEO FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETES

All high school student-athletes and parents of high school student-athletes must view the CrashCourse concussion education video prior to each sport season.

C. SCHOOL HEAD INJURY INFORMATION SHEET

Each year, all coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, first responders, volunteers, student-athletes, and parents of student-athletes must be provided with a concussion and head injury information sheet that meets the requirements of the State Board. Before any student, school employee, volunteer, or first responder will be allowed to participate in interscholastic athletic activities, including tryouts, practices, or competitions, he or she must sign the head injury information sheet and return it to the coach. Parents also must sign the sheet and return it to the coach before their children may participate in any interscholastic athletic activity. The principal of each school shall ensure that a complete and accurate record of the returned signed sheets is maintained in accordance with law and State Board policy.

D. REMOVAL FROM AND RETURN TO PLAY

Any student-athlete who is exhibiting signs or symptoms consistent with a concussion must be removed from athletic activity immediately. Further, the student-athlete must not be allowed to return to play or practice that day or on any subsequent day until he or she has been evaluated and has received written clearance for participation that complies with the requirements of G.S. 115C-407.57 and any other applicable law or State Board policy or rule.

E. RETURN TO LEARNING

The superintendent or designee shall develop a plan that meets all the requirements of the State Board of Education for addressing the needs of students in grades pre-K through 12 who suffer concussions. The superintendent or designee shall also arrange for information and professional development to be provided annually to all teachers and other school personnel on return-to-learn issues and other concerns related to concussion and brain injuries. Parents and students must be offered the opportunity annually to provide information related to any head injury or concussion the student may have incurred during the past year on the health history and emergency medical information update form.

F. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

Each principal or designee shall develop a venue-specific emergency action plan to respond to serious medical injuries and acute medical conditions in which the condition of the injured student may deteriorate rapidly. All such plans must include a delineation of roles, methods of communication, available emergency equipment, and a plan for emergency transport. The plans must be (1) in writing, (2) reviewed by an athletic trainer who is licensed in North Carolina, (3) approved by the principal if developed by a designee, (4) distributed, posted, reviewed, and rehearsed in accordance with G.S. 115C-407.58, and (5) compliant with any other requirements of state law and State Board policy or rules.

G. ATHLETIC TRAINERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS

Each high school principal shall designate at least one licensed athletic trainer or first responder who meets the requirements of state law and State Board of Education policy. The principal shall monitor each athletic trainer's or first responder's compliance with the duties assigned to the position by the State Board and any additional duties assigned by the superintendent or designee, including, but not limited to, attendance at football games and practices and wrestling matches and tournaments and compliance with all applicable training and certification requirements.

To the extent funding and resources are available, the superintendent shall work toward having a licensed athletic trainer or first responder available for all school practices and games of all high school and middle school sports.

H. RECORD KEEPING

The superintendent shall require each principal to maintain complete and accurate records of actions taken in his or her school to comply with this policy and applicable legal authority. Records shall include accounts of any education or training as may be required by law or State Board of Education policy or rules.

The superintendent's annual report to the board on compliance with laws and policies related to student wellness shall include a report on the system's compliance with laws and policies related to concussions and head injuries. (See subsection F.4 of policy 6140, Student Wellness.)

Legal References: G.S. 90 art 34; 115C-12(23), 407.55, -407.57, -407.58, -407.70; S.L. 2011-147; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0205, .0206; State Board of Education Policies ATHL-000, ATHL-003, SHLT-001; N.C. High School Athletic Association Handbook, available at <https://www.nchsaa.org/handbook>

Cross References: Student Wellness (policy 6140)

Other Resources: Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related TBI Research Center at UNC website <https://gfellerwallerlaw.unc.edu/>; *Report to the North Carolina General Assembly: Study of Sports Injuries at Middle School and High School Levels*, N.C. Department of Public Instruction (2011), available at <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/16567>

Adopted: November 10, 2014

Revised: January 28, 2016; August 14, 2017; January 13, 2020 (Legal references only); October 5, 2020; June 28, 2021 (Legal references only); December 12, 2022 (Legal references only); July 11, 2024; DATE

ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Policy Code: 6310

The superintendent shall establish a student transportation services program consistent with the goals of the Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") established in policy 6300, Goals of Student Transportation Services, and with the requirements set forth in state and federal laws and regulations and board policies in the 6300 series. School personnel, volunteers, and private carriers are expected to be familiar with all duties imposed by law, board policy, or the superintendent.

The superintendent or designee shall develop all rules and regulations necessary to implement the board policies in the 6300 series. Specific duties related to providing student transportation services ~~should~~shall be included in appropriate job descriptions.

The superintendent shall ensure that a copy of all job descriptions, rules, regulations, and policies related to the safe, orderly, and efficient operation of the student transportation services program are posted on the school system website as required by the State Board of Education.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-241, -242, -244 to -246, -248; 16 N.C.A.C. 6B .0103

Cross References: ~~Goals of Student Transportation Services policies~~ (policy 6300 series)

Adopted: April 11, 2016

Revised: DATE

RETIREMENT

Policy Code:

7910

Retirement will be in accordance with the Teacher's and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina. No employee will be required to retire at any age.

Any employee who plans to retire must notify the human resources department at least 120 days prior to his or her intended retirement date, except in cases in which health or other extenuating circumstances make shorter notice necessary.

If an employee's retirement allowance is subject to an adjustment pursuant to the contribution-based benefit cap for retirement under G.S. 135-5(a3), the board will not be responsible for restoring the employee's retirement allowance to the pre-cap amount unless the board has specified in writing in the employee's contract that the board will restore the employee's retirement allowance.

Legal References: 29 U.S.C. 621-634; G.S. 135, art. 1; G.S. 135-4 and -5

Adopted: January 11, 2016

Revised: DATE