



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

August 2025-2026

1621 5th Ave. North Bessemer, AL 35020

205-432-3000

Mr. Michael Turner,
Superintendent of Schools

Core Standards for Ethical Conduct

Professional Conduct: Educators should follow professional standards, encourage colleagues, and participate in professional development. Unethical conduct includes harassment, misuse of test materials, inappropriate language, physical altercations, and failing to supervise students.

Trustworthiness: Educators must be honest and have integrity in their professional dealings.

Unlawful Acts: Educators must obey all federal, state, and local laws.

Teacher/Student Relationship: Educators must maintain professional relationships with students and nurture their potential.

Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Use: Educators should refrain from using alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs during professional practice and educate students on substance abuse.

Public Funds and Property: Educators entrusted with public funds and property must be honest and responsible.

Remunerative Conduct: Educators should maintain integrity when accepting gifts, gratuities, or other compensation.

Confidentiality: Educators must maintain the confidentiality of student and staff information.

Abandonment of Contract: Educators must fulfill the terms of their contracts and cannot abandon them without a formal release from their employer.

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MISSION

Educating and empowering our students to successfully compete
in a global society.

VISION

The vision of Bessemer City Schools is to serve as a model of
excellence by preparing all students with the knowledge, skills,
and abilities to be successful in their unique endeavors.

CORE BELIEFS

- Student-Centered Focus
- High Expectations
- Collaborative Relationships
- Integrity
- Respect for All
- Accountability for All
- Diversity and Inclusivity

INTRODUCTION

This employee handbook provides an overview of personnel policies, practices, and procedures observed in the Bessemer City Schools. The right is retained to modify or alter these procedures and policies in accordance with applicable statutes and whenever it is deemed to be in the best interest of the system.

This handbook is not an employment contract. The information contained herein is intended to provide guidance and intended for general information to keep you informed about your benefits and obligations. Official policies are contained in the Board of Education Policy Manual, which is available for reference in all schools, departments and online. If there is a conflict between a Board policy and this handbook, the board policy will apply.

All forms associated with Human Resources or Payroll/Benefits information can be found online at: www.bessk12.org or with your local bookkeeper.

Human Resources related questions must be addressed to the Human Resources Department. Payroll questions must be addressed to the Finance Department. To contact either department, call 432-3000 or email hr@bessk12.org with Human Resources questions.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

The Bessemer City Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in any of its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies:

Dr. Eric James, Director of Federal Programs

Phone: 205.432.3004 Email: erjames@bessk12.org

Dr. Curt R. Green, Director of Human Resources

Phone: 205.432.3009 Email: cgreen@bessk12.org

Dr. Shayla McCray, Director of Student Services

Phone: 205.432.3007 Email: smccray@bessk12.org

Mr. Iverson Dudley, Director of Career Technical Education

Phone: 205.432.3005 Email: idudley@bessk12.org

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES & PROCEDURES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Bessemer City Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer. Human Resources and payroll decisions will be made without regard to factors or considerations prohibited by federal or state law (as such laws may from time to time be amended), including but not limited to race, gender, age, disability, national origin, citizenship, genetic makeup and religious preference. Subject to the limitations set forth in the Policy Manual, the general complaint policy may be used to present any complaint alleging unlawful discrimination or harassment. Inquiries regarding compliance and complaint procedures can be directed to:

Dr. Eric James, Director of Federal Programs

Bessemer City Schools

1621 5th Ave. North

Bessemer, AL 35020

Phone: 205.432.3004 Email: erjames@besskl2.org

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENT

All applicants must submit an online application via HireTrue platform, all required documents, and a copy of their educational credential. An official transcript and a teaching certificate must also be submitted, if applying for a certified position. Upon recommendation to hire, all employees of the Bessemer City Board of Education are subject to a background check through the State Department of Education and are required to be e-verified through the Department of Homeland Security.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AND PROCEDURES

In addition to requirements established by the State Board of Education and the pertinent job description, professional employees must hold a degree from an accredited college or university and hold a current, valid and properly endorsed Alabama Teacher's Certificate, which will be maintained in their Human Resources file.

A teacher who has completed the certification process, but has not received the certificate, may be employed pending verification of the initiation of the certification process from the State Department of Education. The Human Resources Department will work closely with each teacher to expedite the process to obtain the certificate as soon as possible; however, it is ***ultimately the teacher's responsibility to ensure they obtain and maintain the proper certification for their position.***

If a teacher earns a higher degree from a regionally accredited institution recognized by the State Department, that merits increased compensation under the approved salary schedule, the salary increase will become effective following verification of the new degree or additional hours with an official transcript presented to the Human Resources office.

Professional Certification Reminders:

It is ultimately the employee's responsibility to maintain and renew a certificate. The following information is based on the system's understanding of the state's certification requirements and is provided for informational purposes only. Employees are responsible for independently verifying the current requirements to obtain or maintain their certificate.

- Any Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field (PCTF) & Professional Certificate in Career & Technical Teaching Field (PCCT) applications must be received in the Teacher Certification Office at the Alabama Department of Education by October 1st of the application year. To request the 1st PCTF, the teacher must have already passed the Praxis subject area test by September 1st.
- Any first year Interim Employment Certificate (IEC) and Provisional Certificate in Library Media or School Counseling (PCLS) applications for the current school year must be received in the Teacher Certification Office at the Alabama Department of Education each application year within four scholastic school years.
- An individual may not be employed more than three years while holding a PCTF, IEC, PRE or any combination thereof.
- If an employee is renewing an instructional leader/administrative certificate that expires at the end of the five-year period, he or she is currently required to earn 5 PLU's (Professional Learning Units).
- If an employee is renewing a teaching certificate that expires at the end of the five-year period, he or she is currently required to earn 5 CEU's (50 hours of professional development).

WORK VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

Verification of prior work experience will be obtained through the application, interview and Teacher Retirement System of Alabama. All newly hired employees are responsible for providing proper documentation of previous experience for purposes of placement on the salary schedule within **90 days of hire**.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICIES

It is the policy of the Bessemer City Board of Education that the use of alcohol and other drugs and the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of illicit drugs is prohibited. The Board also requires that all employees report to work without any alcohol or illegal or mind altering substances in their system.

All transportation personnel under the regulations of the United States Department of Transportation will be drug tested in accordance with state and federal law. If an employee holding a Commercial Driver's License tests positively during a random drug screening, he/she may be subject to immediate termination or enrollment and treatment in an appropriate Substance Abuse Program. If termination is not recommended by the Superintendent, the employee must meet requirements specified by federal law and the Substance Abuse evaluator to be eligible to return to duty. The employee will be placed on administrative leave until the Substance Abuse evaluator reinstates eligibility to return to work and all other DOT requirements are met to return to work.

EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Punctual, regular attendance is an essential job function of every job and position, and employees are expected to report to work when scheduled to work and to remain at work each working day.

EMPLOYEE ABSENCES – Kelly Education / Frontline

When an employee needs to be absent from work, some are required to enter absences in Frontline and all other employees must notify their immediate supervisor and building administrator. Please verify with the building administrator/supervisor which employee groups must utilize the Frontline service. It is the employee's responsibility to register an absence when he/she will not be reporting to work or notify the building administrator/supervisor of the absence. Additional questions can be addressed to LaKindra Harkins at 205-432-3014 or email, lharkins@bessk12.org in the Human Resources Office. In the event an employee must leave work in the middle of the day, he or she must notify an administrator who will work with you to arrange coverage and add to Frontline accordingly.

In the event of an emergency or incapacity that makes advance notice impractical, employees must notify the Principal of their absence as early as possible. Except as otherwise provided or permitted, an employee who is absent from work without approved leave will be considered absent without leave in violation of Board policy and subject to appropriate disciplinary measures. Employees who are approved for paid leave or absences will be paid at the regular daily rate of pay; however, a day of

paid leave or absence will not be counted as a day worked for the purposes of computing overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Pay will be reduced on a pro rata basis for leaves or absences not covered by sick, vacation, personal, or other appropriate form of paid leave. The continuation of benefits during an approved absence is subject to the provisions of the particular benefit policy or plan. **An employee who is absent for 5 or more consecutive workdays without any contact with the system may be charged with abandoning his/her position.** Except as otherwise authorized under Board policy, employees may be absent from work only in the following circumstances:

SICK LEAVE

State laws for sick leave for employees of local boards of education are contained in Title 16, Chapter 1, Section 16-1-18.1 of the Code of Alabama (last amended by Act No. 2012-376). This law also covers two-year postsecondary institutions and some other agencies. In addition to sick leave, this law includes provisions for on-the-job injury, vacations, and leaves of absences. A summary of the sick leave provisions of this law follows:

1. The law covers full-time employees and adult bus drivers.
2. An employee earns one day per month of employment.
3. An employee is allowed to accumulate an unlimited number of sick leave days.
4. An employee may transfer earned and unused sick leave from one employer (as defined by this law to include four year public institutions of higher learning) to another.
5. Sick leave is defined as the absence from duty by an employee as a result of any of the following:
 - a) Personal illness or doctor's quarantine.
 - b) Incapacitating personal injury.
 - c) Attendance upon an ill member of the employee's immediate family (parent, spouse, child, foster child currently in the care and custody of the employee, sibling); or an individual with a close personal tie.
 - d) Death in the family of the employee (parent, spouse, child, sibling, parent-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew, niece, grandchild, grandparent, uncle or aunt).
 - e) Death, injury, or sickness of another person who has unusually strong personal ties to the employee, such as a person who stood in loco parentis.

PERSONAL LEAVE

State laws for personal leave for employees of local boards of education are contained in Title 16, Chapter 8, Section 16-8-26 of the Code of Alabama (last amended by Act No. 97-444). This law also covers two-year postsecondary institutions and certain other agencies. A summary of the provisions of this law follows:

1. This law covers any certificated employee and those support employees who work an average of at least 20 hours a week.
2. A board of education may grant up to 5 days, but not less than 2 days, of personal leave each year.
3. An employee is entitled to full pay for at least two of the personal leave days used during the scholastic year.
4. A board of education may decide to grant additional personal leave days (not to exceed 5 days total) and may decide whether additional personal leave days are at full pay, partial pay, or without pay.
5. Personal leave is noncumulative (unused days do not carry-forward to the next school year).
6. A teacher or support employee may convert unused personal leave to sick leave at the end of the school year if the unused personal leave days are funded (full pay or partial pay) by state or local funding.
7. A teacher may choose to be paid at the end of the school year for unused personal leave days at the same daily rate paid to substitute teachers if the unused personal leave days are funded (full pay or partial pay) by state or local funding.
8. A teacher or support employee cannot be required to disclose their reasons for requesting personal leave.

SICK LEAVE BANK

State laws for sick leave banks for employees of local boards of education are contained in Title 16, Chapter 22, Section 16-22-9 of the Code of Alabama (last amended by Act No. 99-581). Act No. 99-581 made significant changes in the operation of sick leave banks. Local boards of education operating sick leave banks prior to the 1999 law are required to change their policies regarding sick leave banks in order to comply with the 1999 law. This law also covers two-year postsecondary institutions and other agencies. In addition to sick leave banks, this law includes provisions for the operation of catastrophic sick leave. A summary of the sick leave bank provisions of this law follows:

1. The law covers full-time and part-time employees of local boards of education, Alabama Institute of Deaf and Blind, Department of Youth Services School District, Alabama School of Fine Arts, Alabama High School of Mathematics and Science, two-year postsecondary institutions, and Alabama A& M University.
2. Upon the request 10% or more of its full-time certificated and full-time support

personnel, a local board of education will establish a sick leave bank plan for each of the two groups either jointly or separately.

3. Employees of the local board of education will vote by secret ballot to determine whether to have a joint sick leave bank or to have separate sick leave banks.
4. Each sick leave bank will have a sick leave bank committee consisting of five employees.
5. The local superintendent will appoint an employee (to be approved by the local board of education) to serve as one sick leave bank committee member.
6. The members of each sick leave bank will elect (by secret ballot at the beginning of each scholastic year) four of its members to serve a one-year term on the sick leave bank committee. No member can serve on the committee for longer than 5 years.
7. The sick leave bank committee will write the guidelines for the operation of the sick leave bank.
8. The sick leave bank committee may adopt appropriate and beneficial guidelines in addition to the regulations contained in Section 16-22-9, if the additional guidelines do not conflict with this section of the law.
9. The guidelines developed by the sick leave bank committee must contain a provision whether or not to allow employees, who have previously failed or refused to join the sick leave bank, the option to join the sick leave bank upon the deposit of the prerequisite number of sick leave days.
10. The guidelines developed by the sick leave bank committee must establish an equal number of sick leave days (not to exceed five days) for deposit by each participating employee in order to become a member of the sick leave bank.
11. The guidelines developed by the sick leave bank committee are to be approved by a secret ballot vote of the participating members of the sick leave bank.
12. The sick leave bank committee will develop the forms and administrative procedures for the sick leave bank.
13. The sick leave bank committee will investigate any alleged abuse of the sick leave bank.
14. Sick leave days can only be used for the reasons stated in Section 16-1-18.1.
15. Employee membership in the sick leave bank is voluntary.
16. The revised law contains a provision that allows a new employee of a local board of education to join the sick leave bank at the beginning of employment. If the new employee does not have the required number of sick leave days to join the sick leave bank, the appropriate number of sick leave days will be credited (advanced) to the new employee as the deposit to join the sick leave bank. (The credit balance will be reduced by one day each month as the sick leave days are earned by the employee. After the credit balance is reduced to zero, sick leave days earned by the employee will be used to repay any outstanding loan to the sick leave bank.)
17. A participating member of a sick leave bank whose sick leave has been exhausted may borrow days from the sick leave bank.
18. An employee cannot owe more than 15 days to the sick leave bank, unless over 50

percent of the members of the sick leave bank vote to extend the limit.

19. Days are to be repaid to the sick leave bank by the borrowing member monthly, as the sick leave day is earned each month by the employee.
20. Upon the resignation or termination of an employee who owes days to the sick leave bank, the value for each of the owed days will be deducted from the final paycheck at the employee's current daily rate of pay.
21. Upon the transfer of a sick leave bank member, the days the employee has on deposit in the sick leave bank are withdrawn from the bank and transferred with the employee.
22. Upon the retirement of a sick leave bank member, the days the employee has on deposit in the sick leave bank are withdrawn from the bank and made accessible for retirement credit.

CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE

State laws for catastrophic sick leave for employees of local boards of education are contained in Title 16, Chapter 22, Section 16-22-9 of the Code of Alabama (last amended by Act No. 99-581). This law also covers two-year postsecondary institutions and other agencies. In addition to catastrophic sick leave, this law includes provisions for the operation of sick leave banks. A summary of the catastrophic sick leave provisions of this law follows:

1. The law covers full-time and part-time employees of local boards of education, Alabama Institute of Deaf and Blind, Department of Youth Services School District, Alabama School of Fine Arts, Alabama High School of Mathematics and Science, two-year postsecondary institutions, and Alabama A& M University.
2. An employee must be a member of a sick leave bank to donate or receive catastrophic sick leave days.
3. A catastrophic illness is defined as “Any illness, injury, or pregnancy or medical condition related to childbirth, certified by a licensed physician which causes the employee to be absent from work for an extended period of time.”
4. Each sick leave bank committee is responsible for writing guidelines and administrative procedures for catastrophic sick leave.
5. An employee must exhaust all sick and personal leave days before using catastrophic sick leave days.
6. An employee must borrow and utilize days from the sick leave bank (up to a maximum of 15 days) before being eligible to use catastrophic sick leave days.
7. Donated catastrophic sick leave may be used to repay days owed to a sick leave bank.
8. Sick and personal leave days earned while the employee is utilizing catastrophic sick leave days must be exhausted before continuing the use of catastrophic sick leave days.
9. An employee may use catastrophic sick leave days for a catastrophic illness for himself or herself or for the following covered persons: parent, spouse, child, foster child

currently in the custody and care of the employee, sibling, or an individual with a close personal tie.

10. A sick leave bank member may donate a specific number of days (not to exceed 30 sick leave days) to a sick leave bank for a specific employee to use against a catastrophic illness.

11. The employee donating sick leave for a catastrophic illness does not have to be a member of the same sick leave bank as the recipient employee.

12. The employee donating sick leave for a catastrophic illness cannot be required to donate a minimum number of days.

13. The donated catastrophic sick leave days revert to the donating employee only if the recipient employee does not use all of the donated days.

14. The sick leave bank committee will adopt guidelines for reverting unused donated days to the employees who donated the days.

ON THE JOB INJURY LEAVE

On-the-Job Injury State laws for on-the-job injury for employees of local boards of education are contained in Title 16, Chapter 1, Section 16-1-18.1 of the Code of Alabama (last amended by Act No. 2001-671). This law also covers two-year postsecondary institutions and some other agencies. In addition to on-the-job injury, this law includes provisions for sick leave, vacations, and leaves of absences. A summary of the on-the-job injury provisions of this law follows:

1. The law covers full-time employees and adult bus drivers.

2. An on-the-job injury is any accident or injury to the employee occurring during the performance of duties (or when directed or requested by the employer to be on the property of the employer), which prevents the employee from working or returning to his or her job.

3. Within **5 days** after occurrence of the injury, the employee must make proper notification of the injury to the local superintendent of education (or school principal, if applicable) in accordance with the notification procedures of the local board of education.

4. In the event the employee is clinically unable to report the injury, the notification procedures of the local board of education shall permit the reporting of the injury by another person who is reasonably knowledgeable to make the notification of the injury.

5. The local board of education will establish procedures and forms for notification of on-the-job injuries.

6. Within 30 calendar days of notification of the injury, the local superintendent of education (or designee) will inform the employee injured on the job about the local board of education's approved policies for on-the-job injuries and the employee's rights to request reimbursement from the State Board of Adjustment.

7. The local board of education may require medical certification from the employee's physician that the employee was injured and cannot return to work as a result of the injury.

8. The local superintendent of education may require a second opinion from another physician at the expense of the local board of education.
9. The local board of education may require a statement from the physician that there is a reasonable expectation that the employee will be able to return to work.
10. If the local superintendent of education determines that the employee has been injured on the job and cannot return to work as a result of the injury, the employee's salary and benefits will continue up to 90 working days consistent with the employee's injury and absence from work resulting from the injury.
11. Sick leave days will not be deducted for the days the employee is paid for an absence approved for on-the-job injury pay.
12. A local board of education may adopt a policy to extend the 90-day period for on-the-job injuries.
13. A local board of education may request reimbursement for the cost of substitutes for the employee injured on the job. The reimbursement request is limited to 90 days for each approved on-the-job injury at the daily substitute rate (currently \$60) funded in the annual budget act. The State Department of Education will reimburse the local board of education if the Legislature provides funds for the reimbursement in the annual budget act.
14. The employee may file for reimbursement with the State Board of Adjustment for unreimbursed medical expenses and costs incurred as a result of an on-the-job injury. Reimbursement to the employee shall be determined by the Board of Adjustment's policies, rules, and regulations.

LEAVES OF ABSENCES

State laws for paid leaves of absences for employees of local boards of education are contained in Title 16, Chapter 1, Section 16-1-18.1 of the Code of Alabama (last amended by Act No. 2001- 671). This law also covers two-year postsecondary institutions and some other agencies. In addition to paid leaves of absences, this law includes provisions for sick leave, vacations, and on-the-job injury. Provisions for unpaid leaves of absences for teachers are contained in Title 16, Chapter 24C, Section 16-24C-13 of the Code of Alabama. A summary of the provisions of these laws for leaves of absences follows:

1. Full-time employees and adult bus drivers may be paid for leaves of absences.
2. The local board of education may provide paid leaves of absences for training while schools are in or out of session.
3. The local board of education may provide paid leaves of absences when approved by the State Board of Education as beneficial to the state's educational objectives.
4. The local board of education may provide a paid leave of absence when the employee is absent for an unavoidable cause (other than sickness) when school is in session.
5. The pay for an absence resulting from an unavoidable cause other than sickness cannot be for a longer time than one week during a scholastic year.

6. The local board of education may grant an unpaid leave of absence for good cause to a teacher for a period of one year.
7. The local board of education may extend the unpaid leave of absence for a valid reason to the teacher for one additional year.
8. The unpaid leave of absence granted by the local board of education will not impair the continuing service status of the teacher.

VACATION LEAVE

State laws for paid vacations for employees of local boards of education are contained in Title 16, Chapter 1, Section 16-1-18.1 of the Code of Alabama (last amended by Act No. 2001-671). This law also covers two-year postsecondary institutions and some other agencies. In addition to paid vacations, this law includes provisions for sick leave, paid leaves of absences, and on-the-job injury. A summary of the vacation leave provisions of this law follows:

1. The law covers full-time employees and adult bus drivers.
2. The local board of education may adopt policies and procedures to provide paid vacations to employees.

Twelve-month full-time employees are eligible for paid vacation as follows:

- a. A proportionate number of ten (10) vacation days will be awarded as when the eligible employee begins work at the beginning of a scholastic year but has not yet been employed by the Board for a full scholastic year:

<u>Initial Employment (between)</u>	<u>Number of Vacation Days</u>
July 1 and July 14	10 (.83/month)

- b. At the anniversary of the 15th year you will accumulate a proportionate of 15 vacation days.

Accrual and Accumulation of Vacation Time - Twelve month employees may carry over unused vacation days from fiscal year to fiscal year, but no employee may accrue more than of thirty (30) vacation days. Any accrued but unused vacation days in excess of thirty (30) will be forfeited after the close of business on June 30 of each year. Vacation days may not be bought, sold, or donated.

Upon an employee's effective date of retirement, resignation, or death, the employee will be paid at the employee's daily rate of pay for up to forty-five (45) accrued, but unused vacation days. This policy applies to all applicable employees unless otherwise

specified by contract.

Vacations must be scheduled with the knowledge and approval of the employee's supervisor. Vacation leave in excess of five (5) consecutive days must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

MILITARY LEAVE

State law for paid military leave for employees of local boards of education is contained in Title 31, Chapter 2, Section 31-2-13 of the Code of Alabama.

1. Employees are provided pay for time away from work for federal military leave for no more than 168 working hours per calendar year.
2. Employees are provided pay for time away from work for state military leave (called by the Governor to duty in the active service of the state) for no more than 168 working hours at any one time.
3. Employees on paid or unpaid military leave continue to accumulate service credit for any seniority, status, and rate of pay the employee would have obtained had the employee not taken military leave.

MILITARY LEAVE DIFFERENTIAL PAY

State law provides for military leave differential pay for employees of local boards of education called into active service in the war on terrorism.

An employee called into active service of the U. S. armed forces during the war on terrorism (which began September 11, 2001) is entitled to compensation from the local board of education if the basic pay for active military service is less than the salary the employee would receive if still working for the board.

For purposing of calculating the military leave differential pay, the board salary includes supplements, pay raises, and salary schedule step increases the employee would receive if still working for the board

Military leave differential pay is subject to state and federal tax withholdings but not employer or employee FICA or TRS matching.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

Employees who are eligible under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) may take leave for up to 12 work weeks during a calendar year for any one or more of the following reasons:

1. The birth of the employee's child, and to care for the newborn child during the first year after the birth;
2. The placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care, and to care for the newly placed child during the first year after the placement;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent (but not for parent-in-law), who has a serious health condition; or
4. Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of his/her job.

From the inception of the qualifying event, the 12-week FMLA leave entitlement is to be charged concurrently with accumulated sick leave, annual leave or leave without pay. Any FMLA leave taken for a single condition should be taken all at one time. An employee may take FMLA leave intermittently or by reducing his/her work schedule to care for a family member with a serious health condition or for the employee's own serious health condition, only if medically necessary and with proper medical certification. Any intermittent leave schedule must be approved by his or her supervisor and the superintendent.

The Board may require the employee to provide medical certification of the serious health condition from the attending health care provider. The certification must be submitted within 15 calendar days after the Board requests it. Failure to provide the certification in a timely manner according to policy may result in denial of taking leave and/or discipline up to and including termination. The Board may require, at its discretion and expense, a second medical opinion. If the first and second opinions differ, the Board, at its own expense, may require the binding opinion of a third health care provider approved jointly by the employee and the Board. The Board may require periodic recertification on a reasonable basis. The Board may also require, as a condition of reinstatement, certification from a health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

Spouses who are both employed by the Board are entitled to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks of leave combined (rather than twelve (12) weeks each) for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care. However, if an employee's child or spouse is seriously-ill, both the employee and his or her spouse are each entitled to twelve (12) weeks of leave. Leave may begin prior to birth or placement, as circumstances dictate. An employee's FMLA entitlement to leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care shall expire at the end of the twelve (12) month period beginning on the date of such birth or placement.

During FMLA leave, the Board will maintain the employee's individual group insurance benefits at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee had been

working. Dependent insurance coverage must be paid by the employee. If an employee fails to return to work at the conclusion of the approved leave, he/she may be required to reimburse the Board for the employer's portion of the premium paid on their behalf during the leave.

Should an employee request FMLA-qualifying leave, the employee must give the Board at least thirty days' advance notice of the need for leave when it is foreseeable, such as a birth, placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or planned medical treatment for a serious health condition of the employee or of a family member, and must set forth:

1. The reasons for the requested leave;
2. The anticipated duration of the leave; and
3. The anticipated start of the leave.

If 30 days' notice is not practicable, such as a medical emergency, notice must be given as soon as practicable (which ordinarily means at least verbal notification to the employee's supervisor within 1 or 2 business days of when the need for leave becomes known to the employee). Reasonable efforts must also be made to schedule foreseeable leave so as not to unduly disrupt work operations, subject to the doctor's approval. Failure to give the required notice may delay the taking of FMLA leave until at least 30 days after the date the employee provides notice to the Board of the need for FMLA leave.

To be eligible for the leave, an employee must:

1. Have been employed by the Board for a least one year as of the date leave commences, and
2. Have worked for the Board at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months.

Upon timely return from FMLA-qualifying leave and proper certification, an eligible employee who has not been designated a key employee by the Board, will be restored to his/her last position or an equivalent position with equal pay, benefits, and other conditions and terms of employment.

Employees involved in disciplinary actions from management will still be under those actions after returning to work from FMLA leave of absence.

It is the policy of the Board not to unlawfully interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). It is not the intent of the Board to discharge or discriminate against any person for enforcing the FMLA or opposing practices made unlawful by FMLA; nor is it the Board's intent to discharge or discriminate against any person because of involvement in any proceeding under or related to FMLA. FMLA's enforcement procedures parallel those of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. The FMLA will be enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor's

Wage and Hour Division. If an eligible employee has a complaint regarding an FMLA violation, he or she should report it to the Chief Human Resources Officer.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

Upon completing the Academic Leave of Absence Request Form and approval by the Superintendent, professional leave may be granted for the purpose of attending national, regional, state or local meetings which, in the judgment of the Superintendent, serve the needs and interests of the school system.

COURT LEAVE

Permanent and full-time employees are entitled to regular compensation while performing jury duty (ALA. CODE § 12-8-25), or when the employee is summoned under subpoena or other legal requirement to testify at trial in a court of law, or in administrative proceedings constituted under the statutory authority of the agency conducting the proceeding provided that the testimony is not for a personal litigation matter and is for school-related purposes. Paid leave is not authorized for employees to meet with attorneys, to attend depositions, or to otherwise prepare for legal

An employee must submit the summons for jury duty prior to the date to appear for this service. A copy of the jury certificate that an employee receives from the court at the completion of their jury service must also be submitted. These documents must be given to the payroll bookkeeper at the employee's work location. Failure to provide this documentation will result in utilizing the employee's accumulated personal or vacation to cover the absence. In the event the employee has no accumulated days, a pay deduction equivalent to their daily rate will be docked for each day.

PARENT LEAVE ACT (2025)

(1) Paid Parental Leave. Beginning July 1, 2025, an eligible employee shall be entitled to the following:

- (a) 8 weeks of paid parental leave for a mother in connection with the birth, stillbirth, or miscarriage of her child;
- (b) 2 weeks of paid parental leave for a father in connection with the birth, stillbirth, or miscarriage of his child;
- (c) 8 weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the placement of a child with an eligible employee for adoption, provided the child is three years of age or younger at the time that he or she is placed with the eligible employee.

i. If parents who jointly adopt a child are both eligible employees, one parent shall be entitled to eight weeks of paid parental leave and one parent shall be entitled to two weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the adoption.

(2) Eligible Employee. An employee is eligible for paid parental leave pursuant to Ala. Code § 36-6A-1(3)(b) if the employee is a full-time certified or noncertified employee

of a local education agency and has been employed by or in pay status for any local education agency in this state for at least 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the occurrence of a qualifying event.

(5) Compensation. Paid parental leave under this Rule shall be paid at 100 percent of the eligible employee's base pay, as determined by the employer, and shall remain at 100 percent of the employee's base pay as if the eligible employee worked continuously from the date that paid parental leave commenced until the eligible employee's return to work.

(9) Limitations.

(a) Paid parental leave does not require the employee to exhaust his or her sick leave, annual leave, or any other leave or paid time off prior to use.

(b) An eligible employee may only use paid parental leave in connection with one qualifying event during a 365-day period, even if more than one qualifying event occurs.

(c) After an eligible employee exhausts all available paid parental leave, any additional leave an employee wishes to take shall be taken in accordance with these Rules and his or her employer's policy.

(d) Eligible employees using paid parental leave under this Rule shall follow their employer's customary leave practices that are not contradicted by this Rule. Further, any leave taken under this Rule shall run concurrently with any leave granted under Ala. Code § 25-1-61 and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Grievances:

It is the policy of the Board to reduce, as much as possible, the potential area of grievances; to assure each employee the opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of grievances; to establish and maintain appropriate channels of communication between the staff and administration; and to resolve each grievance at the most immediate level of administration.

It shall be understood that the Board is the final authority in all matters pertaining to grievances unless an employee should desire to exercise proper redress through the courts or utilize appeal procedures as established by law.

With the ultimate objectives of serving the educational welfare of children and youth, the following grievance procedure is designed to accomplish an equitable and expeditious resolution of grievances.

[Reference: Ala. Code §16-12-15; Pickering v. Board of Education, 88 S. Ct. 1731 (1968); Givhan v. Western Line consolidated School 99 S. Ct. 693 (1979)]

Grievances Procedures

Section I – Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide an orderly and systematic method whereby the Board and its employees can resolve differences that might develop between them in an equitable and expeditious manner.

Section II – Definitions

1. Grievance “Grievance” shall mean a claim submitted by an employee of a violation, misinterpretation or inequitable application of local Board policy, local school rules and regulations, or system administrative procedures. The term “grievance” shall apply to matters which fall within the discretionary powers of the Board but shall not apply to areas where the Board has no authority to act.
2. Employee “Employee” shall mean any staff member employed on an annual basis by the Board to perform services, either full or part-time.
3. Immediate Supervisor “Immediate Supervisor” is the employee possessing administrative authority next in rank above any grievant.
4. Days “Days” shall mean working days exclusive of Saturday, Sunday, or official holidays, as established by the school calendar.
5. Parties in Interest Any persons involved in the processing of the grievance. In order to maintain the grievance all parties must adhere to the time lines established for resolution of the grievance.
6. In addition, employees must initiate any grievance within thirty (30) days of an action(s) precipitating the grievance.

Step I – Section III – Informal Procedures

Hopefully, most grievances can be resolved informally and at the most immediate administrative level. With this objective in mind, simple, honest, and straightforward communication is encouraged between the employee, the principal, and the Superintendent. An employee who feels he/she has a grievance should present the matter orally to the immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor to whom the grievance is presented shall hear and attempt to resolve the grievance within five (5) days from the time presented and advise the grievant of the decision within two (2) days thereafter. If the grievance is resolved, or if no further action is needed, the matter is closed.

If an employee feels his or her grievance has not been resolved, he/she may resort to the formal procedure as outlined in Section IV.

Step II – Section IV – Formal Procedure

In order to resolve grievances in the most appropriate fashion and in the shortest period of time possible, each grievance shall start at the most immediate level of

administration (level one in most cases) and progress to the next level until the matter is resolved. If level one does not apply to a particular grievant, such as a supervisor in the central office, that level should be omitted from the process.

The grievance must be filed in writing at each level and the grievant shall indicate with his or her filing at each level who will accompany or represent him/her in any meetings or hearings that might be conducted. The accused party may have same right to representation at the hearing that might be conducted.

All decisions rendered at each level shall be set forth in writing and promptly transmitted to all parties in interest.

All meetings and hearings shall be conducted at a specified time which does not interfere with the employee's work day or the normal operation of the schools. Scheduled meetings or hearings can be changed with mutual consent of the parties in interest. All records of meetings and hearings shall be maintained in confidence; however, this shall not be interpreted to prevent such records from becoming a part of the aggrieved personnel file. Only the Board's official reporter or transcriber may be utilized to record the meeting.

Level One – Principal or Immediate Supervisor

Representation – The grievant must present the grievance, but may be accompanied by a fellow employee.

If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the aggrieved party at the informal level, the aggrieved party may file the grievance in writing with the principal or immediate supervisor. The written communication will be signed by the grievant. The principal or immediate supervisor shall set a time to discuss the grievance that is mutually convenient for the parties in interest and shall seek an amicable solution to the problem. Within five (5) days after receipt of the grievance, the immediate supervisor shall hear the grievance and within (2) days after hearing the grievance shall notify the aggrieved party in writing of the final decision. If the grievance is not resolved by the principal or immediate supervisor to the satisfaction of the aggrieved at level one, the grievant may appeal within the (10) days to the Superintendent.

Step III – Level Two – Superintendent

Representation – The grievant must be present to present the grievance initially, but may be represented by a fellow employee or by anyone of his or her choosing. However, the grievant must be present at all meetings where his or her grievance is discussed.

Within ten (10) days after receipt of the decision at level one, the aggrieved party may

appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall, within a ten (10) day period following the appeal do one or more of the following as he/she may deem appropriate:

1. Review written decisions at level one together with any and all other documentary evidence that may be submitted.
2. Conduct a hearing with all persons whom he/she may choose to invite including the principal parties. The principal parties shall be provided with a list of hearing participants prior to said hearing.
3. Designate such person or persons as he/she deems appropriate to investigate the grievance and to offer recommendations prior to making his or her final decision.

The Superintendent will decide the matter within seven (7) days from the review or hearing and advise the parties concerned within two (2) days thereafter. All parties shall be notified of the decision in writing.

Step IV – Level Three – Board of Education

Representation – The grievant must be present, but may be represented by a fellow employee or by anyone of his or her own choosing.

Within ten (10) days after the receipt of the decision at level two, the aggrieved party may appeal to the Board. The Board shall conduct a hearing which may be an open or closed session as requested by the grievant and all parties having direct interest shall be permitted to attend. All hearings and appeals shall be conducted according to the following procedures:

1. The aggrieved party shall file a written request with the Superintendent for a hearing before the board. The request shall contain a detailed description of the grievance as well as previous action or inaction relative to the grievance.
2. Within fifteen (15) days following the receipt of the written request the Board shall set a time, date, and place for the hearing. All parties in interest shall be given written notice of the time, date, and place for the hearing. After written notice is given, the time, date, and place can be changed only by mutual consent of the Board and the aggrieved party.
3. All parties and the Board shall have the right to legal counsel (at own expense), to present witnesses (at own expense) and documentary evidence and to cross-examine witnesses offered by other parties.
4. All parties shall be given an opportunity to present oral arguments and written briefs within reasonable time limits (30 minutes). All such arguments and briefs shall be made available to the opposing parties.

5. The Board shall reach a decision concerning the grievance within ten (10) days after the hearing and shall convey the decision to all parties in interest within two (2) days.

The decision of the Board of Education shall be final unless the grievant decides to appeal to the courts or to utilize any other duly recognized procedure as established by law.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Board strictly prohibits unlawful discrimination in all of its programs, offices, departments and facilities. Sexual harassment, as defined by law, is a form of unlawful discrimination and will not be tolerated from employees or other persons associated with the Board. All employees are required to participate in “Sexual Harassment” training.

The “Sexual Harassment” training behavior program is available on-line on the system web site throughout the year for all employees to review the contents. Any staff member who is aware of a sexual harassment complaint by a student should report the complaint to his or her principal or supervisor.

- I. Definition of Sexual Harassment - Title IX regulations define sexual harassment to include one or more of the following
 - a. An employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school/school district on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo sexual harassment);
 - b. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school/school district's education program or activity; or
 - c. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, as each of those terms is defined by federal statutes enumerated in the Title IX regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a).
- II. Examples of Prohibited Conduct – The following are examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on individual circumstances:
 - a. Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature, including graphic or derogatory comments, the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, and sexual propositions;

- b. Repeated unwelcome sexual advances, solicitation of sexual activity or sexual contact;
 - c. Unwelcome, inappropriate sexual touching;
 - d. Demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats with regard to an individual's employment status.
- III. Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures Authorized – The Superintendent is authorized and directed to establish, implement and revise more detailed sexual harassment complaint procedures in compliance with Title IX that are designed to provide employees who believe that they are victims of unlawful sexual harassment with a thorough, discreet, and prompt internal procedure for investigating and resolving sexual harassment complaints. The process and procedures will be drafted so as to provide supportive measures, facilitate the gathering of relevant facts and evidence, permit timely assessment of the merits of the complaint, provide an opportunity for informal resolution of complaint where appropriate, eliminate any harassment that is established by the investigation, and prevent any retaliation based upon the filing of the complaint. The procedures will reflect due regard for the legal rights and interests of all persons involved in the complaint, and will be drafted, explained, and implemented so as to comply with federal regulations, and to be understandable and accessible to all population groups and ages.
- IV. Initial Confrontation of Accused Harasser Not Required – An employee who invokes the harassment complaint procedure will not be required to present the complaint to the accused or suspected harasser for resolution. Employees will be permitted to report allegations of suspected harassment to any employee and such persons have a duty to promptly refer such allegations to the Title IX Coordinator or to take such action as may be required by the procedures established under “Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures Authorized” above. In no case will any employee who is the subject of a complaint be permitted to conduct, review, or otherwise exercise decision making responsibility in connection with the processing of the complaint.
- V. Notice of Policy to be Promulgated – The Superintendent will promulgate and disseminate this policy and the complaint procedures to applicants for admission and employment, the schools, parents and legal guardians, unions and professional organizations, and will take such other steps and measures as may be reasonably available and expedient for informing the school community of the conduct prohibited by this policy and the recourse available to students who

believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment.

- VI. Confidentiality – To the extent possible, reports of sexual harassment will be kept confidential; however, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- VII. Retaliation Prohibited – No retaliation or adverse action may be imposed as a result of a good faith complaint or report of sexual harassment. False accusations that are made in bad faith or for improper reasons may result in disciplinary action.
- VIII. Penalties for Violation – Any employee who violates the terms of this policy or who impedes or unreasonably refuses to cooperate with a Board investigation regarding allegations of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

TECHNOLOGY USAGE

The primary goal of the technology environment is to support the educational and instructional endeavors of students and employees of Bessemer City Schools. Use of any and all technology resources is a privilege and not a right. The Board permits restricted and conditional access to and use of its technology resources, including but not limited to computers, the “Internet,” network storage areas, and electronic mail. Such access and use is restricted to employees, students, and other persons who are engaged in *bona fide* educational and administrative activities that serve and are consistent with identified educational objectives or authorized support functions, and who, by signing an “Acceptable Use Agreement,” agree to abide by all Board policies, rules, and regulations regarding technology use. The Acceptable Use Agreement will be developed by the Superintendent and approved by the Board. Employees who violate any Board policy, rule, or regulation regarding technology use may be denied use of the Board’s technology resources and may be subject to additional disciplinary action. All technology resources, including network and Internet resources, e-mail systems, and computers or other access devices owned, leased, or maintained by the Board are the sole property of the Board. Board personnel may, at any time and without prior notice, access, search, examine, inspect, collect, or retrieve information of any kind from the Board’s technology resources, including computer or related equipment, files, and data, to determine if a user is in violation of any of the Board’s policies, rules, and regulations regarding access to and use of technology resources, for or in connection with any other matter or reason related to the safe and efficient operation or administration of the school system, or for any other reason not prohibited by law. Users of school system technology resources have no personal right of privacy or confidentiality with respect to the use or content of such. Any

questions about this policy, its interpretation, or specific circumstances shall be directed to the Technology Officer before proceeding.

Americans with Disabilities Act Complaint Procedures

- A. *Complaint Criteria* – Persons who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits covered by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act may file a written complaint with the ADA Coordinator.
- B. *Complaint Form* – The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination including the name, address, phone number of complaining party and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.
- C. *Complaint Process* – The complaint should be submitted to the ADA Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than thirty (30) days after the alleged violation. The ADA Coordinator will meet with the complaining party to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within fifteen (15) calendar days of the meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complaining party, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the Board and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.
- D. *Appeal Procedure* – If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complaining party may appeal the decision within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the response to the Superintendent. Within fifteen (15) calendar days, the Superintendent will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.
- E. *Records Retention* – All written complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to the Superintendent, and records relating thereto will be retained by the Board for at least three (3) years.
- F. *Additional Procedures Authorized* – The Superintendent is authorized to develop such procedures as are necessary to implement this policy.

CONTACTS FOR THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

Director of Human Resources

Dr. Curt R. Green

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Email: cgreen@bessk12.org

Executive Secretary

Mrs. LaKindra Harkins

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PAYROLL GUIDE

The payroll section of this handbook is to provide information regarding paychecks, health benefits, insurance and other financially related matters. Employees are responsible for verifying their eligibility and coverage for the various benefits provided. In the event of a conflict between this handbook and any benefit plan documents, the benefit plan documents would control.

When do I get my first Paycheck if I start day one of my contact?

- **Nine & Ten month employees**
– ***September 30****
- **Eleven month employees**
– ***August 31****
- **Twelve month employees**
– ***July 31****

An employee's salary is divided evenly over 12 months -September thru August for 9 and 9.5 month employees; August through July for 10, and 11 month employees; and July thru June for 12 month employees. The pay periods are for reporting absences. Adjustments to pay because of absence will be made in the payroll period in which it falls. Absences are reported a month behind. For late hires, pay is calculated on the number of working days and is divided equally over the remaining pay periods.

Below is an example of take home pay based on mandatory deductions. Actual deductions may vary depending on the employee's individual needs.

Mandatory Deductions	Hire Date	Hire Date
	Before 01-01-2013	After 01-01-2013
	Tier I*	Tier II**
Wages	\$1,953.33	\$1,953.33
Social Security (6.2%)	-121.11	-121.11
Medicare (1.45%)	-28.32	-28.32
Federal per tax table	-119.73	-119.73
Bessemer City (1%)	-19.53	-19.53
State per tax table	<u>-146.50</u>	<u>-121.11</u>
Retirement (7.50%)*; (6.2%)**	\$ 1,460	\$1,485.39

Some examples of non-mandatory deductions could include health insurance, disability insurance, dental insurance, savings accounts, deferred compensation plans and flexible spending accounts.

Employees hired prior to January 1, 2013 are considered Tier 1 employees for the employer contribution rate for retirement purposes. Any employee hired on or after January 1, 2013 is considered a Tier 2 employee for the employer contribution rate for retirement purposes.

Tier 1 Employees have **7.50%** of their gross pay withheld for their retirement account at the Teachers' Retirement System in Montgomery. The board pays 14.57% to the retirement system on behalf of each employee. Tier 2 employees have **6.20%** of their gross pay withheld for their retirement account at the Teachers' Retirement System in Montgomery. The board pays 13.61% to the retirement system on behalf of each employee.

For every dollar that an employee pays in Social Security and Medicare tax the Board is required to match that amount on the employee's behalf. State unemployment insurance is also paid by the Board for the employee.

TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULES CAN BE FOUND ON THE BESSEMER CITY SCHOOLS WEBSITE

DIRECT DEPOSIT - All new employees are encouraged to have direct deposit for receiving their monthly earnings. Below are some of the highlights of utilizing this feature:

- **Improved security**
- **No waiting in lines at the bank**
- **Money available payday morning**
- **Choose your own bank**

Notify Payroll Department immediately if you change banks and/or your account is closed. Also, it is important that the payroll department be notified if your account number changes. Guidance is available on the website to make these changes.

HEALTH BENEFITS - 2026-2027

Blue Cross/Blue Shield

Basic Major Medical No Referrals Monthly Premium	
\$30 Single	
\$207 Employee + non spouse dependents	
\$282 Employee + spouse only	
\$307 Family with spouse	

VIVA Health Plan –HMO

Major Medical, Vision, Dental HMO Monthly Premium	
\$30 Single	
\$207 Family	
\$207 Employee + non spouse dependents	
\$282 Employee + spouse only	
\$307 Family with spouse	

Non-tobacco User Discount

All PEEHIP members enrolled in the PEEHIP Hospital Medical or VIVA Health Plan are charged a **\$50.00** per month PEEHIP premium increase. However, non-tobacco users can have the **\$50 premium removed** from their monthly premium by certifying that they (and their spouse, if the spouse is covered as a dependent) have not used tobacco products within the last 12 months. Members must certify their tobacco status to PEEHIP to qualify for the **\$50 to be removed** from their monthly premium.

If you have previously certified your tobacco status and your spouse’s status (if you have family coverage), you do not need to re-certify every year. You are required to complete a **NEW ENROLLMENT AND STATUS CHANGE** form if your or your spouse’s tobacco status changes during the year.

New employees who enroll in hospital medical or VIVA Health Plan must certify their tobacco status (and their spouses’ tobacco status if covered as a dependent) by completing the tobacco questions through the Member Online system at the time of enrollment.

Southland Supplemental Insurance Coverage-

Cancer Plan	\$ 38 per month*
Dental Plan	\$ 38-\$50 per month
Hospital Indemnity	\$ 38 per month*
Vision Plan	\$ 38 per month*

***Single or Family Coverage**

– **You can Purchase supplements for an additional amount @ \$38-\$50 ea. / month**

OR

– **Refuse major medical coverage and apply allocation to the supplements for coverage at no charge.**

Note: No change in premiums, single or family, for the Cancer, Indemnity and Vision plans.

Copayment & Deductible Changes

Copayments- Deductibles

**Prescription Drugs
(30 day supply)**

	<u>PEEHIP BCBS</u>	<u>VIVA</u>
Generic Co-pay	\$ 6.00	\$ 5.00
Preferred Drug Co-pay	\$40.00	\$60.00
Non Preferred Drug Co-pay	\$60.00	\$80.00

**Prescription Maintenance Drugs
(90 day supply)**

	<u>PEEHIP BCBS</u>	<u>VIVA</u>
Generic Co-pay	\$12.00	\$12.00 Mail
Preferred Drug Co-pay	\$120.00	\$150.00 Mail
Non-Preferred Drug Co-pay	\$180.00	\$200.00 Mail

Open Enrollment dates: July 1 - August 30 for paper forms and through September 10 for online changes. Effective date of coverage for Open Enrollment elections is October 1.

This section provides you with information on how to enroll yourself and your eligible dependents in PEEHIP Hospital Medical Plans or Optional Coverage Plans, and Flexible Spending Accounts, or make changes in your coverages.

Enrollments and changes in coverage are handled by PEEHIP and not by the employer. The preferred method of enrollment is online through Member Online Services (MOS) at <https://mso.rsa-al.gov>.

Instructions are given below:

Information needed to enroll online.

1. Your Personal Identification (PID) Number. If you do not know your PID number, you can request a PID letter online. You will need your PID to create a User ID and Password.
2. Last five digits of your SSN
3. Email address
4. SSN and dates of birth for each dependent being enrolled in coverage
5. Additional health insurance information under which you and your dependents are covered
6. Credit card, debit card, or e-check to make first premium payment at the time of enrollment.

To Register as a first-time use.

From the RSA Home Page at <https://www.rsa-al.gov/>, members can click Member Log In located at the top left of the web page.

- . Members can click Need to Register or login with your User ID and Password.
- . If you do not remember your User ID and/or Password, you can re-register by clicking Forgot User ID or Password.
- . The RSA mails new members their Personal Identification Number (PID).

- . If you do not have your PID, you can request a PID letter through MOS, and one will be mailed to you.
- . Click Need a PID?
- . Your PID will also be located on all personal correspondence sent to you by PEEHIP.

Enrolling in or changing coverage online.

From the PEEHIP Services tab, select one of the following:

- Click Enroll or Change PEEHIP Coverages to enroll in a hospital medical plan, Optional Coverage Plans (dental, vision, cancer, indemnity), or FSA as:
- Click New Enrollment (available for 30 days from date of hire) if wanting to enroll as a new hire or newly eligible member.
- Click Open Enrollment (available July 1 – September 10) to:
 - Enroll, Change, or Cancel Hospital Medical Plan
 - Enroll, Change, or Cancel PEEHIP Optional Coverage Plan(s) (Cancer, Dental, Indemnity, Vision)
 - Add, Update, or Cancel My Additional Insurance Coverage Information
 - Enroll or Re-enroll in Flexible Spending Accounts
 - Add or Update Medicare Information
- Click Qualifying Life Event (QLE) to add a newly acquired dependent within 45 days of QLE.
 - Adoption a Child
 - Birth of a Child
 - Legal Custody of a Child
 - Marriage of a Subscriber
- To make changes outside of Open Enrollment for QLE's not listed, members must complete a New Enrollment and Status Change form and send it to PEEHIP within 45 days of the QLE.
- Select Other (available year-round) to add or update:
 - Tobacco user status
 - Other medical insurance coverage information
- Retiree Employment Information
- From the PEEHIP Services tab at the top of the screen, you can:
 - View Current Coverages
 - Wellness Completion Status

Enrollment Documentation Required by PEEHIP.

Every member who enrolls dependent(s) on his or her PEEHIP coverage(s) is required to certify to PEEHIP their dependent's eligibility. Certification will require appropriate documents to support your dependent's eligibility. **Black out Social Security numbers, account numbers, income, or statement balances prior to sending your documents to PEEHIP.** Under no circumstances does PEEHIP solicit this type of information from members.

Please upload to MOS or mail your documents to PEEHIP. Enrollments cannot be processed without the appropriate documentation. PEEHIP is not bound by a court order to insure dependents who do not meet PEEHIP guidelines. **To avoid enrollment deadlines, submit your enrollment even if you do not have all of the appropriate documentation at the time of enrollment.**

Alternatively, enrollments or changes in coverage can be made by submitting a completed New Enrollment and Status Change form. The form can be obtained on the RSA website or upon request by calling Member Services at 877.517.0020.

*New Employees have **30 days to enroll** in insurance.

* If an employee does not need the PEEHIP hospital medical insurance, they may elect to enroll in the four Southland optional plans (dental, vision, cancer and indemnity) at no cost to the employee. There is also a Supplemental insurance plan at no cost if PEEHIP hospital medical is not elected. Active members who have TriCare or Champus as their primary coverage cannot enroll in the Supplemental Plan.

PEEHIP Insurance Allocation - “3 – 1” Rule

An employee will earn one additional insurance allocation for every three months the employee has worked at least one half of the work days in the months worked.

- Work nine months and receive three summer allocations.
- Employees working less than nine months will not earn all months and will owe an additional amount for insurance.

THE WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Wellness Program is a voluntary program, available during work hours at no cost to PEEHIP members. Members and covered dependents will be eligible to participate in free health screenings, osteoporosis screenings and flu vaccines provided by the Public Health Department nurses. The wellness screenings are intended to assist employees and their families identify health risks and receive early and necessary treatment and ultimately lower healthcare costs.

The PEEHIP Wellness screenings and flu shots will continue to be covered at 100% with no copayment or deductible. Additional information regarding the PEEHIP Worksite Wellness program can be found at www.adph.org/worksitewellness or by calling ADPH at 800.252.1818 and asking for the Wellness Division.

Wellness Premium Discount Program

All active employees covered under the State Employees’ Health Insurance Plan (Group 14000) are eligible for a wellness premium discount. Each wellness plan year is September 1 through August 31 and every active employee must be screened either through the SEIB’s worksite wellness screening program by a healthcare provider (through the submission of a physician’s certification form), or at a participating Pharmacy. Visit our [SEIB Wellness](#) page or [Pharmacy Screening Network](#) page to find screening locations.

TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM

TIER 1 EMPLOYEES

All full-time employees are eligible, and required, to participate in the State Retirement Program. For employees hired prior to January 1, 2013, seven and a half percent of the employee's salary is deducted each month for retirement and all contributions belong to the employee.

Ten years of creditable service are required for an employee to become "vested" or eligible for benefits. Persons terminating their employment with less than 10 years of service must withdraw their retirement funds within 5 years of termination.

A person hired prior to January 1, 2013 may retire after 25 years of service or at the age of 60 (if vested) and may use accumulated sick leave in determining the amount of creditable service.

Retirement benefits will be calculated on the annual salary of the highest 3 of the last 10 years of service.

TIER 2 EMPLOYEES

Employees hired January 1, 2013, or later, will pay six and two tenths percent to the retirement system and their retirement benefits will be calculated at a lower percentage than current employees. Benefits will be calculated on the annual salary of the highest 3 of the last 5 years of service.

The retirement age requirement for employees hired January 1, 2013, or later will be 62 (if vested) or 30 years of service. An employee may use accumulated sick leave in determining the amount of creditable service effective October 1, 2021, per Act 2021-537.

TRS DEATH BENEFITS

Death benefits are also provided through the Teacher Retirement Program and depend on years of service and age. For example, persons under 60 years of age with from 1 to 25 years of service will receive death benefits consisting of their total retirement contributions and total earned interest plus an amount equal to the previous year's salary.

DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLANS

403B - Under this plan, employees may contribute as much as \$23,000 (2024) of pre-tax income to an annuity each year. The catch-up contribution limit (for those over 50 years old) increased for an annual total of \$30,500. The contribution is automatically deducted from their paychecks.

By investing money in this way before taxes are paid, employees can reduce their current

income tax burden. It is permissible to transfer accumulated funds, with no dollar limit, to other qualified IRA annuity plans.

Once such an investment is made, the interest or dividends earned are only taxed as funds are withdrawn. Since the withdrawals are usually made after retirement when the participant is likely to be in a lower tax bracket, less tax is paid and funds accumulate faster.

RSA-1 - Using this plan, employees may elect to delay receiving a portion of their salary (may not exceed--if more than one 457 plan, combined deferrals must not exceed--\$23,000 (2024) or \$30,500 (2024) for employees age 50 or over) until some later determined date, usually after retirement.

The deferred income, which accumulates interest in a special fund, is not subject to federal income tax until distributed to the employee.

RSA-1 funds will be invested in the same type of investments and are subject to the same guidelines and limitations as applicable to investments made by the Teacher Retirement System.

Catch-Up Maximums - If you did not defer the maximum deferral amount in the years beginning with 1986 and were eligible to participate, you may “catch-up” unused eligible amounts for one to three years if you are within three years of normal retirement age and are eligible for an unreduced pension. For 2024, the catch-up maximum is \$46,000.

FLEXIBLE SPENDING PLAN

A flexible spending plan is a way to provide employees valuable benefits and tax savings. Benefits under an eligible plan may include reimbursement of dependent care expenses and medical expenses such as co-payments and deductibles.

Also, most importantly, you always pay insurance premiums with pre-tax dollars. All full-time employees are eligible to participate in this plan which gives them the opportunity to recognize additional monthly income through pre-tax savings.

■ OPEN ENROLLMENT

- The open enrollment deadline for the Flexible Spending Accounts is September 30th, for an effective date of October 1st.
- Plan deductions start on the October payroll check. Deductions end with the September payroll check of the following year.

All deductions are processed over 12 months.

PEEHIP's Flexible Spending Account is administered by Health **Equity** that is offered through BC/BS of Alabama. Below is the website address:

<https://www.rsa-al.gov/peehip/flex-account/>

Reimbursement of over-the-counter drugs from the Health Care FSA will be prohibited due to the Federal Reform Act unless you have a doctor's prescription for the drug.

CONTACTS FOR THE ACCOUNTING OFFICE

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