



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK *2026-2027*

**305 MERRITT DRIVE  
CLEVELAND, MS 38732**  
**PHONE: 662.843.3529 | FAX: 662.441.1938**  
**WEBSITE: [WWW.CLEVELAND.K12.MS.US](http://WWW.CLEVELAND.K12.MS.US)**

# Table of Contents

<b>Welcome to Cleveland School District</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Vision, Mission, Motto, and Goals</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Cleveland School District Board of Trustees</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>District Administrators</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Administrative Support Staff</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>School Information</b>	<b>9</b>
Elementary Schools	9
Secondary Schools	10
<b>PERSONNEL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ALL PERSONNEL - DRESS AND APPEARANCE (POLICY GABA)</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT (Policy GAAA)</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION</b>	<b>14</b>
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL HIRING (Policy GBD)	14
ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCIES (Policy GBCA)	15
EMPLOYEE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (Policy GAD)	15
LICENSED AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL EMPLOYEES (Policy GBD)	15
CRIMINAL RECORDS BACKGROUND CHECK / CHILD ABUSE REGISTRY CHECK (Policy GBD)	16
CONVICTION BASED ON ERRONEOUS INFORMATION (Policy GBD)	16
NEPOTISM AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST (Policy GBD)	16
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL COMPENSATION GUIDES AND CONTRACTS (Policy GBA)</b>	<b>17</b>
YEAR OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	17
FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT	17
SCHOOL LIBRARIANS	17
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS	17
MILITARY SERVICE	17
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AND AUDIOLOGISTS	17
LEVEL OF PAY	18
CONTRACT REQUIRED	18
LENGTH OF CONTRACT	18
FIXING OF SALARY	18
SALARY PAY SCHEDULE	19
PAY CERTIFICATES	19
EXECUTION OF WRITTEN CONTRACT	19
SALARY DEDUCTIONS	19
RELEASE FROM CONTRACT	19
BREACH OF CONTRACT	20
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS (Policy GAR)</b>	<b>20</b>
CONFIDENTIALITY	20

TYPES OF INFORMATION	20
USE OF PERSONNEL RECORDS	21
PARENTAL NOTICE	21
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL TIME SCHEDULE (Policy GBRB)</b>	<b>22</b>
LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY	22
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL WORKLOAD (Policy GBRC)	22
TEACHING DAY (Policy GBRC)	22
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL NON-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT (Policy GBRG)	23
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL TUTORING FOR PAY (Policy GBRGB)	23
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT (Policy GBE)	23
COACHES ASSIGNMENT POLICY (Policy GBRCA)	24
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL SUPERVISION (Policy GBH)</b>	<b>24</b>
MISSED PUNCHES (Policy GBRCB)	24
EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION BADGES (Policy EBBA)	25
TIMECLOCK GUIDELINES (Policy GBRCB)	25
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL PROMOTIONS (Policy GBJ)	25
<b>LEAVE AND ABSENCES (Policy GBRI)</b>	<b>26</b>
ABSENCE FROM DUTY	27
PERSONAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE	27
PROFESSIONAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE	28
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL EXPENSES (Policy GBRF)	28
REGARDING TRAVEL ADVANCES (Policy GBRF)	28
RETIREMENT (Policy GBRI)	29
RULES AND REGULATIONS (Policy GBRI)	29
ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUBSTITUTES (Policy GBRJ)	30
NONLICENSED AND HOURLY PAID SCHOOL EMPLOYEES (Policy GBRI)	31
VACATION AND PERSONAL LEAVE (Policy GBRI)	31
DEFINITIONS (Policy GBRI)	31
JURY DUTY / OTHER LEAVE (Policy GBRI)	33
REQUEST FOR LEAVE (Policy GBRCB)	33
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA) (Policy GBRIA)	34
Leaves and Absences and The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (Policy GBRIA)	34
MILITARY LEAVE (Policy GBRID)	34
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL SUSPENSION / DISMISSAL (Policy GBK)</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL (REDUCTION IN FORCE) (Policy GBKAR)</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL SEPARATION (Policy GBN)</b>	<b>36</b>
NOTICE OF NONRENEWAL	37
LICENSED EMPLOYEE RIGHTS	37
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS (Policy GBO)</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RELEASE FROM CONTRACT (Policy GBOA)</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RETIREMENT (Policy GBQ)</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL REEMPLOYMENT (Policy GBP)</b>	<b>38</b>

<b>PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT (Policy GAA)</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE CONDUCT (Policy GAB)</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>STATE BOARD POLICY (Reference in Policy GAA)</b>	<b>40</b>
CODE OF ETHICS STANDARDS OF CONDUCT	40
<b>SEXUAL HARASSMENT (Policy GBR)</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PROHIBITED (Policy JCA)</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Cleveland School District Student Bullying Policy (Policy JDDA-P)</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES -- LICENSED PERSONNEL APPRAISAL (Policy JDAA_P)</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>USE OF CELL TELEPHONES BY TEACHERS (Policy IFBB)</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Acceptable Use Policy For Student / Parent / Community Member / Faculty &amp; Staff (Policy IJ)</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES (Policy GABBA)</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>USING COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL (Policy IJC)</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY (Policy GBRM-2)</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>How to Report Workers' Compensation Injuries</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Human Resource Forms</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Tardy and Clocking Out Guidelines</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Employee Handbook Acknowledgement Form</b>	<b>61</b>

Please note that School Board Policies are subject to be added, deleted, or amended throughout the school year. These policies are not intended to represent all school board policies of the Cleveland School District. The complete list of school board policies can be found at <https://cleveland.msbapolicy.org/>.

### *Handbook Purpose, Policy Supremacy, and Annual Updates*

This Employee Handbook summarizes selected Cleveland School District policies, procedures, expectations, and legal requirements for the 2026-2027 school year. It is not a complete statement of every Board policy, employment contract term, administrative procedure, or legal requirement.

If this handbook conflicts with an employee's written contract, an officially adopted Board policy, Mississippi or federal law, State Board of Education policy, or a valid administrative directive, the contract, Board policy, law, or directive will control. Nothing in this handbook creates tenure, a property interest, or contractual rights beyond those provided by written contracts, Board policy, and applicable law.

Employees are responsible for reviewing the handbook and Board policies at the beginning of the year and when the District provides notice of revisions. Employees should direct questions to their immediate supervisor or Human Resources.

## Welcome to Cleveland School District

Dear Cleveland School District Employees:

It is an honor to welcome you to the 2026-2027 school year. As Superintendent, it is my goal to lead efforts in sustained change for the school district and community. I want to be a positive spokesperson for student achievement and ensure we involve all stakeholders in maintaining a safe and orderly environment where students can learn.

This Employee Handbook has been prepared so that you will be informed about the policies and procedures used to govern employment with the Cleveland School District. It is your responsibility to view and familiarize yourself with this handbook as well as the policies and procedures manual as approved by the Board of Trustees.

On behalf of the Cleveland School District, I thank you for your support of our schools as we provide a quality education that encourages every student to realize his/her fullest potential. I wish each of you a successful school year.

The policies which govern the Cleveland School District are accessible online at [www.cleveland.k12.ms.us](http://www.cleveland.k12.ms.us).

If our office can assist you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours in Service,

Dr. Lisa Bramuchi, Superintendent of Education

Cleveland School District



## Vision, Mission, Motto, and Goals

### Our Vision

Commitment to the development of productive and successful citizens through innovative and diverse learning opportunities.

### Our Mission

Commitment to the educational and extracurricular achievements of all learners.

### Our Goals

1. **Student Achievement:** Committed to developing and implementing a rigorous curriculum and assessment system in alignment with the state standards and assessment system.
2. **Positive Culture:** Committed to providing a safe and orderly learning environment where all stakeholders are valued and respected.
3. **Community Engagement:** Committed to fostering a collaborative relationship with all stakeholders to achieve excellence in all aspects of the district.
4. **Employee Retention:** Committed to recruiting and retaining committed teachers and administrators that will provide an educational system of excellence.
5. **Fiscal Accountability:** Committed to the use of fiscal resources effectively and efficiently to accomplish the district's commitment to excellence.

## Cleveland School District Board of Trustees

Ms. Paulette Howze, **President**

Mr. Richard Boggs, **Vice-President**

Mrs. Lucille Holmes, **Secretary**

Mr. George Evans, **Parliamentarian**

Mrs. Beverly Janoush, **Chaplain**

### District Administrators

Dr. Lisa Bramuchi

**Superintendent**

Mr. Charles Johnson

**Deputy Superintendent**

Mr. Nathan Towers

**Federal Programs Director**

Mr. Kenneth Harris

**Financial Services Director**

Mrs. Markeita Brinkley

**Special Services Director**

Mrs. Nikki Montgomery

**Curriculum and Instruction Director**

Ms. Shenika Newson

**Food Service Director**

Mr. Michael Harrington

**Maintenance Director**

Mr. Henry Alexander

**Transportation Director**

Mr. Keithan Dear

**Technology Director**

Ms. Amelia Jones

**Human Resources Coordinator**

Mrs. Patsy Clerk

**Family & Community Engagement Coordinator**

Mrs. Anna Bennett

**District MTSS/Data Management Coordinator**

Mr. Gerald Wesley Jr.

**Safety and Security Coordinator/Police Chief**

## Administrative Support Staff

**Bell, Sheila** Executive Assistant to Superintendent / Board Clerk

**Beamon, Cherrier** Administrative Assistant to Federal Programs Director & Federal Programs Bookkeeper

**Hawkins, Kiara** Administrative Assistant to Transportation Director

**Hernandez-Speck, Joni** District Case Manager, Special Services

**Jones, Gwendolyn** Accounts Receivable Clerk

**Johnston, Molly Carol** District Nurse

**Johnson, Sheila** Administrative Assistant to Special Services Director

**Lemon, Brandon** Technology Technician

**McCline, Jhantierra** District Nurse

**Moore, Martina** Administrative Assistant to Deputy Superintendent

**Peavy, Aryana** District Nurse

**Skinner, Magan** Technology Technician

**Sullivan, Wendy** Accounts Payable Clerk

**Thomas, Tacarra** Payroll Clerk

**Trotter, Neamonia** Receptionist/Information Clerk

**Wade, Michelle** District Accountant

**Wade, Simuel** Fixed Assets / 16<sup>th</sup> Section Land Leases

**Washington, Lakeisha** Administrative Assistant to Director of Food Services

**Wilburn, Mandy** District Nurse

**Wilson, Kedrick** Technology Technician

**Ybarra, Mary** ELL / Migrant / Homeless

## School Information

### *Elementary Schools*

#### **B. L. BELL ACADEMY**

Tiffanie Russell, Principal

Kimberley Jones, Counselor

Carolyn Washington, Secretary

1016 Taylor Road, Boyle, MS 38730 | Ph: 662.843.4572 | Fax: 662.579.3109

Grades: Pre-Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup>

#### **D.M. SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Rasheda Barksdale, Principal

Lutoya Earvin, Counselor

Tyronica Williams, Secretary

715 Martin Luther King Drive, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.846.6152 | Fax: 662.545.4895

Grades: 3rd through 6<sup>th</sup>

#### **HAYES COOPER CENTER**

Kacie Neville, Interim Principal

Jessica Martinson, Counselor

Mona Lisa Thompson, Secretary

500 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Merigold, MS 38759 | Ph: 662.748.2734 | Fax: 662.748.2735

Grades: Pre-Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup>

#### **NAILOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Nanette Williams, Interim Principal

Dianne Tidwell, Social Worker

D'Myra Lucas, Secretary

600 East Cross Street, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.843.4528 | Fax: 662.545.4774

Grades: Pre-Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup>

#### **PARKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Holly Haynes, Principal

Marion Story, Counselor

Erin Berryhill, Secretary

1305 Terrace Road, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.843.3166 | Fax: 662.545.4195

Grades: Pre-Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup>

#### **PEARMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Jo'Nathan Davis, Interim Principal

T Aijah Minter, Counselor

Natalie Sanders, Secretary

306 Merritt Drive, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.843.4484 | Fax: 662.545.4727

Grades: 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>

*Secondary Schools*

**CLEVELAND CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Cathy Sparks, Principal

James Strong, Assistant Principal

Ronda Johnson, Counselor | Shatanner McFarland-Brown, Counselor

Alicia Gillespie, Secretary | Anne Marie Brown, Clerk

601 Lucy Seaberry Boulevard, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.843.2338 | Fax: 662.545.4568

Grades: 7<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>

**CLEVELAND CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL**

Precious Redmond, Principal

Whitney Williams, Assistant Principal | Fredrick Ford, Assistant Principal

Benjamin Earnest, Assistant Principal

Nakita Goins, Counselor | Legarius Jefferson, Counselor | LaShundreya Townsend, Counselor

Jordan Gentry, Secretary | Harriett Burks, Clerk | Shelia Mitchell, Clerk

300 West Sunflower Road, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.843.2460 | Fax: 662.545.4314

Grades: 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>

**WALTER C. ROBINSON ACHIEVEMENT CENTER**

Dr. Derek Bell, Director

601 Third Street, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.843.8818 | Fax: 662.545.4612

**CLEVELAND CAREER DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

Equonda Jackson, Director

Deunderia Smith-Wraggs, Counselor

Iris Clark, Secretary

601 Third Street, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.843.8818 | Fax: 662.545.4612

**CLEVELAND SCHOOL DISTRICT PARENT CENTER**

Patsy Clerk, Coordinator

305 Sunflower Road, Cleveland, MS 38732 | Ph: 662.579.3096

## PERSONNEL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- To employ personnel of the highest quality, both licensed and non-licensed
- To be an equal opportunity employer
- To involve staff in decision making
- To provide professional development opportunities through well-planned staff development and allowances to attend seminars, workshops and visit other successful school districts
- To provide procedures for complaints and grievances
- To assign personnel to ensure that they are utilized as effectively as possible
- To develop a climate that will produce the highest staff performance, morale, and satisfaction
- To recognize and reward accomplishments and distinguished service

# **ALL PERSONNEL - DRESS AND APPEARANCE (POLICY GABA)**

## **DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

Employees are expected to set an example that reflects our profession. In dress, conduct and interpersonal relationships, teachers and other staff members should recognize that we are being continuously observed by students, parents, and the public. Our actions and demeanor will be reflected in the conduct of the students under our guidance. One of the best methods of instructing students is through a positive example of proper conduct, manners, dress, and grooming on the part of the faculty and staff.

Proper attire is expected in each work location. It is of paramount importance that the members of the faculty and staff set good examples in conduct, manners, dress and grooming. Employees are expected to wear appropriate dress for work. This means that clothing and appearance should be in good taste, conservative, and suitable for the job at hand. All employees are expected to dress beyond the expectations for students.

All employees will be allowed to dress in business casual attire or the uniform dress of the students in the schools in which you are employed, unless uniforms are prescribed for the assigned work area. In addition, all employees will maintain acceptable professional appearance while on duty at field trips, when deemed necessary; the principal/supervisor does have the right to approve attire for staff participating in school-sponsored field trips.

While no dress code can cover all contingencies, employees are expected to and must exert good judgment in the choice of clothing. The guide below provides what is acceptable or not as business casual attire according to the district standards:

### **Shirts, Tops, and Blouses**

Casual shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, tops, and golf-type are acceptable. Provocative, tight-fitting shirts, tank tops, halter tops, or crop tops which show the midriff, armpits, or cleavage are inappropriate. Other inappropriate tops include shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons or slogans.

### **Slacks, Pants and Suit Pants**

Slacks that are similar to Dockers brand, Capri pants, polyester blend slacks, and trousers are acceptable. NO LOW RIDERS - shirts and bottoms must cover all. Other inappropriate slacks, pants or trousers include sweatpants, exercise pants, Bermuda shorts, shorts, leggings, jeggings, or other form fitting pants. Knee length dressy shorts are permitted.

### **Skirts and Dresses**

Sun dresses with spaghetti straps or T-straps should not be worn without a shirt or jacket.

Dresses or skirts with side splits must be at the knee. The length of dresses or skirts must also be at the knee.

### **Shoes and Footwear**

Conservative or walking shoes, loafers, clogs, sneakers, boots, flats, dress heels, sandals and other leather deck-type shoes are acceptable. Thongs, flip-flops, and slippers are not acceptable at anytime.

There will be no revealing clothing or clothing that allows undergarments to show through. Clothing must be SIZE - APPROPRIATE- Absolutely "NO SAGGING" will be permitted . Belts must be worn and shirts (if applicable) must be tucked into pants.

### **The consequences for violating this dress code are:**

OFFENSE	CONSEQUENCE
First	Verbal warning
Second	Written warning
Third	Up to a three (3) day suspension without pay
Fourth	Appearance before the School Board for additional discipline, up to and including termination.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT (Policy GAAA)**

The Cleveland School District is an equal opportunity employer and shall not discriminate in recruitment, hiring, compensation, assignment, promotion, discipline, termination, training, benefits, or any other term, condition, or privilege of employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, religion, disability, age, genetic information, military or veteran status, marital status, or any other classification protected by federal or Mississippi law.

The District prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Employees and applicants may report discrimination, harassment, or retaliation to their supervisor, Human Resources, the Superintendent or designee, or the Title IX Coordinator. Good-faith reports and participation in investigations are protected from retaliation.

Title IX Coordinator: Mr. Charles Johnson, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, Cleveland School District, 305 Merritt Drive, Cleveland, MS 38732; Phone: 662.843.3529; Fax: 662.441.1938; Email: [titleix@cleveland.k12.ms.us](mailto:titleix@cleveland.k12.ms.us).

### *Reasonable Accommodations, Pregnancy-Related Accommodations, and Lactation/Pumping Breaks*

The District will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees and applicants with disabilities when required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504, and other applicable laws, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship. Requests for accommodation should be directed to Human Resources, the employee's supervisor, or the District's designated accommodation/Section 504 contact.

The District will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees and applicants with known limitations related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions as required by the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship. The District will use an interactive process and will not retaliate against an employee for requesting or using an accommodation.

The District will provide reasonable break time and a private place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion for eligible employees to express breast milk for a nursing child for up to one year after the child's birth, consistent with the FLSA as amended by the PUMP Act.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

### *PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL HIRING (Policy GBD)*

The District shall employ licensed and nonlicensed staff based on job-related qualifications, valid licensure or certification where required, experience, performance, references, and the needs of the District, and without regard to any protected classification under federal or Mississippi law.

Every school teacher, principal, and administrator employed in this school system must possess a valid license or credential required for the assignment and shall execute a written contract when required by Mississippi law and State Board of Education rules. The superintendent shall enter into contracts and make recommendations to the Board in the manner provided by law and Board policy.

The superintendent or designee will ensure that employee manuals and handbooks are reviewed for compliance with applicable state and federal requirements and that employees are advised of revisions and any implications for existing personnel.

For Title I schools, the superintendent or designee will ensure that parents/guardians are informed of their right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher and that required notices are provided when students are assigned to or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements for the grade level and subject area.

Staffing patterns will be reviewed annually to help ensure that low-income and minority students are not taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, inexperienced, out-of-field, or otherwise unqualified teachers. If inequitable patterns are identified, the District will develop strategies to address them.

### ***ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCIES (Policy GBCA)***

Announcements of vacancies for full-time professional and nonprofessional positions shall be posted on the Cleveland School District website and, as appropriate, through local media or other recruiting sources. Announcements of vacant professional positions may also be submitted to outside sources such as the Mississippi Department of Education.

Vacancies shall be advertised for a minimum of ten (10) business days except in cases of extreme emergency as determined by the superintendent and allowed by Board policy. Vacancy announcements should include the minimum qualifications for the position and any required licensure, endorsement, background check, or other employment condition.

In the event of an emergency need to fill a position, the superintendent may waive advertising procedures consistent with Board policy and may recommend personnel to the Board for approval as required by law.

### ***EMPLOYEE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (Policy GAD)***

All employees will be provided with an explanation of both their responsibilities and their rights under the law in terms of actions they may take to maintain order, discipline, and an appropriate educational environment. Training will be provided that defines approved actions and informs employees that they may be liable for harm when they engage in criminal, grossly negligent, or reckless conduct, or act with flagrant indifference to the rights and safety of another person who suffers harm as a result. The superintendent will develop rules that prescribe the circumstances under which the district administration and/or parents/guardians are to be notified of actions taken, any written documentation of actions taken that is necessary, and other appropriate procedures including staff training.

### ***LICENSED AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL EMPLOYEES (Policy GBD)***

On or before April 1 of each year, the principal of each school shall recommend to the superintendent of the local school district the licensed employees or non-instructional employees to be employed for the school involved except those licensed employees or non-instructional employees who have been previously employed and who have a contract valid for the ensuing scholastic year. If such recommendations meet with the approval of the superintendent, the superintendent shall recommend the employment of such licensed employees or non-instructional employees to the local school board, and, unless good reason to the contrary exists, the board shall elect the employees so recommended. If, for any reason, the local school board shall decline to elect any employee so recommended, additional recommendations for the places to be filled shall be made by the principal to the superintendent and then by the superintendent to the local school board as provided above.

### ***CRIMINAL RECORDS BACKGROUND CHECK / CHILD ABUSE REGISTRY CHECK (Policy GBD)***

All new licensed and nonlicensed employees, and any other individuals required by law or Board policy, must complete a current Mississippi child abuse registry check and a current criminal records background check before employment or as a condition of contingent employment.

Fingerprints shall be forwarded by the District to the Mississippi Department of Public Safety for processing and submission to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The District may charge the applicant the maximum fee permitted by law or may pay the fee at its discretion.

Information obtained from a criminal records check or child abuse registry check is confidential and shall be used only for employment-related purposes, except as disclosure is required by law.

An applicant is not eligible for employment if the required checks disclose a felony conviction, guilty plea, or plea of nolo contendere, not reversed on appeal and not pardoned, for possession or sale of drugs; murder; manslaughter; armed robbery; rape; sexual battery; a sex offense listed in Mississippi Code Section 45-33-23(h); child abuse; arson; grand larceny; burglary; gratification of lust; or aggravated assault, unless the Board or other authorized hiring entity grants a waiver as permitted by law.

When the law permits consideration of a waiver, the Board may consider mitigating circumstances, including the applicant's age at the time of the offense, circumstances surrounding the offense, the length of time since the offense and subsequent criminal history, work history, references, and other evidence demonstrating that the person can perform the job and does not pose a threat to the health or safety of school children.

If an applicant has been hired contingent upon the results of a background check or child abuse registry check and derogatory information is received, the applicant's employment or contract is voidable as provided by law and Board policy.

### ***CONVICTION BASED ON ERRONEOUS INFORMATION (Policy GBD)***

In the event an applicant wishes to contest a conviction based on erroneous information the applicant shall appeal the information to the Department of Public Safety. The applicant will show the school board or its designee proof of the corrected record.

### ***NEPOTISM AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST (Policy GBD)***

It shall be illegal for any superintendent, principal or other licensed employee to be elected by the school board if such superintendent, principal, or licensed employee is related within the third degree by blood or marriage according to the common law to a majority of the members of the school board. No member of the school board shall vote for any person as a superintendent, principal, or licensed employee who is related to him within the third degree by blood or marriage or who is dependent upon him in a financial way. Any contract entered into in violation of the provisions of this section shall be null and void.

NOTE: In order to be in agreement with statutes related to Nepotism and to Conflict of Interest, please ensure compliance with MS Codes cited above and with Sections 25-4-25 thru 25-4-29; 25-4-105; 37-11-25 & 37-11-27; and with Article 4, Section 109 of the MS Constitution.

# PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL COMPENSATION GUIDES AND CONTRACTS (Policy GBA)

## *YEAR OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE*

The term "year of teaching experience" shall mean nine (9) months of actual teaching in public or private elementary and secondary schools and shall also include nine (9) months of actual teaching at postsecondary institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) or equivalent regional accrediting body for degree-granting postsecondary institutions. In no case shall more than one (1) year of teaching experience be given for all services in one (1) calendar or school year. In determining a teacher's experience, no deduction shall be made because of the temporary absence of the teacher because of illness or other good cause, and the teacher shall be given credit therefor.

## *FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT*

Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, the State Board of Education shall fix a number of days, not to exceed forty-five (45) consecutive school days, during which a teacher may not be under contract of employment during any school year and still be considered to have been in full-time employment for a regular scholastic term. If a teacher exceeds the number of days established by the State Board of Education that a teacher may not be under contract but may still be employed, that teacher shall not be credited with a year of teaching experience.

## *SCHOOL LIBRARIANS*

In determining the experience of school librarians, each complete year of continuous, full-time employment as a professional librarian in a public library in this or some other state shall be considered a year of teaching experience.

## *SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS*

If a full-time school administrator returns to actual teaching in public schools, the term "year of teaching experience" shall include the period of time he or she served as a school administrator.

## *MILITARY SERVICE*

In determining the salaries of teachers who have experience in any branch of the military, the term "year of teaching experience" shall include each complete year of actual classroom instruction while serving in the military.

## *SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AND AUDIOLOGISTS*

In determining the experience of speech-language pathologists and audiologists, each complete year of continuous full-time post master's degree employment in an educational setting in this or some other state shall be considered a year of teaching experience. 37-151-5 (m)

## *LEVEL OF PAY*

This school district shall not pay any teacher less than the state minimum salary. 37-151-87

The minimum base pay for all classroom teachers may be increased by the district from any funds available to it. 37-151-89

It is the policy of this school board to attempt to pay its licensed employees at a level that will attract and hold people with ability who can exercise professionalism in the school district.

If, at the commencement of the scholastic year, any licensed employee shall present to the superintendent a license of a higher grade than that specified in such individual's contract, such individual may, if funds are available from adequate education program funds of the district, or from district funds, be paid from such funds the amount to which such higher grade license would have entitled the individual, had the license been held at the time the contract was executed. 37-9-17

## *CONTRACT REQUIRED*

The superintendent shall enter into a contract with each licensed employee in the manner prescribed by law and the State Board of Education.

If any licensed employee or other person recommended for a licensed position who has been elected and approved shall not execute and return the contract within ten (10) days after the same has been tendered to him for execution, then, at the option of the school board, the election of the licensed employee and the contract tendered to him shall be null and void and of no effect. 37-9-23

## *LENGTH OF CONTRACT*

All contracts shall include the exact period of time for which the licensed person shall be employed.

## *FIXING OF SALARY*

In employing and contracting with licensed employees, the school board shall determine and fix the amount of salary and ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

In employing licensed employees and in fixing their salaries the school boards shall take into consideration the character, professional training, experience, executive ability, and teaching capacity of the licensed employee. '37-9-37

## *SALARY PAY SCHEDULE*

This school district shall process a single monthly or bimonthly payroll for licensed employees with the electronic settlement of payroll checks secured through direct deposit of net pay. In December, salaries or wages shall be paid by the last working day.

Licensed employees shall earn a salary payable in equal monthly or bimonthly installments beginning in the first month of employment, regardless of the number of days worked in any particular month by the employee.

Any employee failing to complete the contractual obligation of service, and who receives payment in excess of the installment for the period during which such employee ceases employment with the school district, shall become liable immediately to the board of trustees of the Cleveland School District for the

sum of all amounts received in payment less the corresponding amount of any compensation paid for which service has been rendered, plus interest accruing at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the person discontinues his or her service.

Any school employee whose employment ends during a school term, regardless of the reason(s) the employment ended, shall be paid salary or wages only for that portion of the school term that the employee actually worked. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to entitle any employee to payment of salary or wages when no work has been performed. 37-9-39

### *PAY CERTIFICATES*

The salaries of licensed employees shall be paid by pay certificates issued by the school district superintendent. All pay certificates shall be preserved as a part of the official records of his/her office for the same time and in the same manner as other records are preserved. All pay certificates and warrants issued shall show the gross amount of the salary and all authorized deductions therefrom for income taxes, social security, retirement contributions, and other lawful purposes.

### *EXECUTION OF WRITTEN CONTRACT*

It is unlawful for any licensed employee to be paid for any services as such until a written contract has been executed. If the school district superintendent shall make any such payment prior to the execution of the contract he shall be civilly liable for the amount thereof, and, in addition, shall be liable upon his bond. If any licensed employee, shall willfully and without just cause breach his contract and abandon his employment he shall not be entitled to any further salary payments either for services rendered prior to such breach or for services which were thereafter to have been rendered. 37-9-43

### *SALARY DEDUCTIONS*

All deductions from salaries shall be in accordance with all state and federal laws, regulations, and school board policies.

### *RELEASE FROM CONTRACT*

All contracted licensed employees desiring to be released from the contract shall submit a written request to the school board for release. The request shall clearly state the reasons for the release. If the board acts favorably upon the request for release, the licensed employee shall be released from his contract and said contract shall be null and void on the date specified in the school board's order. 37-9-55

### *BREACH OF CONTRACT*

If any licensed employee in this school district shall arbitrarily or willfully breach his or her contract and abandon his or her employment without being released therefrom as provided by law, the contract of such licensed employee shall be null and void. In addition, upon the written recommendation of the majority of the members of the school board, the license or certificate of the licensed employee may be suspended by the State Board of Education for a period of one (1) school year as provided by law.

The Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard for this policy is standard 2.

## PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS (Policy GAR)

As used throughout this policy, the term "employee" refers to licensed personnel.

A file of personnel records shall be maintained in the superintendent's office for each licensed employee of this school district. A file shall be kept for all resigned or retired licensed employees, including such essential information as deemed appropriate by the superintendent (or designee) as specified by state and federal laws.

### *CONFIDENTIALITY*

Personnel information concerning district employees is generally confidential and may be reviewed only on a "need to know" basis under conditions which guarantee the administration's right of access to information necessary to make judgments and the protection of employees against the unnecessary invasion of privacy. Personnel information that is "public record" may be released to any person upon request.

Records of a teacher's performance and evaluation shall not be released without the written consent of the teacher. Files containing medical information regarding an employee will be kept separate from other personnel files.

The superintendent shall notify an employee in writing when a request is made for disclosure of the employee's personnel, medical, or similar files if the superintendent reasonably believes disclosure would invade the employee's privacy. The records will be disclosed unless written objection is received from the licensed employee within seven (7) business days from receipt by the employee.

### *TYPES OF INFORMATION*

It shall be the responsibility of each licensed employee to ensure that the school district receives records of any prior teaching experience. In addition, if the teacher has rendered military service, the proof of discharge from service must be furnished to the school district. The licensed employee is responsible for ensuring that the information that will maintain the employee's personnel file on a complete and up-to-date basis is provided to the superintendent's office.

The records shall contain the following:

1. The correct name, current address, and home telephone number of the employee;"
2. An accurate record of the employee's work experience;
3. Current data on education completed, including transcripts of academic work;
4. Proof of requirements fulfilled in order to be eligible for salary;

5. Current data on credentials;
6. Any current data requested by the superintendent concerning the employee's health and/or medical examinations;
7. Records of assignment;
8. Evaluations of performance;
9. Letters of commendation, reprimand, or omission of duty;
10. Other materials mutually agreed upon between the principal and the teacher.

### ***USE OF PERSONNEL RECORDS***

The District reserves the right to have a member of the superintendent's office staff present at the time the employee inspects his or her personnel file for the purpose of explaining and interpreting information therein. Similarly, at the time the record is reviewed, the employee shall have the right to present a representative of his or her own choosing, if desired.

### ***PARENTAL NOTICE***

If the District receives Title I funds, the District shall provide parents with notice that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. Upon request, the District will provide the information in a timely manner.

The notice and response shall include whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensure criteria for the grade level and subject area taught; whether the teacher is teaching under emergency, provisional, or other status through which State qualification or licensure criteria have been waived; the teacher's baccalaureate degree major and any graduate certification or degree held; the subject area of certification; and whether the child receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

The District will provide timely notice to parents when their child has been assigned to or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements for the grade level and subject area.

Medical, accommodation, workers' compensation, FMLA, PWFA, and other confidential employment records shall be maintained separately or otherwise protected from unauthorized disclosure, consistent with applicable law and Board policy.

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL TIME SCHEDULE (Policy GBRB)**

The work day shall be set within the legal parameters with consideration of the instruction and activity schedules established by the principal.

Every effort shall be made to provide a uniform workday for employees where this is practical and consistent with the safe and efficient administration of the school.

Professional employees shall be on duty the number of days shown on the face of their current employment contract less and except those days granted by the board for illness, personal business, earned vacation, and emergencies.

## *LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY*

The number of hours of actual teaching which shall constitute a school day shall be determined and fixed by the board of trustees of the Cleveland School District at not less than five and one half (5-1/2) hours. '37-13-67

Elementary, junior high, and senior high school teachers are expected to be on duty at their respective schools at 7:30 a.m. each day. Except when carrying out assignments of the principal, teachers are expected to remain at school or on duty during the designated hours. It is expected that all teachers remain at school Monday through Friday as follows:

Elementary - 3:30

Junior and Senior High - 3:30

Time is provided each school day for instructional preparation and planning, and conferences.

## *PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL WORKLOAD (Policy GBRC)*

The local school board shall have the power and authority to fix the date for the opening and closing of the school term, subject to the minimum number of days in which schools must be in session during a scholastic year, as prescribed under Section 37-13-63. However, local school boards are authorized to keep the school in session in excess of the minimum number of days prescribed in Section 37-13-63. ' 37-13-61

Except as otherwise provided, all public schools in the state shall be kept in session for at least one hundred eighty (180) days in each scholastic year. '37-13-63

## *TEACHING DAY (Policy GBRC)*

A day in which a minimum of 330 minutes of instruction and/or evaluation and/or district-approved group testing is provided. Exceptions are days with fewer than 330 instructional minutes that are part of an instructional week of at least 27.5 hours.

## *PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL STAFF MEETINGS (Policy GBRD)*

Faculty meetings shall be held upon the call of the superintendent and/or school principal.

The Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard for this policy is standard 9.

## *PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL NON-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT (Policy GBRG)*

This school board considers a professional assignment in the school district to be full-time employment.

Employees shall not engage at any time in any outside employment that would interfere with their effectiveness in performing regularly assigned duties; would compromise or embarrass the school system; or would in any way conflict with assigned duties. Employees shall not be employed or involved in any private or other public business during the hours necessary to fulfill their contractual responsibilities; nor will the employee use district materials, supplies, or property for outside employment.

For incompetence, neglect of duty, immoral conduct, intemperance, brutal treatment of a pupil, or other good cause the superintendent of schools may dismiss or suspend any licensed employee in any school district. '37-9-59

### ***PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL TUTORING FOR PAY (Policy GBRGB)***

To assure all students of reasonable assistance without charge from their own teachers and to avoid placing a teacher in a position where he may have a conflict of interest, teachers shall receive no money from parents for tutoring any student they have in class or upon whose evaluation or assignment they will be called upon to make.

Further, no tutoring for which a teacher receives a fee will be carried on in the school building.

No teacher shall use his official position to obtain a pecuniary benefit for himself other than that compensation provided for by law or to obtain a pecuniary benefit for any relative or any business with which he is associated. '25-4-105 (1) (1994)

### ***PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT (Policy GBE)***

The superintendent of schools shall have the power and authority to make assignments to the various schools in the district of all noninstructional and nonlicensed employees and all licensed employees, as provided in Sections 37-9-15 and 37-9-17, and to make reassignments of such employees from time to time; however, a reassignment of a licensed employee may only be to an area in which the employee has a valid license issued by the State Department of Education. Upon request from any employee transferred, such assignment shall be subject to review by the school board. '37-9-14

Staffing patterns will be reviewed annually to ensure that poor and minority students are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other children. If such patterns are noted, strategies to correct the problem will be developed.

### ***COACHES ASSIGNMENT POLICY (Policy GBRCA)***

The school board of this district adopts this policy governing coaching duties, responsibilities, and salaries.

All coaches, equipment managers, athletic aides\assistants, and others who have athletic responsibilities shall be assigned duties by the principal with the approval of the superintendent. All such persons shall be employed by the board on an at-will basis with respect to such athletic duties.

The superintendent, with the assistance of the principal and the approval of the Board, shall determine the duties and number of days per year to be worked by athletic personnel. Such determination shall be based on considerations of the needs of the individual sports and of the time necessary to coach the activities or sports assigned.

All coaches shall work together to promote all sports. All coaches not directly responsible for the sport in season shall assist the responsible coach upon request and within limits established by the superintendent.

Athletic-related duties are non-instructional and supplementary to the teaching contract. Therefore, athletic-related positions are not subject to the School Employment Procedures Act.

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL SUPERVISION (Policy GBH)**

The board expects its administrative and supervisory staff to help and encourage staff members to develop their teaching personalities and instructional abilities to an optimum degree. Each principal is expected to visit the classroom of each teacher on a regular basis to offer suggestions and give encouragement.

### ***MISSED PUNCHES (Policy GBRCB)***

Subject to any approved time off (sick leave, personal leave, or vacation) employees must clock in and clock out according to the employee's daily schedule as specified by their supervisor. Failure to clock in or out in accordance with this assigned schedule will subject the employee to the disciplinary actions listed below. Violation of these occurrences will be recorded in the employee's file/record (original in principal's office and copy in personnel record at Central Office)

The following missed punch ladder is in effect each time an employee requests a time edit (substitute teachers are excluded from this policy and are more specifically addressed below): (For each 45-day period in which no incident occurs, an incident from the previous 45 days will be removed from the employee's file/record.)

- First Occurrence - Verbal Warning
- Second Occurrence - Written Warning
- Third Occurrence - One-day suspension without pay
- Fourth Occurrence - Review of record with Superintendent with further suspension and/or termination possible.

The following missed punched ladder is in effect for each time a substitute teacher requests a time edit:

- First Occurrence - Verbal Warning
- Second Occurrence - Written Warning
- Third Occurrence - Review of record with the Superintendent with the possibility of being removed from the substitute teacher list.

### ***EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION BADGES (Policy EBBAA)***

All employees are required to wear official school district employee identification badges when entering any school campus in the district. Official identification badges will bear the employee's name, department/school, and picture. Any individual identified on a school campus in this school district not wearing an employee identification badge shall be reported to the school office and/or to security.

The badge is to be worn during working hours in an easily observed location on the blouse, coat, shirt, or uniform. Stickers or decals are not allowed to be attached to the identification badge. Badges that are lost or stolen may be replaced for a \$10 fee to cover the cost of replacement materials. All employee identification badges are the property of this school district and must be returned to the District Personnel Office upon resignation or termination.

### ***TIMECLOCK GUIDELINES (Policy GBRCB)***

All employees shall accurately record time worked in the manner directed by the District. Nonexempt employees must clock in and clock out according to their assigned schedules unless they have prior approval for a schedule change, approved leave, or other authorized exception.

Nonexempt employees must obtain prior written or documented supervisory approval before working overtime, extra duty, or work outside the assigned schedule. However, all time actually worked must be accurately reported and will be compensated as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act and applicable Board policy. Supervisors shall not require, permit, or encourage off-the-clock work.

Failure to clock in or out, falsification of time records, working without authorization, or failure to follow timekeeping procedures may result in corrective action or discipline. Payroll may require verification of time worked before processing payment, but employees will be paid for all verified time actually worked.

Employees must promptly notify their supervisor and payroll/Human Resources of any missed punch, timekeeping error, or discrepancy. Repeated missed punches may result in discipline under Board policy and applicable due process procedures.

### ***PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL PROMOTIONS (Policy GBJ)***

Professional personnel shall be promoted on their own merit by the superintendent.

If, at the commencement of the scholastic year, any licensed employee shall present to the superintendent a license of a higher grade than that specified in such individual's contract, such individual may, if funds are available from minimum education program funds of the district, or from district funds, be paid from such funds the amount to which such higher license would have entitled the individual, had the license been held at the time the contract was executed. '37-9-17 (1) (1997)

Race, creed, color, national ancestry, age, religion, handicap, marital status, or sex shall not be considered in promotion. The process of administrative promotion shall be free from pressures considered detrimental to the best conduct of the schools.

## **LEAVE AND ABSENCES (Policy GBRI)**

### ***ABSENCE FROM DUTY***

1. **LICENSED EMPLOYEE**

The term licensed employee means any employee of a public school district required to hold a valid license by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development. 37-7-307

2. **SICK LEAVE ALLOWANCE**

The school board of this district shall establish by rules and regulations a policy of sick leave with pay for licensed employees and teacher assistants employed in the school district, and such policy shall include the following minimum provisions for sick emergency leave with pay:

- a. Each full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee at the beginning of each school year, shall be credited with a minimum sick leave allowance, with pay, of seven (7) days for absences caused by illness or physical disability of the employee during that school year

- b. Any unused portion of the total sick leave allowance shall be carried over to the next school year and credited to such full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee if the full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee remain employed in the same school district. In the event any public school full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee transfers from one public school district in Mississippi to another, any unused portion of the total sick leave allowance credited to such full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee shall be credited to such full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee in the computation of unused leave for retirement purposes under Section 25-11-109, Mississippi Code of 1972. Accumulation of sick leave allowed in the school district shall be unlimited.
- c. No deduction from the pay of such full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee may be made because of the absence of such full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee caused by illness or physical disability of the full-time licensed employee and non-licensed employee until after all sick leave allowance credited to such full time licensed employee and non-licensed employee has been used.
- d. For the first ten (10) days of absence of the licensed employee because of illness or physical disability, in any school year, in excess of the sick leave allowance credited to such licensed employee, there shall be deducted from the payment of such licensed employee the established substitute amount of licensed employee compensation paid in that local school district, necessitated because of the absence of the licensed employee as a result of illness or physical disability. In lieu of deducting the established substitute amount from the pay of such licensed employee, the policy may allow the licensed employee to receive full pay for the first ten (10) days of absence because of illness or physical disability, in any school year, in excess of the sick leave allowance credited to such licensed employee. Thereafter, the regular pay of such absent licensed employee shall be suspended and withheld in its entirety for any period of absence because of illness or physical disability during that school year.

### *PERSONAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE*

Each licensed employee at the beginning of each school year shall be credited with a minimum personal leave allowance, with pay, of two (2) days for absences caused by personal reasons during that school year. Except as otherwise listed below, such personal leave shall not be taken on the first day of the school term, the last day of the school term, on a day previous to a holiday, or a day after a holiday. Notwithstanding the restrictions listed above on the use of personal leave, a licensed employee may use personal leave as follows:

- a. Personal leave may be taken on the first day of the school term, the last day of the school term, on a day previous to a holiday, or a day after a holiday if, on an applicable day, an immediate family member of the employee is being deployed for military service.
- b. Personal leave may be taken on a day previous to a holiday or a day after a holiday if an employee of a school district has either a minimum of ten (10) years experience as an employee of that school district or a minimum of thirty (30) days of unused accumulated leave that has been earned while employed in that school district.

- c. Personal leave may be taken on the first day of the school term, the last day of the school term, on a day previous to a holiday, or a day after a holiday if, on an applicable day, the employee has been summoned to appear for jury duty or as a witness in court.
  
- d. Personal leave may be taken on the first day of the school term, the last day of the school term, on a day previous to a holiday if, on an applicable day, an immediate family member of the employee dies or funeral services are held. Any day of the three (3) bereavement days may be used at the discretion of the teacher, and are not required to be taken in consecutive sessions.

Personal leave may be used for professional purposes, including absences caused by the attendance of such licensed employee at a seminar, class, training program, professional association, or other functions designed for educators. No deduction from the pay of such an employee may be made because of the absence of such a licensed employee caused by personal reasons until after all personal leave allowance credited to such employee has been used. However, the superintendent of a school district, in his discretion, may allow a licensed employee personal leave in addition to any minimum personal leave allowance, under the condition that there shall be deducted from the salary of such licensed employee the actual amount of any compensation paid to any person as a substitute, necessitated because of the absence of the licensed employee. Any unused portion of the total personal leave allowance of up to five (5) days shall be carried over to the next school year and credited to such licensed employee if the licensed employee remains employed in the school district.

### *PROFESSIONAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE*

Each licensed employee shall be credited with a professional leave allowance, with pay, for each day of absence caused by reason of such employee's statutorily required membership and attendance at a regular or special meeting held within the State of Mississippi of the State Board of Education, the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development, the Commission on School Accreditation, the Mississippi Authority for Educational Television and the meetings of the state textbook rating committees or other meetings authorized by local school board policy.

### ***PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL EXPENSES (Policy GBRF)***

Authorized travel expenses shall be reimbursed only when the travel is approved in advance, is for a legitimate District purpose, and is documented as required by Board policy, District procedures, and state travel regulations.

Mileage shall be reimbursed at the current state-approved mileage rate applicable to public agencies unless a more restrictive District policy applies. Employees must submit required travel approval forms, itemized receipts, mileage documentation, agendas or conference notices, and any other documentation required by the business office.

Travel expenses not approved in advance, not properly documented, submitted outside the required timeline, or inconsistent with law or District procedures may be denied. Employees may be subject to discipline for knowingly submitting false, inflated, or misleading reimbursement documentation.

## ***REGARDING TRAVEL ADVANCES (Policy GBRF)***

1. The superintendent ONLY is authorized to approve travel advances.
2. The superintendent shall comply with all rules and regulations of the State Department of Audit regarding travel advances.
3. The superintendent shall comply with the State Department of Finance and Administration's daily limits on expenditures for meals.
4. All official travel must be preapproved.
5. Persons receiving advances must be officers or employees of the school district.
6. Travel advances may not be used for personal expenses or for any purpose other than the actual expenses of the authorized travel.
7. Accounting for any travel advance shall be made within five (5) working days after the end of the month in which the official travel was made.
  1. Any money not used for travel-related expenses shall be repaid to the school district at this time.
  2. The travel reimbursement form prescribed by the State Department of Finance and Administration shall be completed and submitted at this time for all money not refunded to the school district.
  3. Actual receipts for all travel expenses are to be included.

## ***RETIREMENT (Policy GBRI)***

Upon retirement from employment, each licensed and nonlicensed employee shall be paid for not more than thirty (30) days of unused accumulated leave earned while employed by the school district in which the employee is last employed. Such payment for licensed employees shall be made by the school district at a rate equal to the amount paid to substitute teachers and for nonlicensed employees, the payment shall be made by the school district at a rate equal to the federal minimum wage. The payment shall be treated in the same manner for retirement purposes as a lump sum payment for personal leave as provided in Section 25-11-103 (e). Any remaining lawfully credited unused leave, for which payment has not been made, shall be certified to the Public Employees' Retirement System in the same manner and subject to the same limitations as otherwise provided by law for unused leave. No payment for unused accumulated leave may be made to either a licensed or nonlicensed employee at termination or separation from service for any purpose other than for the purpose of retirement.

## ***RULES AND REGULATIONS (Policy GBRI)***

The school board may adopt rules and regulations which will reasonably aid to implement the policy of sick and personal leave, including, but not limited to, rules and regulations having the following general effect:

- a. Requiring the absent employee to furnish the certificate of a physician or dentist or other medical practitioners as to the illness of the absent employee, where the absence is for four (4) or more consecutive school days, or for two (2) consecutive school days immediately preceding or following a nonschool day;
- b. Providing penalties, by way of full deduction from salary, or entry on the work record of the employee, or other appropriate penalties, for any materially false statement by the employee as to the cause of absence;
- c. Forfeiture of accumulated or future sick leave, if the absence of the employee is caused by optional dental or medical treatment or surgery which could, without medical risk, have been provided, furnished, or performed at a time when school was not in session;
- d. Enlarging, increasing, or providing greater sick or personal leave allowances than the minimum standards established by this section at the discretion of the school board of each school district.

### ***ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUBSTITUTES (Policy GBRJ)***

A roster of teachers approved for substitute teaching on a per diem basis shall be issued annually by the superintendent of schools, which shall contain the names of approved teachers who shall have made formal applications to the office of the superintendent to serve as emergency teachers. Principals shall use the roster of approved substitute teachers in selecting teachers for emergency service as required. Retired teachers may substitute-teach. ' 25-11-127

### **CRIMINAL RECORDS BACKGROUND CHECK**

Superintendents/directors of schools under the purview of the State Board of Education, the superintendent of the local school district and any private firm under contract with the local public school district to provide substitute teachers to teach during the absence of a regularly employed schoolteacher shall require, through the appropriate governmental authority, that current criminal records background checks and current child abuse registry checks are obtained, and that such criminal record information and registry checks are on file for any new hires applying for employment as a licensed or nonlicensed employee at a school and not previously employed in such school under the purview of the State Board of Education or at such local school district prior to July 1, 2000. In order to determine the applicant's suitability for employment, the applicant shall be fingerprinted. ' 37-9-17 (2)

### **TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION**

Substitute teachers are approved by the school board for one academic year. Substitute teacher applicants are screened. The applicants with the most educational training are selected. Temporary service teachers are at-will employees and have no property rights in their employment which may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the employer without notice.

### **PAYMENT FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

School boards may include in their budgets provisions for the payment of substitute employees, necessitated because of the absence of regular licensed employees. All such substitute employees shall be paid wholly from district funds. Such school boards, in their discretion, also may pay, from district funds other than adequate education program funds, the whole or any part of the salaries of all employees

granted leaves for the purpose of special studies or training. ' 37-7-307 (7)

The Cleveland School District has established the following pay scale for substitute teachers:

- \$80.00/day High School Diploma Required
- \$100.00/day Minimum 60 College Hours (including certified teachers)
- \$90.00/day Long-term substitute with High School Diploma
- \$125.00/day Long-term substitute with 60 College Hours or Associate Degree
- \$150.00/day Long-term substitute (Cleveland School District retired teacher)
- \$10.00/hour Custodian

A Long Term Substitute teacher position is defined as employment in a certified teaching position for no less than 20 days.

### ***NONLICENSED AND HOURLY PAID SCHOOL EMPLOYEES (Policy GBRI)***

The school board may further adopt rules and regulations which will reasonably implement such leave policies for all other nonlicensed and hourly-paid school employees as the board deems appropriate.

### ***VACATION AND PERSONAL LEAVE (Policy GBRI)***

Vacation leave granted to either licensed or nonlicensed employees shall be synonymous with personal leave. Unused vacation or personal leave accumulated by licensed employees in excess of the maximum five (5) days which may be carried over from one (1) year to the next may be converted to sick leave. The annual conversion of unused vacation or personal leave to sick days for licensed or unlicensed employees shall not exceed the allowable number of personal leave days as provided in Section 25-3-93. The annual total number of converted unused vacation and/or personal days added to the annual unused sick days for any employee shall not exceed the combined allowable number of days per year provided in Sections 25-3-93 and 25-3-95. Local school board policies that provide for vacation, personal and sick leave for employees shall not exceed the provisions for leave as provided in Sections 25-3-93 and 25-3-95. Any personal or vacation leave previously converted to sick leave under a lawfully adopted policy before May 1, 2004, or such personal or vacation leave accumulated and available for use prior to May 1, 2004, under a lawfully adopted policy but converted to sick leave after May 1, 2004, shall be recognized as accrued leave by the local school district and available for use by the employee. The leave converted under a lawfully adopted policy prior to May 1, 2004, or such personal and vacation leave accumulated and available for use as of May 1, 2004, which was subsequently converted to sick leave may be certified to the Public Employees' Retirement System upon the termination of employment and any such leave previously converted and certified to the Public Employees' Retirement System shall be recognized.

### ***DEFINITIONS (Policy GBRI)***

For the purposes of this subsection, the following words and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed in this paragraph unless the context requires otherwise:

1. "Catastrophic injury or illness" means a life-threatening injury or illness of an employee or a member of an employee's immediate family that totally incapacitates the employee from work, as verified by a licensed physician, and forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned by that employee, resulting in the loss of compensation from the state for the employee. Conditions that are short-term in nature, including, but not limited to, common illnesses such as influenza and measles, and common injuries, are not catastrophic. Chronic illnesses or injuries, such as cancer or major surgery, that result in intermittent absences from work and that are long-term in nature and require long recuperation periods

may be considered catastrophic.

2. Immediate family means spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, child or stepchild, grandparent, stepbrother, or stepsister.

Any school district employee may donate a portion of his or her unused accumulated personal leave or sick leave to another employee of the same school district who is suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness or who has a member of his or her immediate family suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness, in accordance with the following:

1. The employee donating the leave (the donor employee) shall designate the employee who is to receive the leave (the recipient employee) and the amount of unused accumulated personal leave and sick leave that is to be donated and shall notify the school district superintendent or his designee of his or her designation.
2. The maximum amount of unused accumulated personal leave that an employee may donate to any other employee may not exceed the number of days that would leave the donor employee with fewer than seven (7) days of personal leave remaining, and the maximum amount of unused accumulated sick leave that an employee may donate to any other employee may not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the unused accumulated sick leave of the donor employee.
3. An employee must have exhausted all of his or her available leave and sick leave before he or she will be eligible to receive any leave donated by another employee. Eligibility for donated leave shall be based upon review and approval by the donor employee's supervisor.
4. Before an employee may receive donated leave, he or she must provide the school district superintendent or his designee with a physician's statement that states that the illness meets the catastrophic criteria established under this section, the beginning date of the catastrophic injury or illness, and a prognosis for recovery and the anticipated date that the recipient employee will be able to return to work.
5. Before an employee may receive donated leave, the superintendent of education of the school district shall appoint a review committee to approve or disapprove the said donations of leave, including the determination that the illness is catastrophic with the meaning of this section.
6. If the total amount of leave that is donated to any employee is not used by the recipient employee, the whole days of donated leave shall be returned to the donor employees on a pro-rata basis, based on the ratio of the number of days of leave donated by each donor employee to the total number of days of leave donated by all donor employees.
7. Donated leave shall not be used in lieu of disability retirement. 37-7-307

## *JURY DUTY / OTHER LEAVE (Policy GBRI)*

This school board shall provide leave for employees who serve on juries and/or serve as a witness under subpoena. The school board cannot recover jury fees from employees who serve on juries. (Attorney General Opinion, *Middleton*, 1991)

## *REQUEST FOR LEAVE (Policy GBRCB)*

In addition to completing a Request for Travel form (blue form), all requests for leave shall be entered through the time clock. Once approved by the employee's supervisor, the leave will attach to the employee's pay record for that pay period. Specific instructions for requesting leave can be found in the Time Trust manual located in the principal's office at each school.

### *Certified employees (Exempt)*

The normal workday for full-time licensed and professional staff is an 8-hour day. Principals may adjust the arrival and departure time to accommodate bus routes and student supervision. Certified Employees are expected to comply with clock-in and clock-out procedures and duty hours. Teachers will remain at the school throughout the school day unless granted permission to leave by the principal. All certified employees are exempt from overtime. The normal 8-hour work day may include but is not limited to, administrative meetings, professional development, student supervision, assigned duties, parent conferences, group or individual planning, and extra-curricular activities. Some activities may extend beyond the normal workday. Work schedules for other employees will be defined by the superintendent or his/her designee, consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act and the provisions of this policy.

Districts must ensure that exempt and non-exempt employees with a contract greater than 187 days (i.e. administrations with 234, 220, and 212-day contracts) are in fact working the actual number of days of the contract.

It is extremely important that leave is documented and reconciled to time worked. Not just for administrators, but for all employees whether they are contracted or not.

### *Classified Employees (Non-Exempt)*

Classified employees work 40 hours per week (not including some cafeteria staff), but the shifts may vary depending on the job. The workweek for school district employees will be Saturday through Friday. A workweek that exceeds 40 hours must be cleared in advance by the principal or supervisor and approved by the superintendent. Workdays are set by the calendar and adopted annually by the school board. All employees are expected to comply with the work schedules established for their particular area.

Any hours **worked** over 40 hours in a work week will be posted as compensatory time in the time clock. Exceptions to this policy require prior approval of the Superintendent. Time off must be cleared in advance with the principal or supervisor and approved by the superintendent. Classified employees are required to clock in and clock out at the beginning and end of each workday. Employees are expected to clock out and clock in for lunch.

It is extremely important that leave is documented and reconciled to time worked. Not just for administrators, but for all employees whether they are contracted or not.

## ***FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA) (Policy GBRIA)***

The District will administer leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Board Policy GBRIA, and applicable regulations. The required FMLA notice shall be posted and employees may obtain FMLA forms and additional information from Human Resources.

To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have worked for the District for at least twelve (12) months, must have at least 1,250 hours of service during the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the leave, and must work at a location where the employer has at least fifty (50) employees within seventy-five (75) miles, as determined by FMLA regulations.

Eligible employees may take up to twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid, job-protected FMLA leave in a twelve-month period for qualifying reasons, including the birth and care of a newborn child; placement of a child for adoption or foster care; care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition; the employee's own serious health condition; or a qualifying exigency arising out of covered military service.

Eligible employees may take up to twenty-six (26) workweeks of military caregiver leave during a single twelve-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, consistent with FMLA regulations.

Employees must provide notice of the need for FMLA leave as soon as practicable and must provide required medical or other certification within the timeframe required by law and District procedures. Failure to provide required notice or certification may delay or affect leave approval.

Paid leave may run concurrently with FMLA leave when permitted or required by Board policy and law. The District will maintain group health benefits during approved FMLA leave on the same terms as if the employee had continued working. FMLA records and medical certifications shall be treated as confidential employment records. Retaliation or interference with FMLA rights is prohibited.

Instructional employees may be subject to special FMLA rules regarding intermittent leave, reduced schedule leave, and leave near the end of an academic term as permitted by federal regulations.

## ***MILITARY LEAVE (Policy GBRID)***

Mississippi law on the subject of employees called to military service is covered in Mississippi Code 1972, ' 33-1-21

The law provides that state employees and employees of "any county, municipality or other political subdivision" are entitled to a leave of absence from their respective duties for periods not to exceed 15 days without loss of pay, time, annual leave, or efficiency rating when ordered to military duty.

Districts do not have to pay such employees after the 15-day absence, but all other benefits are to remain intact until the employee "is relieved from duty."

Employees released from military service have 90 days to apply for reemployment and cannot be discharged "without cause" within one year after reinstatement to their school district positions. The law adds that reemployment protection is not extended to employees dishonorably discharged from military service.

If the time of call to active duty is optional for the employee, this school district expects that the employee chooses a time for reporting to active duty that is least disruptive to the district.

This district shall comply with the Uniformed Services Employment And Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 ("USERRA") which, among other things, removes the distinction between active service personnel and reserve personnel from the employer's perspective. Further, the Act prohibits an employer from denying "initial employment, reemployment, retention in employment, promotion, or any benefit of employment" to a person who is a member of or applies to be a member of the uniformed services, or who is performing, has performed, or has applied to perform services in a uniformed service.

NOTE: Due to the breadth and complexity of USERRA, all of its provisions cannot be covered here. Each board is advised to have its attorney review USERRA and assist in the development of district policy regarding specific applications of USERRA requirements.

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL SUSPENSION / DISMISSAL (Policy GBK)**

Licensed employees may be suspended or dismissed only in accordance with Mississippi law, the Education Employment Procedures Law where applicable, the employee's contract, and Board policy. Grounds may include, but are not limited to, incompetence, neglect of duty, immoral conduct, intemperance, brutal treatment of a pupil, or other good cause as provided by law.

A licensed employee who is dismissed or suspended during the term of a contract is entitled to written notice of the charges and a hearing when required by Mississippi Code Section 37-9-59 and related statutes. The superintendent may immediately release a licensed employee from duties pending a hearing when the superintendent determines that continued presence poses a threat to health, safety, or welfare or may cause a substantial disruption of school operations, consistent with law.

Nonlicensed and at-will employees are subject to discipline, suspension, dismissal, or nonrenewal as provided by law, Board policy, and any applicable employment agreement. All employment actions shall be administered without unlawful discrimination or retaliation.

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL (REDUCTION IN FORCE) (Policy GBKAR)**

The Board of Trustees has the responsibility for providing and maintaining quality schools within the district. In order to carry out its responsibility, the board may: (1) abolish or combine job positions, (2) reduce the length of the work year with a concomitant reduction in salary (the same to be in no event less than 187 days per contract year), (3) reduce administrative supplements, (4) reduce the number of employees. Initially, staff reduction will be accomplished by attrition.

When reducing the number of licensed employees, the board will take into account the following reasons for such a reduction in force:

1. Enrollment declines,
2. Financial decline/reduction
3. Educational program(s) elimination, and
4. Priority needs for human, material, and financial resources.

The primary objective of the board when reducing the workforce will be the maintenance of a fair and balanced educational program consistent with the needs of the students and the functions and responsibilities of the school district. When deciding reduction in force, the board will consider the following factors, not necessarily in the order listed:

1. Criticality of the position to the mission, goals, and objectives of the school district
2. Subject area(s) and advanced degrees by certification.
3. Experience, professional training, length of service within the district, and work assignment.
4. Quality of performance including the proven ability to accomplish the educational mission of the school district.
5. Executive ability.
6. Employee attendance and discipline history.
7. Skills and licensure in the area(s) where the district has instructional and/or supervisory needs.

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL SEPARATION (Policy GBN)**

Separation from employment includes resignation, retirement, nonrenewal, dismissal, reduction in force, expiration of contract, abandonment of employment, or other separation recognized by law or Board policy.

### *Notice of Nonrenewal*

Nonrenewal decisions for licensed employees shall be handled in accordance with the Education Employment Procedures Law and Board policy. When required, the employee shall receive written notice, reasons for nonrenewal, and an opportunity to request a hearing and present matters in response. Nonrenewal does not constitute a finding of misconduct unless the notice or Board action so states.

### *Licensed Employee Rights*

Licensed employees retain the rights provided by Mississippi law, the employee's written contract, and Board policy, including applicable rights to notice, reasons, and hearing. Nonlicensed employees may have different rights depending on law, Board policy, and employment status.

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS (Policy GBO)**

All resignations of licensed employees must be acted on by the school board, at which time the board may either officially accept or not accept the resignation. Any such action shall be reflected in the school board's official minutes.

A licensed employee who leaves the district without having fulfilled his/her contractual obligations and without being officially released from his or her contract by the board will be considered to be in breach of his/her contract and may have his/her license revoked.

It is the board's position that when an employee has a legitimate reason for requesting a release from their contract, said employee will not be released unless and until a highly qualified replacement for that position is identified by the Cleveland School District.

## **PROCEDURES**

Resignations must be mailed to the superintendent by certified mail, return receipt requested, or personally delivered to the superintendent's office and an acknowledgment of receipt must be inscribed on the face of the letter of resignation.

Upon receipt of a letter of resignation, the superintendent shall present the resignation to the Board of Trustees at their next meeting and, after presentation to the Board, notify the employee in writing as to whether or not the employee's resignation is accepted. This notification shall be sent to the employee by certified mail, return receipt requested, or personally delivered to the employee, and an acknowledgment of receipt by the employee inscribed on the face of the letter of acceptance or denial of the resignation. The employee shall be given one copy of the acknowledged acceptance or denial of the resignation and the superintendent shall keep one copy of the acknowledged acceptance or denial of the resignation.

All letters of resignation and acceptance or denial of resignations shall become a permanent part of the employee's personnel file.

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RELEASE FROM CONTRACT (Policy GBOA)**

Any appointed superintendent, principal, or licensed employee in any public school district who is under contract to teach or perform other duties and who desires to be released from such contract shall make an application in writing to the school board of the school district for release therefrom, in which application the reasons for such release shall be clearly stated. If the board acts favorably upon such application for release, such superintendent, principal, or licensed employee shall be released from his contract, and said contract shall be null and void on the date specified in this school board's order. ' 37-9-55 (1997)

If any appointed superintendent, principal or licensed employee in any public school of this state shall arbitrarily or willfully breach his or her contract and abandon his or her employment without being released therefrom as provided in Section 37-9-55, the contract of such superintendent, principal or licensed employee shall be null and void. In addition, thereto the license or certificate of such superintendent, principal, or licensed employee may be suspended by the State Board of Education for a period of one (1) school year as provided in Section 37-3-2 (8) upon written recommendation of the majority of the members of the school board of the school district involved. '37-9-57 (1997)

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RETIREMENT (Policy GBQ)**

Professional educators shall be retired from public employment under such conditions and provisions established by the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS). ' 25-11-101 et seq.

### *ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINION*

Q: May a superintendent or school board give retirees who worked in a school district free lifetime passes to all sports events as a retirement gift?

A: A school board would have no authority to award gifts to employees upon retirement. See Article 4, Section 96 of the Mississippi Constitution. (Attorney General's Opinion to Necaise dated December 20, 2002)

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL REEMPLOYMENT (Policy GBP)**

### **LICENSED AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL EMPLOYEES**

On or before April 1 of each year, the principal of each school shall recommend to the superintendent of the local school district the licensed employees or non-instructional employees to be employed for the school involved except those licensed employees or non-instructional employees who have been previously employed and who have a contract valid for the ensuing scholastic year. If such recommendations meet with the approval of the superintendent, the superintendent shall recommend the employment of such licensed employees or noninstructional employees to the local school board, and, unless good reason to the contrary exists, the board shall elect the employees so recommended. If, for any reason, the local school board shall decline to elect any employee so recommended, additional recommendations for the places to be filled shall be made by the principal to the superintendent and then by the superintendent to the local school board as provided above.

## **PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT (Policy GAA)**

All licensed educators in the District shall comply with the current Mississippi Professional Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct as adopted by the Mississippi State Board of Education and referenced in Policy GAA. If the text of the Code printed in this handbook becomes inconsistent with the current official MDE rule, the current official MDE rule controls.

The superintendent or designee shall establish procedures to: provide licensed employees with access to the Code; maintain a signed statement in each licensed employee's personnel file verifying notice of the Code; advise licensed employees that their contracts and licenses are subject to the Code; and provide annual in-service training for employees on the Code and related reporting obligations.

The Superintendent shall report to the Mississippi Department of Education reportable license-holder misconduct and other reportable infractions within the timelines required by MDE rules and Mississippi law. Employees must promptly notify their supervisor or Human Resources of arrests, criminal charges, convictions, licensure investigations, or other matters that may affect employment, licensure, or student safety, as required by law, contract, or Board policy.

## **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT (Policy GAB)**

Employees of the Cleveland School District are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on the District and supports a safe, respectful, nondiscriminatory, and orderly learning and working environment.

Employees shall maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students at all times. Romantic, sexual, grooming, exploitative, secretive, or otherwise inappropriate communications or relationships with students are prohibited regardless of student age or purported consent. Employees shall use District-approved communication methods for school business and shall keep student communications educational, transparent, and accessible to supervisors or parents when appropriate.

Employees must maintain the confidentiality of student education records, student health information, employee medical information, personnel information, test materials, security information, and other confidential District information. Confidential information shall not be disclosed except as authorized by law, Board policy, or a legitimate educational or employment need to know.

Employees shall not use abusive, foul, profane, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory language or conduct. Employees shall provide adequate supervision, comply with testing and assessment security requirements, report safety concerns promptly, and follow all District policies regarding discipline, use of technology, social media, student searches, bullying, harassment, and mandated reporting.

Violations may result in corrective action, written reprimand, suspension, nonrenewal, dismissal, termination, licensure referral, and/or referral to law enforcement or child protection authorities as required by law.

## **STATE BOARD POLICY (Reference in Policy GAA)**

This code shall apply to all persons licensed according to the rules established by the Mississippi State Board of Education and protects the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators.

Ethical conduct is any conduct that promotes the health, safety, welfare, discipline, and morals of students and colleagues.

Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the license holder's ability to function in his/her employment position or a pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, discipline, or morals of students and colleagues.

Any educator or administrator license may be revoked or suspended for engaging in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4). Superintendents shall report to the Mississippi Department of Education license holders who engage in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4).

# *CODE OF ETHICS STANDARDS OF CONDUCT*

## **Standard 1: Professional Conduct**

An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.

1.1. Ethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Encouraging and supporting colleagues in developing and maintaining high standards
- b. Respecting fellow educators and participating in the development of a professional teaching environment
- c. Engaging in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to professional development designed to promote student learning
- d. Providing professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner
- e. Maintaining competence regarding skills, knowledge, and dispositions relating to his/her organizational position, subject matter, and pedagogical practices
- f. Maintaining a professional relationship with parents of students and establishing appropriate communication related to the welfare of their children.

1.2. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Harassment of colleagues
- b. Misuse or mismanagement of tests or test materials
- c. Inappropriate language on school grounds or any school-related activity
- d. Physical altercations
- e. Failure to provide appropriate supervision of students and reasonable disciplinary actions.

## **Standard 2: Trustworthiness**

An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice and does not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.

2.1. Ethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Properly representing facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression
- b. Advocating for fair and equitable opportunities for all children
- c. Embodying for students the characteristics of honesty, diplomacy, tact, and fairness.

2.2. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting any of the following:
  1. employment history, professional qualifications, criminal history, certification/recertification
  2. information submitted to local, state, federal, and/or other governmental agencies
  3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel
  4. reasons for absences or leave
  5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation
- b. Falsifying records or directing or coercing others to do so.

## **Standard 3: Unlawful Acts**

An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes and local school board policies.

3. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or sexual offense. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought or a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted.

#### **Standard 4: Educator/Student Relationships**

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.

4.1. Ethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Fulfilling the roles of mentor and advocate for students in a professional relationship. A professional relationship is one where the educator maintains a position of teacher/ student authority while expressing concern, empathy, and encouragement for students.
- b. Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and civic potential of all students
- c. Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement
- d. Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students.

4.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a. Committing any act of child abuse
- b. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment
- c. Committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act
- d. Engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion, or disability
- e. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs
- f. Soliciting, encouraging, participating, or initiating inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, physical, or romantic relationships with students.

Examples of these acts may include but not be limited to:

1. sexual jokes
2. sexual remarks
3. sexual kidding or teasing
4. sexual innuendo
5. pressure for dates or sexual favors
6. inappropriate touching, fondling, kissing, or grabbing
7. rape
8. threats of physical harm
9. sexual assault
10. electronic communication such as texting
11. invitation to social networking
12. remarks about a student's body
13. consensual sex.

#### **Standard 5: Educator/Collegial Relationships**

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with colleagues, both in and outside the classroom.

1. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the following:

- a. Revealing confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law

- b. Harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system
- c. Interfering with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities
- d. Discriminating against or coercing a colleague on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, or family status
- e. Using coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence the professional decisions of colleagues.

**Standard 6: Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Use or Possession**

An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during the course of professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs.

- 6.1. Ethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Factually representing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use and abuse to students during the course of professional practice.
- 6.2. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Being under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs
  - b. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages. A school-related activity includes but is not limited to, any activity that is sponsored by a school or a school system or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum such as club trips, etc. which involve students.
  - c. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented using tobacco.

**Standard 7: Public Funds and Property**

An educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use funds, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

- 7.1. Ethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Maximizing the positive effect of school funds through judicious use of said funds
  - b. Modeling for students and colleagues the responsible use of public property.
- 7.2. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Knowingly misappropriating, diverting, or using funds, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain
  - b. Failing to account for funds collected from students, parents, or any school-related function
  - c. Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay
  - d. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts
  - e. Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing body.

**Standard 8: Remunerative Conduct**

An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

- 8.1. Ethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Insuring that institutional privileges are not used for personal gain
  - b. Insuring that school policies or procedures are not impacted by gifts or gratuities from any person or organization.

- 8.2. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:
- a. Soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local governing body
  - b. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local school board
  - c. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. (This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.)

**Standard 9: Maintenance of Confidentiality**

An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements.

- 9.1. Ethical conduct includes but is not limited to, the following:
- a. Keeping in confidence information about students that has been obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a legitimate purpose or is required by law
  - b. Maintaining diligently the security of standardized test supplies and resources.
- 9.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- a. Sharing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information family status/income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law.
  - b. Violating confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, and violating local school board or state directions for the use of tests
  - c. Violating other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

**Standard 10: Breach of Contract or Abandonment of Employment**

An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local school board or educational agency for the duration of the contract.

- a. Abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the school board
- b. Refusing to perform services required by the contract.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT (Policy GBR)**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The District prohibits sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and retaliation in employment and in all District programs and activities. The District will follow current federal Title IX regulations, Title VII, applicable Mississippi law, and Board policy.

Title IX Coordinator: Mr. Charles Johnson, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, Cleveland School District, 305 Merritt Drive, Cleveland, MS 38732; Phone: 662.843.3529; Fax: 662.441.1938; Email: [titleix@cleveland.k12.ms.us](mailto:titleix@cleveland.k12.ms.us).

Any person may report sex discrimination or sexual harassment in person, by mail, by telephone, by email, or by any other method that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the report. Reports may be made by the person alleged to be the victim, a parent/guardian, an employee, a witness, or any other person.

For K-12 schools, notice to any District employee may constitute actual knowledge under Title IX. All employees who receive information about possible sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or retaliation must promptly report the information to the Title IX Coordinator or other designated District official.

For purposes of the District's Title IX grievance process, sexual harassment includes: (1) an employee conditioning an aid, benefit, or service on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; (2) unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity; or (3) sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as defined by federal law.

The District will offer supportive measures as appropriate, conduct required grievance procedures before imposing disciplinary sanctions under Title IX, maintain required records, and prohibit retaliation. Conduct that does not meet the Title IX definition may still violate Title VII, other civil-rights laws, the Educator Code of Ethics, criminal law, or Board policy and may be addressed through other District procedures.

Knowingly making a false report or knowingly providing false information in an investigation is prohibited and may result in discipline. This provision shall not be used to discourage good-faith reports or participation in investigations.

## **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PROHIBITED (Policy JCA)**

Sexual misconduct involving students is strictly prohibited. No employee, volunteer, contractor, or other adult acting on behalf of the District may engage in sexual contact, a romantic or dating relationship, sexual conversation, sexual images, grooming behavior, exploitation, or any other sexualized conduct with a student, regardless of the student's age, grade level, or purported consent.

Employees who know or reasonably suspect child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, exploitation, human trafficking, or other reportable harm to a child must make required reports immediately to the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services or other required authority and must also follow District reporting procedures. Reporting to a supervisor does not replace any direct mandatory reporting duty imposed by Mississippi law.

When an accusation is made against a school employee involving sexual involvement, fondling, exploitation, or similar misconduct with a child enrolled in school, District officials shall make required notifications to appropriate authorities, including law enforcement, the district attorney, MDE, and/or MDCPS as required by Mississippi law and Board policy.

Employees must preserve evidence, avoid interference with investigations, cooperate with District and agency investigations, and maintain confidentiality to the extent required by law. Retaliation against any person who reports or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

# *Cleveland School District Student Bullying Policy*

## *(Policy JDDA-P)*

All employees are responsible for helping maintain a safe school environment and must promptly report suspected bullying, harassment, intimidation, hazing, cyberbullying, or retaliation involving students to the building principal or other designated administrator. Employees should intervene when safe and appropriate, protect students from immediate harm, and document/report incidents using District procedures.

Reports of bullying or harassment shall be handled consistently with Board policy, state law, the student handbook, and applicable civil-rights requirements. Employees shall not retaliate against any student, parent, employee, or witness for making a good-faith report or participating in an investigation.

## *GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES -- LICENSED PERSONNEL APPRAISAL (Policy GAEP)*

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to provide the licensed employee an equitable solution to a grievance filed in connection with a personnel appraisal.

### **DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions shall apply in this grievance procedure:

1. "Personnel appraisal" refers to the system of annual performance evaluation of all licensed staff, as is mandated by state law. This grievance procedure has been approved by the school board for use in this district as part of its "Personnel Appraisal System."
2. A "grievance" is a complaint by an individual based upon an alleged violation of his or her rights under state or federal law or board policy related to the personnel appraisal process for that individual.
3. A "grievant" is a person or persons making the complaint.
4. The term "days" shall mean working school days and shall exclude weekends, holidays, and vacation days.

### **PROCEDURE FOR PROCESSING GRIEVANCES**

Grievances shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

#### **Level One**

1. All grievances, as defined above, must be presented orally to the principal of the grievant within five (5) days of the act or omission complained of, and the principal and grievant will attempt to resolve the matter informally.
2. If the grievant is not satisfied with the action taken or the explanation given by his principal the grievant shall, within five (5) days after meeting with his principal, file a written statement with his principal setting forth in detail how the grievant claims to have been discriminated against. This written statement shall contain, in addition to the above, the time, place, and nature of the alleged act or omission and the state or federal law or board policy violated. The statement must be signed by the grievant.

3. In the event the grievant does not submit to his principal a written statement as required, his failure to do so shall be deemed as an acceptance of the informal decision rendered by his principal.
4. Within five (5) days after receiving the grievant's signed statement the principal shall send to the superintendent a copy of the grievant's statement along with a statement from the principal setting forth his response to the grievant and/or his decisions, as is applicable. At the same time, the principal shall also provide a copy of his written statement to the grievant.

### **Level Two**

1. Upon receipt by the superintendent of the written notice that the grievant intends to appeal the decision of his principal, the superintendent shall notify the grievant in writing within five (5) days and shall advise the grievant of the date, time, and place upon which the matter will be considered by the superintendent. The superintendent shall schedule a hearing on the matter no later than ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the grievant's written notice of intention to appeal the written decision of his principal.
2. The written statement submitted by the grievant to his principal in Level One shall form the basis of the grievance before the superintendent. The grievant shall submit in writing any and all additional information on his behalf which he desires to the superintendent not later than five (5) days prior to the date upon which the matter is scheduled for hearing by the superintendent.
3. In the event the grievant does not personally attend the hearing scheduled by the superintendent, his failure to attend shall be deemed as an acceptance of the written decision rendered by his principal at LEVEL ONE.
4. The superintendent shall render a written decision to the grievant within five (5) days of the date upon which the matter was heard.

### **Level Three**

1. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant at LEVEL TWO, or if the superintendent does not render a decision within five (5) days, the grievant may file the grievance with the secretary of the school board.
2. If the grievance is not filed with the secretary of the school board within five (5) days of the hearing at LEVEL TWO, the grievance shall be considered resolved.
3. Within five (5) days after receipt of the grievance, the board secretary, in concert with the board chairman and superintendent, shall schedule a hearing before the school board on the grievance.
4. The board shall render its decision within seven (7) days of the hearing.

## **USE OF CELL TELEPHONES BY TEACHERS (Policy IFBB)**

The Board of Trustees of the Cleveland School District believes that the school district was created for the primary purpose of effectively educating the children attending school within the school system. The Board further believes that to accomplish this mission, it is imperative that classroom instructional time be protected. Therefore, any activity that distracts the teacher from his or her ability to utilize the entire class period for instructional purposes is prohibited. Specifically prohibited is the use of cell telephones by teachers during class time.

### **VIOLATIONS**

Alleged violations of this policy shall be discussed in a conference between the employee and the building principal. If the principal finds the violation(s) to be factual, the principal shall issue a written reprimand to the employee(s) involved. This reprimand shall become a part of the employee's personnel file. Repeated violations may result in the non-renewal of an employee's contract or dismissal.

## **Acceptable Use Policy for Student / Parent / Community Member / Faculty & Staff (Policy IJ)**

District technology, networks, accounts, devices, software, data systems, and internet access are provided for authorized educational and operational purposes. Use of District technology is a privilege and may be monitored, searched, archived, or disclosed as permitted by law and Board policy.

Employees shall protect passwords, multifactor credentials, student records, personnel information, medical information, test materials, financial information, security information, and all other confidential data. Employees shall not share credentials, bypass security controls, install unauthorized software, connect unauthorized devices, or use District systems for unlawful, harassing, discriminatory, commercial, political campaign, or inappropriate personal purposes.

Employees shall not enter confidential student, employee, assessment, medical, personnel, financial, security, or legally privileged information into public or unauthorized websites, apps, artificial intelligence tools, or other third-party services unless the District has approved the tool and the use complies with FERPA, data privacy, records retention, procurement, and Board policy requirements.

Suspected cybersecurity incidents, lost or stolen devices, phishing attempts, unauthorized disclosures, or access to inappropriate material shall be reported promptly to the Technology Department and the employee's supervisor.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES (Policy GABBA)**

Employees are expected to use social media responsibly and in a manner that does not disrupt District operations, violate confidentiality, damage the educational environment, or impair the employee's ability to perform assigned duties.

Employees shall not post or transmit confidential student information, student images or work in violation of privacy rules, employee medical or personnel information, test materials, security information, or other nonpublic District information on personal or unauthorized social media accounts.

School-related social media accounts must be approved by the District or building administrator and operated in accordance with District communication, branding, records retention, accessibility, and student privacy procedures. Communications with students through social media must remain professional, educational, transparent, and consistent with District-approved methods.

Employees shall not use social media to harass, bully, threaten, discriminate, retaliate, or engage in conduct that violates the Educator Code of Ethics or Board policy. Employees should make clear that personal views are their own and not official District statements unless authorized to speak for the District.

### **USING COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL (Policy IJC)**

Employees shall comply with copyright law, licensing agreements, Board policy, and District procedures when using printed, digital, audio, video, software, online, or streaming materials. District equipment and accounts may not be used to copy, distribute, stream, download, perform, or display copyrighted works unless authorized by license, permission, public-domain status, an open license, or a valid legal exception such as fair use.

Employees are responsible for reviewing licensing terms before using digital subscriptions, online media, videos, music, images, software, or classroom resources. The fact that material is available on the internet does not mean it may be copied, uploaded, reposted, streamed, or distributed.

Questions about copyright, fair use, the TEACH Act, or licensing should be directed to the building administrator, media specialist, or curriculum/technology supervisor before the material is used.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY (Policy GBRM-2)**

The District is committed to a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace. Employees are prohibited from reporting to work, remaining at work, operating District vehicles or equipment, supervising students, or performing safety-sensitive duties while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, misused prescription medication, or any substance that impairs the employee's ability to perform duties safely and effectively.

The District may conduct pre-employment testing, reasonable-suspicion testing, post-accident testing, return-to-duty testing, follow-up testing, and random testing for bus drivers and other safety-sensitive positions as required or permitted by federal law, Mississippi law, and Board policy. Bus drivers and other employees subject to U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration rules must comply with all DOT testing, removal-from-duty, return-to-duty, and follow-up requirements.

Reasonable suspicion may be based on observable symptoms, abnormal conduct, erratic behavior, credible and corroborated reports, evidence of tampering, accident information, possession or use of prohibited substances, or other facts permitted by law. Reasonable-suspicion testing must be approved by the superintendent or designee before testing when practicable.

Employees may provide information about currently or recently used prescription or nonprescription medication to the testing provider or medical review officer as permitted by testing procedures. Employees must not perform duties while medication or any substance impairs safe performance.

Test results and related medical information shall be treated as confidential employment records and disclosed only as permitted or required by law. Refusal to test, tampering, adulteration, substitution, or a confirmed positive test may result in discipline up to and including termination, contract action, removal from safety-sensitive duties, licensure referral, and/or other action required by law.

An employee who receives a positive confirmation test result may contest or explain the result within the timeframe allowed by District procedure and applicable law and may request retesting at a certified laboratory at the employee's expense when permitted by law and testing procedures.

## **How to Report Workers' Compensation Injuries**

Employees should report work-related injuries or illnesses immediately. Emergency medical care should not be delayed. The District prohibits retaliation against an employee for reporting a work-related injury or illness or for filing or participating in a workers' compensation claim.

**INJURY REPORTING:** On the First Report of Injury form provided by the Cleveland School District, the principal or building administrator shall report injuries of employees which require medical attention or which keep the employee from work one-half day or more. This form is submitted to Human Resources.

### ***NON-EMERGENCY***

Follow these steps if you are involved in a new work-related injury or illness anywhere in Mississippi, which is not an emergency, or life-threatening.

1. Report the injury to your supervisor as soon as it occurs and complete the First Report of Injury form. The Principal/Building Administrator or Secretary should contact your School Nurse.
2. If you require treatment, inform your immediate supervisor and Human Resources with details of the medical provider who will be treating your injury.
3. Have a representative from the medical facility contact Human Resources at 662-843-3529

4. Keep all medical treatment appointments.
5. Employees must keep in contact with both their immediate supervisor and Human Resources as to their health status and estimated return to work information from the physician.

***EMERGENCY***

Follow these steps if you are involved in a work-related injury anywhere in Mississippi, which is serious (excessive bleeding, extreme pain, or head injury) and requires immediate emergency treatment:

1. Contact your immediate supervisor if possible.
2. Go to the nearest medical facility, which offers emergency care, or Call 911 emergency services.
3. Have a representative from the medical facility contact Human Resources at 662-843-3529.
4. When the emergency is over, report the injury to your supervisor if not reported already; complete the First Report of Injury form, then follow steps 2 through 5 above.

## Human Resource Forms

The following is a list of forms used in the Human Resources Department:

<i>Employee Recommendation Form</i>	Used when recommending an applicant for employment
<i>Employee Change of Status Form</i>	Used when an employee makes a change of any kind, i.e. grade level, subject area, number of days employed, salary
<i>Employee Termination Form</i>	Used for any of the following reasons: resignation, abandoned position, dismissed, retired, part-time ended, limited service ended, FMLA ended (not able to return to work)
<i>Employee Exit Checklist</i>	Used prior to an employee’s last day of work with the district
<i>Employee Exit Survey</i>	Used as a tool to improve the HR operations of the school district (google document)
<i>Request for New Personnel</i>	Used when requesting a new teacher unit or additional staff
<i>New Teacher Survey</i>	Used as a tool to improve the HR operations of the school district (google document).
<i>Employee Verification Form</i>	Used to verify years of experience

<i>Notice of Corrective Action</i>	Used for employee infractions

## Tardy and Clocking Out Guidelines

Employees must report to work on time, remain on duty during assigned work hours, and accurately record all time worked. Tardiness, early departures, leaving campus without authorization, repeated missed punches, or falsification of time records may result in corrective action or discipline.

Supervisors shall administer timekeeping rules consistently and in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, wage-payment requirements, employee contracts, Board policy, and applicable due process procedures. No employee may be directed or permitted to work off the clock. No employee may falsify or alter another employee's time records.

For payroll purposes, a missed punch or other timekeeping error may require supervisory verification before payment is processed. The District will pay employees for all verified time actually worked, and failure to comply with timekeeping procedures may be handled separately as a disciplinary matter.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **LEAVES AND ABSENCES**

#### **What should I do if I miss work?**

1. *Call your school within the time-frame established by your principal for reporting absences.*
2. *Report the length of your absence.*
3. *Report the type of leave your absence is to be coded.*
4. *Call your principal again as soon as you find that you will be out longer than you have reported.*
5. *Be sure to submit your leave request through Active Resources.*

#### **What happens if I don't call in?**

*Your principal reports all absences to the business office by 8:30 a.m. each day. Failure to call-in (or schedule your absence in advance) will result in loss of pay. Absences without pay **will not** be reclassified to leave with pay to avoid loss except in case of extreme emergency.*

**May I use sick leave if I don't have a qualifying illness?**

No.

**May I use personal leave if I'm sick and have no sick days?**

Yes.

**If I call in that I'm sick but it turns out that I don't have any sick leave, will you automatically use my personal days or my vacation days-(12-Month staff only)?**

*No. If this does occur and you are docked, we will make a correction the following month upon written request to use personal leave or vacation that may be available.*

**If I call in or schedule a personal leave day and it turns out that I don't have any accumulated leave, will you automatically use sick leave I have available?**

*No. Sick leave is restricted to use for illness only and cannot be substituted for personal leave. You will be docked. However, vacation leave may be substituted for personal leave upon written request on the following payroll.*

**I am supposed to be a witness in court or have been summoned for jury duty. Will this absence be excused?**

*Yes, if you properly report your absence and present evidence that you received a subpoena in a court action to which you were not a party or a summons for jury duty. You cannot be excused if you are on trial or are part of the court action.*

**What is a School Business Day?**

*An excused absence for attending educational workshops and professional meetings is considered an "School Business" day.*

**How do I request an E Day?**

*Submit a request for travel approval to the district travel coordinator prior to the trip.*

**What will happen if I travel without submitting the request for travel approval as required?**

*Expenses will not be paid and you may be docked for an unexcused absence.*

**Do I do this even if there are no expenses involved?**

*Yes. This request is the basis for recording your absence as excused.*

**If my principal is sending me, do I still have to get approval?**

Yes.

**My principal did not submit my travel request to the business office on time. Will I be reimbursed?**

*NO. It is **not** the principal's responsibility to turn in the request. The principal's responsibility is to indicate approval and assign an account code. It is your responsibility to have everything in order and submitted to the business office prior to the trip.*

**How will I know that my trip has been approved?**

*A purchase order signed by the superintendent will be given to you in your travel pack from the district travel coordinator.*

**Should anything accompany the request for travel approval?**

*Yes. The written notice publicizing the meeting is required for verification of total expenses and number of days to excuse. Principal's approval and any other documentation relevant to the trip.*

**What are the most common errors causing travel requests not to be approved?**

- Lack of principal's signature*
- No budget account codes*
- Inaccurate budget account codes*
- Dates of travel not shown*
- Submitted after-the-fact*
- No monies in travel budget*

**Do I have to do a travel request if I'm going on a field trip?**

*No. However, you must submit a field trip request form through travel tracker.*

**When may I submit a field trip request?**

*After the amount necessary to pay for the trip has been deposited into your school's activity bank account and at least three weeks prior to the trip for in-state trip.*

**What is extended leave?**

*The Superintendent may grant an extension of leave due to your personal illness of up to ten days. Extended leave is only granted when used consecutively in conjunction with a personal illness that requires the use of all of your accumulated leave. In other words, in order to get extended leave you must have accumulated leave to couple with it.*

**How often can I use extended leave?**

*Extended leave can be used only once during the school year, if approved by the superintendent.*

**Do I receive full pay for the days I'm on extended leave?**

*No. Certified employees have the cost of a substitute deducted from each day of extended leave pay. Classified employees are deducted at the current minimum wage rate.*

**If I don't use my personal leave days do I lose them?**

*No. Once the maximum number of leave days has been accumulated, additional personal days are rolled into sick leave.*

**What happens to my accumulated leave when I retire?**

*At your discretion, you may be paid for up to 30 days accumulated leave and any additional properly certified leave may be credited towards active service for retirement purposes.*

**I am going to retire. How do I go about getting my days certified towards active service?**

*Stop by the personnel office and sign a form for certifying your days to the retirement system.*

**What happens if I am absent after I have certified my days to the retirement system?**

*Days certified to the retirement system are no longer available for use. If you are absent and have no available leave you will be docked. When you are docked any previous retirement projection will be revised and forwarded to PERS.*

**Will you “uncertify” my days so this won’t happen?**

*No. It is your responsibility to decide how many days to certify and to be diligent in work attendance if you wish to receive your retirement projection. It may benefit you to be conservative and allow for contingencies when certifying your days.*

**How much sick leave do I earn?**

*Nine month employees earn 8 days per year.*

**How many personal days do I get?**

*Employees earn two days per year. Employees may carry forward up to 5 personal days.*

**If I have used all of my accumulated leave and 10 days extended leave, is there any other way I can be absent without loss of pay?**

*Yes, donated leave.*

**What is donated leave?**

*Additional leave received as a donation from other qualified employees. Any school district employee may donate a portion of his or her unused accumulated personal leave or sick leave to another employee of the same school district who is suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness or who has a member of his or her immediate family suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness.*

**What is a catastrophic injury or illness?**

*“Catastrophic injury or illness” means a life-threatening injury or illness of an employee or a member of an employee’s immediate family that totally incapacitates the employee from work,*

*as verified by a licensed physician, and forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned by the employee resulting in the loss of compensation from the state for the employee. Conditions that are short-term in nature, including, but not limited to, common illnesses such as influenza and the measles, and common injuries, are not catastrophic. Chronic illnesses or injuries, such as cancer or major surgery that results in intermittent absences from work and that are long-term in nature and require long recuperation periods may be considered catastrophic.*

**Who qualifies as an “immediate family member”?**

*“Immediate family” means spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, child, stepchild, and grandparents.*

**SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT**

**Are there funds available for supplies and equipment for my class?**

*Yes. Each principal is allotted funds for instructional supplies from local district monies. Additionally, teachers will be allotted senate bill monies for instructional supplies and equipment. Add to this Title I funds which are divided on a pro-rata basis among the schools and budgeted at the discretion of each principal. Senate bill funds vary from year to year depending on legislative appropriations.*

**How do I get those supplies?**

*Contact your principal regarding needed supplies.*

**What happens next?**

*If the principal approves your request, he/she will sign it and submit it in accordance with school district purchasing policy.*

**I’ve been told I couldn’t get the supplies I requested, even though the budget was available, because the business office turned it down. Is this true?**

*No. If a properly filled out requisition is received in the business office and funds are budgeted and available for the items requested, the order will be processed subject to approval by the superintendent.*

**Who is responsible for ensuring that my purchase complies with state purchasing laws?**

*Your principal is required to attach to the requisition any documentation required for purchase law compliance.*

**If my principal approves my purchase and I know that budget funds are available, can I go ahead and get my items?**

*No. The requisition and purchase order procedures must be followed. However, provisions can be made for special circumstances. Your principal should call the business office for approval of any purchases under special circumstances.*

**May I have the materials I need delivered to me at my school?**

No. All school district purchase orders give a shipping address of 500 North Sharpe Avenue. All items must be shipped to that address. However, purchases made from your principal's general activity account or from school club accounts may be delivered directly to the school. The school district uses what is called a "central receiving system." All goods purchased with "central office" purchase orders are delivered to the receiving department at the central office. When we receive an invoice it is not paid until the central receiving department confirms that we have received all the items on the bill.

### **Are there any exceptions to central receiving?**

Yes. All items purchased from principal's activity funds are exempt from this requirement. Additionally, there may be special circumstances which would be better handled by direct delivery. If so, contact the business office and we will work with you.

### **How will I know my purchase request has been processed?**

A copy of the issued purchase order, signed by the superintendent, will be sent to your school.

### **What are the most common errors causing purchase requests not to be processed?**

- Lack of principal's signature
- No budget codes or incorrect codes
- No funds available in the budget

### **How do I handle book previews or trials?**

Submit a requisition and we will issue a purchase order. The books will be received through central receiving. The invoice will then be paid if you decide to keep the books. Return the books to the central receiving if you decide you do not want them. Central receiving will see that we receive credit. You are not responsible for returning unsolicited books. You will be personally responsible for paying for any items bought without a purchase order.

### **What happens if I order and receive materials without a purchase order?**

You will be personally responsible for the bill.

### **Does this apply to previews and trials other than books?**

Yes.

## **THINGS THAT MAY AFFECT YOUR PAYCHECK**

Principals must submit time reports to the business office for all hours and days worked for all employees. Payrolls will be based on the time worked through the predetermined cut-off date.

### **TIME CLOCKS, WORK SCHEDULES, AND HOURS**

### **Who must clock in and out?**

*All employees must clock in and out each day. No exceptions.*

### **What happens if I do not clock in?**

Your first responsibility each day is to clock in. If you do not clock in, payroll may require supervisory verification of the time actually worked before payment is processed, and you may be subject to discipline for failing to follow timekeeping procedures. The District will pay for all verified time actually worked.

### **What happens if I do not clock out?**

You must clock out to create an accurate time record. A missed punch may delay processing until the time worked is verified, and repeated missed punches may result in discipline. The District will pay for all verified time actually worked.

### **Will I get to see my time report?**

*Yes. On the first day of each week your time report will be made available for your review and sign. You should sign your time report and return it to your principal or supervisor to be returned to the Business Office.*

### **What if I don't approve the time as shown?**

*Report any discrepancies to your principal or supervisor immediately. Your report will be reviewed and corrected if necessary. All discrepancies must be reported within three days, unless there are extenuating circumstances.*

### **What if I'm not available to sign my time card report or a discrepancy is not resolved?**

*You will be paid based upon the recorded time. In the event a correction needs to be made, the correction will be done on the next payroll. Your signature must be on your time report.*

## **TIME CLOCKS, WORK SCHEDULES, AND HOURS**

### **I work at Nailor Elementary School and will be going to Parks Elementary School in the morning. May I clock in at Parks?**

*No. You must report to your primary place of employment and clock in. If you need to be at another location for any reason, you still must first report to your primary worksite and clock in.*

### **May I leave campus for lunch?**

*No. All elementary, middle school, and high school employees, are paid for their lunch time and are considered to be on duty and available during the scheduled work day.*

### **What about my planning period? I can leave then can't I?**

*Planning period time is time that the school district is paying for and should be used in a productive manner. It is not “time off.” The principal may, in his or her discretion, grant permission to leave during the planning period if circumstances require a temporary absence. Permission to leave will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. The employee must clock out and clock in on return. The principal will maintain a written record of all intraday absences allowed showing the reason each absence was necessary.*

**What about a necessary absence at any time during the day?**

*Again, circumstances must dictate that it is necessary in the discretion of the principal.*

*The employee must clock out and clock in as required. The principal must maintain the intraday absence approval log with reasons shown.*

**You’re not saying I can’t run errands are you?**

*That’s what we’re saying. Absences during regular work hours will not be allowed except in extraordinary cases. Teaching and learning are the number one priority.*

**May I work more than eight hours a day?**

Additional work hours require prior written or documented approval by the supervisor and superintendent/designee. All hours actually worked must still be accurately reported and will be compensated as required by law; failure to obtain approval may result in discipline.

**Exactly what do you mean by additional work hours?**

*Additional work hours are any hours worked outside your normal scheduled work time. Your supervisor has a form for requesting additional work hours.*

**I’m scheduled to work from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. I’ve got some stuff to do so I’ll just come in at 10:00 and work till 6:00. Is that okay since I’m not going over my eight hour day?**

No.

**What is overtime?**

*Overtime is the amount of time worked during the 7 day work week in excess of 40 hours.*

**When does the work week begin?**

*Sunday.*

**My supervisor told me to clock out at the regular time but wants me to stay and work. He/She will let me off early on another day. Is that okay?**

No. Your time card must reflect the actual hours you work. Your signature on the report attests to its accuracy. Directing, permitting, or signing a false time report violates District policy and may result in discipline, suspension, or dismissal. All hours actually worked must be reported and compensated as required by law.

**But my supervisor told me to do it?**

*Your supervisor is in violation of school district policy and direct instructions from the superintendent. Please call the superintendent immediately.*

**Well it's so much hassle. I'll just volunteer my time?**

Nonexempt employees may not volunteer to perform the same or similar services that they are employed to perform for the District. All time actually worked must be recorded and will be compensated as required by law.

**Are all employees required to be on time?**

Yes. The Superintendent has implemented a procedure for review of all employees' time records for punctuality. Employees with excessive tardiness or early departures may be placed on improvement plans. Tardiness and/or leaving early may result in deduction for time not worked and may also result in discipline, suspension, or dismissal as allowed by law and Board policy.

**How much time must pass before I am considered tardy or considered to have left work early?**

*Five minutes.*

**TRAVEL APPROVAL AND REIMBURSEMENTS**

**Do I need prior approval to attend a conference or workshop?**

Yes

**How do I request approval?**

*Submit a travel approval form to the business office prior to the trip. This is the same form submitted for an excused absence "E" day.*

**What will happen if I travel without submitting the request for travel approval as required?**

*Expenses will not be paid and you may be docked for an unexcused absence.*

**If my principal is sending me, do I still have to get approval?**

Yes.

**My principal did not submit my travel request to the business office on time. Will I be reimbursed?**

*NO. It is not the principal's responsibility to turn in the request. The principal's responsibility is to indicate approval and assign an account code. It is your responsibility to have everything in order and submitted to the travel coordinator prior to the trip.*

**How will I know that my trip has been approved?**

*A purchase order signed by the superintendent will be given to you in your travel pack from the district travel coordinator.*

**What if I'm sent on short notice and there's not enough time for a purchase order to come to me?**

*Call the district travel coordinator for confirmation prior to the trip and arrangements will be made.*

**Should anything accompany the request for travel approval?**

*Yes. The written notice publicizing the meeting is required for verification of total expenses and number of days to excuse. Principal's approval and any other documentation relevant to the trip.*

**How will I receive reimbursement for my travel expenses?**

*Submit the required expense voucher documentation for reimbursement of travel expenses to the district travel coordinator immediately upon return. Travel expenses will not be paid if not requested within thirty (30) days following the travel date.*

**How soon will I receive my travel reimbursement after submitting the travel expense form?**

*Travel reimbursements will be paid based on the date received in the business office.*

# Cleveland School District

## Employee Handbook Acknowledgement Form

2026-2027 School Year

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), certify that I have received or have been provided electronic access to the Cleveland School District Employee Handbook and the Cleveland School District School Board Policies, including policies available at <https://cleveland.msbapolicy.org/>.

I understand that I am responsible for reading and complying with the handbook, Board policies, administrative procedures, my job description, my written contract if applicable, and applicable federal and Mississippi law. I understand that Board policies and applicable law control if there is a conflict with this handbook.

I understand that this handbook is not an employment contract and does not create tenure, a property interest, or contractual rights beyond those provided by a written contract, Board policy, or applicable law. I understand that the District may revise the handbook or policies during the school year and that I am responsible for reviewing revisions when notice is provided.

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee position: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please complete this form and return it to your immediate supervisor within three (3) business days of receiving or viewing the District's Employee Handbook.