



MERIDIAN
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

2026-2027 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Where Learners Become Leaders



Employee Handbook

2026-2027



MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

1019 25th Avenue
Meridian, Mississippi 39301
www.mpsdk12.net

Meridian Public School District shall not discriminate in its policies and practices with respect to compensation, terms or conditions of employment on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, non-disqualifying physical or mental disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit, and need.

MPSD Motto:

Where Learners Become Leaders

MPSD Mission:

The mission of Meridian Public School District is to inspire and develop excellence in everyone.

MPSD Vision Statement:

Empowering learners to become leaders.

MPSD Board Goals:

- All schools will provide high-quality instruction that prepares all students for college and career readiness while achieving a successful or higher rating.
- All schools will maintain safe, attractive, and healthy learning environments.
- All schools will recruit and retain high-quality teachers and staff.
- All schools will create strong relationships with parents and the community.
- All schools will maintain a sound financial balance.

Board of Trustees:

President – Ms. Kimberly Houston
Vice-President – Mrs. Monica Cryer
Secretary – Mrs. Debra Young
Member - Mr. Ronald Turner, Sr.
Member - Mrs. Gwendolyn Hardaway

Superintendent:

Dr. Amy J. Carter

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings, Faculty and Staff:

We are thrilled to embark on another year of discovery, growth, and excellence here in the Meridian Public School District. As a member of Mississippi's premier team of educators and support staff, you play a vital role in shaping the future of our students and the long-term success of our entire community.

Every single position in our district—whether you are leading a classroom, managing a front office, driving a bus, or preparing meals in our cafeterias—is absolutely essential to creating an environment where students can truly thrive. As we begin this new academic year, I encourage you to keep making our schools places where students are inspired, challenged, and deeply supported every day.

Let's commit to inspiring excellence in everything we do by:

- **Connecting with Care:** Greeting our students, families, and colleagues with genuine warmth and enthusiasm.
- **Leading with Integrity:** Approaching our daily responsibilities with deep pride, intentionality, and professionalism.
- **Delivering Quality:** Striving to ensure every child receives an "A+" educational experience in every classroom, in every school, every single day.

This Employee Handbook is designed to serve as a practical, day-to-day reference for the policies, procedures, and institutional expectations of the Meridian Public School District. It is here to support you in your role and guide your professional responsibilities. For more comprehensive details, including full federal and state statutes, please visit the MPSD Board Policy Manual at www.mpsdk12.net.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our students, our schools, and the Meridian community. Let's work hand-in-hand to make 2026–2027 our most impactful year yet!

Always Believe in Blue

Dr. Amy J. Carter,
Superintendent

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is then not an act, but a habit." —Aristotle

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT



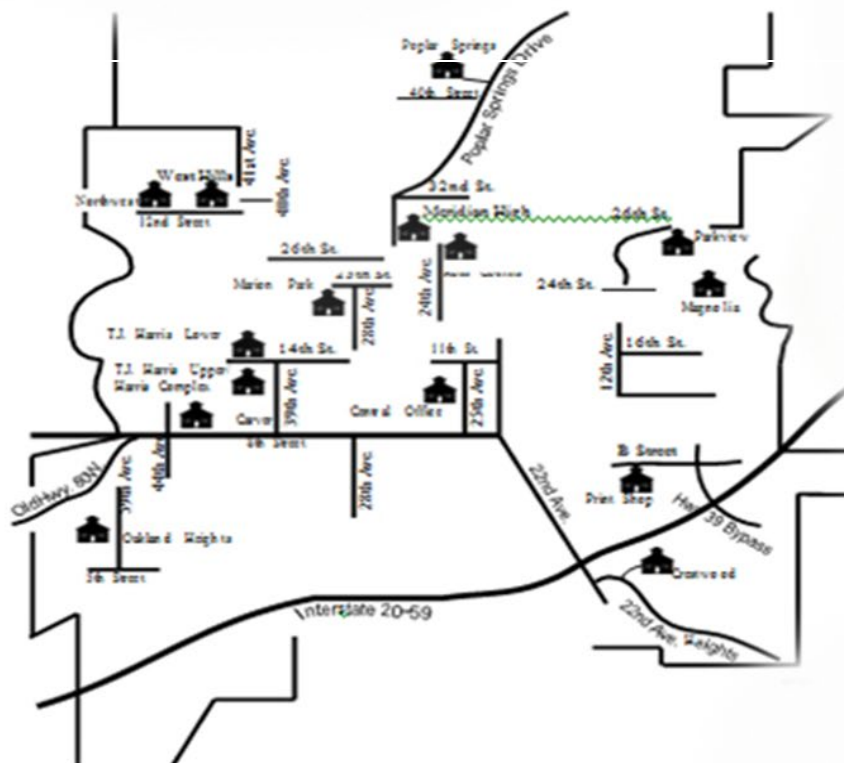
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Central Office

1019 25th Avenue
601-483-6271

Harris - Building A

3951 12th Street
Meridian, MS 39307



MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Magnolia

1350 24th Street
601-484-4060

Northwest

4400 32nd Street
601-484-4094



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Carver

900 44th Avenue
601-484-4482

Crestwood

730 Crestwood Drive
601-484-4971

PreK Academy

3930 14th Street
601-484-4463

Parkview

1225 26th Street
601-484-4990

Poplar Springs

4101 27th Avenue
601-484-4450

West Hills

4100 32nd Street
601-484-4472



HIGH SCHOOL

Meridian High

2320 32nd Street
601-484-4439
MHS-9th Grade: 601-696-7295

Ross Collins

2640 24th Avenue
601-483-3331



MARION PARK SCHOOL

2815 25th Street
601-484-4977



2026-2027 Academic Calendar

◆ Holidays | ◆ Students | ◆ Teachers
◆ Parent/Teacher Conference Day

BOARD APPROVED CALENDAR ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026.

August 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	8	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

◆ Holidays: All Schools and Offices Closed.

September 7: Labor Day
October 12-16: Fall Break
November 23-27: Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 21, 2026-Jan. 4, 2027: Winter Break
Jan. 18: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Mar. 15-19: Spring Break
Mar. 26 & 29: Easter Break
May 31: Memorial Day

◆ Students

First Day: August 7, 2026
60% Day: December 18, 2026
Start of 2nd Semester: January 5, 2027
Last Day (60% Day): May 27, 2027

◆ Teachers

Professional Development: August 3-6, 2026
Professional Development: January 4, 2027
Professional Development: May 28, 2027

◆ Parent/Teacher Conferences

October 7, 2026 and February 17, 2027.
 Student are in school these days. Conferences will take place after early dismissal.

Nine Weeks

1st Nine Weeks: August 7-October 5, 2026
2nd Nine Weeks: October 4-December 18, 2026
3rd Nine Weeks: January-March 10, 2027

Further revisions to the school calendar will be decided in the best academic interests of students by the Superintendent/Board of Education. Please note: Testing dates are determined by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and will be published for students and parents once available. Calendar may be subject to change.

DISTRICT DIRECTORY

POSITION / OFFICE	CONTACT	PHONE
Office of the Superintendent	Dr. Amy Carter	601-484-4915
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning	Dr. Phatasis O’Harroll	601-484-4211
Chief Financial Officer	Mrs. Carolyn Davis	601-484-4904
Chief of Security	Chief Cornelius Parks	601-482-4077
Director of Alternative Education	Dr. Harrison Michael	601-484-4977
Assistant Director of Alternative Education (Secondary)	Mr. Christopher Kennedy	601-484-4977
Director of Athletics	Dr. Cheyenne Trussell	601-482-1225
Director of Career Technology Education	Mr. Matthew Johnson	601-483-3331
Director of Curriculum	Dr. Melanie Jackson	601-482-5942
Assistant Director of Instruction	Dr. Latoya Atterberry	601-484-5178
Director of Federal Programs	Dr. Christine Beeker	601-484-4960
Director of Food Services	Mrs. Louise McPhee	601-484-4928
Assistant Director of Food Services	Ms. Amanda Williams	601-512-0464
Director of Human Resources	Ms. Kimberly Kendrick	601-482-6499
Director of Operations and Warehouse	Mr. Clay Sims	601-484-4946
Assistant Director of Operations and Warehouse	Mr. Eric Smith	601-482-1752
Director of Public Relations	Mr. Matt Davis	601-484-1423
Director of Special Education	Mr. Fred Liddell	601-484-4963
Director of Student Support	Dr. Jackie McFarland	601-484-4916
Director of Technology	Mr. Tim Boutwell	601-484-4957
Director of Transportation	Mr. Jayson Chislom	601-484-4469

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Carver Elementary School (K-5th)

Amanda Shadwick, Principal
Lavesha Sharp, Assistant Principal
Christina Goodwin, Secretary/Bookkeeper

900 44th Avenue

601-484-4482

Crestwood Elementary School (K-5th)

Dana Bell, Principal
Mable Moore, Assistant Principal
Letisha Young, Secretary/Bookkeeper

730 Crestwood Drive

601-484-4971

Parkview Elementary School (K-5th)

Clyde Owens, Principal
Jerlisa Jemison, Assistant Principal
Francine Nickles, Secretary/Bookkeeper

1225 26th Street

601-484-4990

Poplar Springs Elementary School (K-5th)

Yolanda Davis, Principal
Ashley Eades, Lead Teacher
Thornese Brooks, Secretary/Bookkeeper

4101 27th Avenue

601-484-4450

TJ Harris Lower Elementary School (PK & Alt. Elementary)

Angel Hibbler, Principal
LaSonya Williams, Secretary/Bookkeeper

3930 14th Street

601-484-4463

West Hills Elementary School (K-5th)

Janiqua Beasley, Principal
Henrietta Brown, Assistant Principal
Andrea Jordan, Secretary/Bookkeeper

4100 32nd Street

601-484-4472

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Magnolia Middle School (6th -8th)

Amy Grady, Principal
Dr. Steven Shadwick, Assistant Principal
Christopher Ford, Assistant Principal
Travonda Kelly, Secretary/Bookkeeper

1350 24th Street

601-484-4060

Northwest Middle School (6th - 8th)

Frederick Delk, Principal
Marsha Nathan, Assistant Principal
Tonya Mason, Assistant Principal
Theresa Montgomery, Secretary

4400 32nd Street

601-484-4094

HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Meridian High School (9th - 12th)

Sherrod Miller, Principal

Karen McCoy-Burton, Assistant Principal

Deon Harris, Assistant Principal

Patrina Johnson, Assistant Principal

Bettye Jones, Assistant Principal

Rufus Wright, Assistant Principal

2320 32nd Street

601-482-3191

Ross Collins Career and Technical

Matt Johnson, Director

Tawanda McClelland, Assistant Director

2640 24th Avenue

601-483-3331

Marion Park

Dr. Harrison Michael, Director

Chris Kennedy, Assistant Director

2815 25th Street

601-484-4977

INTRODUCTION

Meridian Public School District provides this employee handbook to guide all licensed and non-licensed personnel in following its policies and procedures. These policies establish the rules which govern the employee and the employer. These policies and procedures are designed to foster the most efficient operation of the school system, covering conditions of employment, promotions, work schedules, leave policies, retirement, etc.

It is the responsibility of each employee to know and abide by the policies and procedures of the Meridian Public School District. It is the desire of the Board of Trustees that each person be fully cognizant of his/her responsibilities in the district's overall educational program.

The MPSD employee handbook has been designed to serve as a quick reference for many issues relating to your employment with Meridian Public School District. The MPSD Policy Manual is the authority in cases of a disparity between the Manual and the Employee Handbook.

Being cognizant of and abiding by the policies and procedures related to your job is essential to having a successful school year. Please review this handbook carefully. If you need to refer to the handbook in the future, remember that the most recent version will be available on the MPSD website. In addition, the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Finance can provide assistance with questions relating to your employment and benefits.



Dr. Amy Carter,
Superintendent
601-482-6271



Kimberly Kendrick,
Director of Human Resources
601-482-6499



Carolyn Davis,
Chief Financial Officer
601-484-4904

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Section I: Employment

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and **Meridian Public School District Board Policy GBRIA**, the district is committed to providing equal employment opportunities and access to programs and services for all qualified individuals with disabilities.

The Meridian Public School District prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all employment practices, including recruitment, hiring, promotion, training, compensation, benefits, and all other terms and conditions of employment. This commitment also extends to admission to and participation in district programs, services, and activities.

The district will make reasonable accommodations, as required by law, to support qualified individuals with disabilities in performing the essential functions of their jobs and in accessing district facilities and services.

For more information or to request an accommodation, employees should contact the Office of Human Resources. Additional guidance can be found in **Board Policy GBRIA**, available on the district's website at www.mpsdk12.net.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a powerful tool to enhance student learning, improve educational efficiency, and encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. However, the integration of AI must be approached with care, transparency, and strict adherence to privacy standards.

For the purposes of this policy, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is defined as any machine-based system that uses data inputs to make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments (e.g., generative AI tools, chatbots, and automated analysis software).

All AI use within the district—whether in administrative operations or the classroom—must be transparent, communicated clearly to stakeholders (including students, parents, and staff), and fully compliant with district policies as well as state and federal laws.

Strict Prohibitions for All Users

To protect our community and data, all district employees and students are strictly prohibited from:

1. **Sharing Confidential Information:** Inputting personally identifiable information (PII) or confidential data of any student, staff member, or third party into any AI system.

2. **Exposing Sensitive Data:** Inputting proprietary or sensitive district data into any AI platform.
3. **Accessing/Creating Inappropriate Content:** Using AI to access, generate, or display harmful, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, or harassing material, or content that disparages others based on protected characteristics (race, gender, disability, religion, etc.).
4. **Harassment and Bullying:** Utilizing AI tools to manipulate, bully, or harass any individual.
5. **Classroom Disruption:** Using AI systems in any manner that disrupts the educational environment.

Guidelines for Staff & Classroom Integration

Staff members are authorized to permit students to use AI as a supplemental tool to support instruction and facilitate personalized learning, provided the following guidelines are met:

- **District Approval Required:** Any AI tool used by an educator or introduced to students must be vetted and approved by the district beforehand to ensure strong privacy and data controls.
- **Transparency:** Teachers must ensure students and parents are fully aware of which AI tools are being used in the classroom and how they support learning.
- **Professional Accountability:** Staff members are responsible for the outcomes and any negative effects resulting from their classroom AI implementation.

Compliance Note: Violations of this policy by staff members will be subject to standard disciplinary action.

ASSIGNMENT

Assignment and Reassignment of Personnel

In alignment with MPSD Board Policy GBE, the administration reserves the right to assign or reassign personnel in the best interest of the district. Reassignments may be made due to instructional or curricular needs, a reduction in force at the school or district level, teacher requests, or other justifiable factors such as staff morale, personal matters, or operational efficiency. Normal attrition will be considered prior to initiating any staff transfers.

Reassignments or transfers may take effect during the current or upcoming school year, based on the needs of the district.

Assignment of Athletic Personnel

Per **MPSD Board Policy GBRCA**, athletic coaches, equipment managers, athletic aides, assistants, and other individuals with athletic responsibilities shall be assigned duties by the athletic director, with the approval of the Superintendent. These assignments are considered *at-will* and are not part of an employee's instructional contract.

The Superintendent, in collaboration with the athletic director and with the approval of the Board, shall determine the responsibilities and number of workdays required for athletic personnel. These decisions will be based on the specific needs of individual sports and the time commitment necessary to effectively fulfill those roles.

All coaches are expected to work cooperatively to support and promote the district's entire athletic program. Coaches not directly responsible for a sport in season may be asked to assist the head coach, as appropriate and within the parameters established by the Superintendent.

***Please note:** Athletic-related duties are considered non-instructional and are supplemental to any teaching contract. As such, these roles are not governed by the School Employment Procedures Act.*

BACKGROUND CHECKS

The employment background screening process shall be conducted on any individual recommended for employment in the Meridian Public School District.

The employment background screening process shall include not less than:

- Reference checks made with the applicant's most recent supervisors.
- A criminal records background check of felony and misdemeanor convictions.
- A child abuse check with the child abuse registry.
- Fingerprinting with checks made at the state and national criminal history levels. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBD.)**

CELL PHONE USE/TEXTING/SOCIAL MEDIA

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

An administrator may decide to implement guidelines that allow for the limited use of electronic devices. These guidelines may address using cell phones during planning time and after the dismissal of students. They may also address emergency needs or other extenuating circumstances. All Meridian Public School District employees are prohibited from providing personal wireless telephone information and text messaging a single student at any time. Contacts through group messaging Apps like SchoolStatus are permitted as long as only groups are being contacted. Use of Bluetooth devices are prohibited while in the presence of students.

TEXTING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

All employees, faculty, and staff shall observe the following while participating in any social media websites or applications: Access to social media websites for individual use during school hours is prohibited.

1. Employees, faculty, and staff shall not friend students on any social media platforms.
2. Employees, faculty, and staff shall not give social media passwords to students.
3. Employees, faculty, and staff are solely responsible for the security of their social media accounts.
4. Employees, faculty, and staff are solely responsible for the content posted on their social media accounts at all times.
5. Employees, faculty, and staff shall NEVER use their personal social media accounts in any way purporting to be or speaking for the Meridian Public School District.

Fraternization via the Internet between employees, faculty staff, and students is prohibited and violates the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics standards. Communication with students and parents shall be made in person, over the telephone, through standard mail, and/or email. Social media shall never be used and is not an appropriate form of communication.

Violation of any of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Nothing in this policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff, or students from using educational websites since educational sites are used solely for educational purposes.

When inappropriate use of computers and/or websites is discovered, the technology director will download the offensive material and promptly take proper action. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GABBA.)**

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The successful operation of the Meridian Public School District relies on a clear organizational structure, strong administrative leadership, informed decision-making at the most effective level, and open communication among all individuals involved.

All employees of the Meridian Public School District—excluding the board attorney—are accountable to the Board of Trustees through the Superintendent. Matters requiring administrative attention should be directed to the immediate supervisor or administrator responsible for the area in which the issue arises. If further action is needed, the matter should be referred to the next level of authority in the chain of command.

Before any issue is presented to the Board of Trustees, it must first be submitted to the Superintendent for review and investigation. If the Superintendent determines that Board action is required, the matter will be placed on the appropriate agenda for consideration.

For more information regarding organizational roles and responsibilities, please refer to **MPSD Board Policies CC and CD**, available on the district's website at www.mpsdk12.net.

CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The administration may make changes in the school district's best interest because of curricular or instructional needs, reduction in force at the building or district level, request of the teacher, or other factors such as staff morale, personal problems, or other just reasons. Normal attrition shall be considered before any staff transfers. The administration may make staff transfer or reassignment effective during the current or upcoming school year. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBE.)**

VOLUNTARY TRANSFER

Certified Employees

Any teacher who wishes to change to another building, grade level, or subject assignment shall make written notification to the building principal or immediate supervisor. Transfer requests may be made in Frontline Central and placed on file with the Director of Human Resources at any time. Except in rare circumstances, voluntary transfers are approved and made effective only at the beginning of a new contractual year. Such transfers must have the approval of the releasing and receiving administrators and the Director of Human Resources. Transfers involving a teacher on an improvement plan require the approval of the Superintendent. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBE.)**

Classified Employees

A classified employee who wants to apply for a transfer within the system should submit a transfer request form in Frontline Central to the immediate supervisor who will forward the request to the Human Resources Department.

INVOLUNTARY TRANSFER

Certified Employees

The Superintendent may transfer certified personnel, based on experience and training, from one position and/or school to another within the same position/classification. Staff transfers will be made effective during the current or the upcoming school year as determined by the administration and as the situation requires. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBE.)**

Classified Employees

The Superintendent may transfer classified personnel, based on experience and training, from one position and/or school, to another, as needed. When future vacancies occur, first consideration will be given to the staff member involved in the involuntary transfer if they apply. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBE.)**

SUSPENSION—ALL EMPLOYEES

The Superintendent or designee may suspend employees under their supervision for failure to comply with school policies and procedures or reasonable requests of the administration. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBK.)**

DISMISSAL FOR CAUSE—CERTIFIED

State law gives the Superintendent the authority to suspend or remove a staff member for the following reasons:

1. Incompetence
2. Neglect of duty
3. Immoral conduct
4. Intemperance
5. Brutal treatment of a pupil; and/or
6. Other good cause

Before being removed or suspended, the staff member shall receive written notification of the charges. The staff member is entitled to request a public hearing within five (5) calendar days of the notification. The hearing must be held from five (5) to thirty (30) days from the time of the request. If the employee does not request a hearing within five (5) days after being notified, the decision of the Superintendent is final. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBK.)**

RETIREMENT

Employees planning to retire should begin the process at least three months in advance to avoid delays in benefits. Steps include:

1. Notify your principal/supervisor in writing.
2. Complete a Resignation/Termination Form and submit it with your retirement letter.
3. Await Board of Trustees approval.
4. Work with the Payroll Office to complete PERS Form 9A SRVC (Pre-Application for Service Retirement Benefits).
5. PERS will assign a case manager and provide an estimate of benefits.
6. If participating in the district's retirement reception, contact Shannon Kimbriel at 601-484-5177. (Refer to MPSD Board Policy GBQ.)

To ensure that your retirement package is processed promptly, please begin your retirement process at least three months before your desired retirement date. Failure to do so will result in a delay of retirement benefits. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBQ.)**

RESIGNATIONS

As a licensed professional, your contract is a binding agreement with the School District and the School Board. If you choose to resign from your position, you must follow the official procedure outlined below to ensure you remain in good standing and maintain your professional licensure.

The Resignation Process

To properly initiate and finalize a resignation, licensed employees must adhere to the following steps:

1. **Submit Written Notice:** You must submit a formal written letter of resignation to your Principal or immediate Supervisor, who will forward it to the Human Resources department and the Superintendent.
2. **Board Review:** All resignations must be formally reviewed by the School Board. The Board will vote to either **officially accept** or **not accept** the resignation.
3. **Official Record:** The Board's decision is not final until it is officially recorded in the School Board's meeting minutes.

Important Note: You are not legally released from your employment contract until the School Board has formally voted to accept your resignation.

Fulfillment of Contractual Obligations

The District expects all licensed personnel to fulfill the entirety of their contractual obligations.

- **Contract Release:** If you need to leave your position before the end of your contract term, you must request an official release from the School Board.
- **Breach of Contract:** Leaving the District without fulfilling your contract, and without being explicitly released by a Board vote, constitutes a formal **breach of contract**.

Consequences of a Contract Breach

The District takes contractual obligations seriously to ensure classroom continuity and student success. If an employee abandons their position or leaves without an official Board release:

- The District will consider the employee in breach of contract.
- The District may report the breach to the State Department of Education, which may result in the suspension or permanent revocation of the employee's educator license.

(Refer to MPSD Board Policies GBO and GBQ for additional information.)

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment may end in one of three ways:

1. **Retirement** – Written notice is required at least two months in advance.
2. **Resignation** – Must follow the procedure outlined above.
3. **Dismissal** – As outlined under state law and Board policy.

REDUCTION IN FORCE—ALL EMPLOYEES

To carry out the responsibility of providing and maintaining quality schools in the district, the Board may: (1) abolish or combine job positions, (2) reduce the length of the work year with a salary reduction (the same to be in no event less than 187 days per contract year), (3) reduce administrative supplements, and/or (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 reduction in force:

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

The primary objective of reducing the workforce will be maintaining a fair and balanced educational program consistent with students' needs and the school district's functions and responsibilities. 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 school district's mission, goals, and objectives.
2. Subject area(s) and advanced degrees by certification.
3. Experience, professional training, district service length, and work assignment.
4. Quality of performance, including the proven ability to accomplish the school district's educational mission.
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.

A staff member who is dismissed because of terminating a position shall have his/her name placed on a preferred list for reemployment for a period of one year. Whenever possible, staff members to be affected will be notified in writing by June 1. Staff members not reemployed will be considered for vacancies for which they are certified/qualified, but there will be no guarantee of reemployment if transfer or reassignment is not possible. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBKAR.)**

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING PROCEDURES

The **Meridian Public School District Board of Education** acknowledges its legal and ethical responsibility to report suspected child abuse and neglect. In accordance with **Mississippi Code §93-21-3 and §97-5-23**, all school personnel are designated as **mandated reporters**. This means that if there is *reasonable cause* to suspect that a child has been abused, neglected, or threatened

with abuse, school employees are required to report the incident to the **Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (CPS)** or other appropriate authorities.

Mandated reporters are protected under the law from civil liability when acting in good faith. You do **not** need absolute proof to file a report—it is the **responsibility of Child Protective Services to investigate**.

Reporting to Child Protective Services

When making a report, provide as much of the following information as possible:

1. Child's name and address, and that of the parents or caretakers
2. Child's date of birth
3. Nature and extent of the suspected abuse or injury
4. Identity and address of the alleged perpetrator (if known)
5. Names and dates of birth of other children in the home
6. Any additional relevant information

Reporting Within the School System

1. **Immediately inform the school principal** of your concerns.
2. If abuse is suspected, a report **must** be made by the **principal, counselor/social worker, school nurse, or teacher** directly to Child Protective Services.

Steps to Follow When a Student Discloses Abuse

- **Take the child to a private space** where they can speak freely.
- **Allow the child to share their experience** without interruption or interrogation. Avoid leading questions—ask open-ended prompts such as, *"Can you tell me what happened next?"*
- **Remain calm and supportive.** Your reaction can significantly impact how the child feels about sharing their experience.
- **Affirm the child's disclosure.** Let them know you believe them and that it's okay to talk.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** Share information only with those who need to know.
- **Explain what will happen next.** Reassure the child that you will contact someone who can help and that they are not alone.

Note: Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect may result in legal consequences and disciplinary action. For more information or guidance, please refer to **MPSD Board Policy JGI** and contact your school administrator or the Office of Student Services.

CLASSIFIED AND CERTIFIED PERSONNEL HOURS AND DUTIES

Certified Employees

Certified staff members are expected to work an 8-hour day, with specific arrival and departure times set by the school principal. Adjustments may be made to accommodate transportation schedules or other school-based needs.

All certified employees must adhere to the district's procedures for:

- Clocking in
- Assigned duty hours
- Payroll reporting

Teachers are expected to remain on campus during the full workday unless prior approval to leave has been granted by the principal. **(Refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRB for additional guidance.)**

Classified Employees

Classified employees are scheduled to work 40 hours per week, with shifts and schedules determined by their specific job assignments. The official work week begins at 12:00:01 a.m. on Saturday and ends at midnight on Friday.

Key expectations include:

- Employees must follow the work schedules assigned to their department or building.
- Any work that would result in more than 40 hours per week must be pre-approved by the Superintendent.
- The work calendar for classified employees is adopted annually by the district.

Compensation for Overtime:

Classified employees may be compensated for overtime at a rate of 1.5 hours of compensatory time for each hour of overtime worked, rather than monetary payment. All compensatory time must be requested and approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor and the Superintendent. **(Refer to MPSD Board Policy GCRAA for additional information.)**

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Meridian Public School District complies with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974** and the **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)** in the handling, use, and disclosure of student information and education records.

These federal laws outline how schools and educational agencies may collect, maintain, and share student records. Under FERPA, school officials may access a student's education records

without parental or guardian consent only if they have a **legitimate educational interest**—that is, access is necessary to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

Key expectations include:

- **Confidentiality is required at all times.** The misuse or unauthorized disclosure of student records or personal information by school employees or third parties is strictly prohibited.
- **Electronic access to student data** will be granted based solely on an employee's job responsibilities.
- **Student records must not be printed, transferred, or shared** unless doing so aligns with FERPA guidelines and is necessary for an authorized educational purpose.

All employees are expected to safeguard student privacy and comply with applicable district policies, state regulations, and federal laws. (For more information, refer to MPSD Board Policies **JR** and **JRA**.)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees of the Meridian Public School District are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in all aspects of their work. In accordance with MPSD Board Policy GAG, staff members shall not hold any financial interest—directly or indirectly—that creates, or appears to create, a conflict with their duties and responsibilities to the district.

Key Guidelines:

- Employees may not engage in any private business activities during work hours or on school property.
- Fundraising or selling of products on behalf of any organization (personal, commercial, or charitable) is not permitted without prior approval from the building principal.
- These restrictions apply to all MPSD staff, both certified and non-certified.

Employees are responsible for avoiding any actions or relationships that could compromise, or appear to compromise, their ability to perform job duties impartially and in the best interest of the district.

DONATED EQUIPMENT

All donations of fixed assets to the Meridian Public School District must be processed in accordance with **Board Policy** and properly documented.

Procedures:

1. The **administrator or supervisor** receiving the donation must notify the **Fixed Asset Coordinator**, providing a description of the item and an estimated fair market value.
2. The donation must be **acknowledged and approved by the Board of Trustees** before it can be officially accepted.
3. Once approved, the Fixed Asset Coordinator will:
 - Affix a **district property tag** to the item at its designated location.
 - Add the item to the **district's fixed asset inventory**.
 - Record the asset as a **"donation"** and assign the **estimated fair market value** in the property record.

No donated fixed asset may be used or recorded as district property until it has been properly approved and tagged.

DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

All donations and contributions made to the Meridian Public School District are considered **public funds** and must be accounted for in accordance with district procedures and **MPSD Board Policy DFK**.

Guidelines:

- **All donations and contributions are public funds** and will be recorded as such in the district's financial records.
- Any **donation or contribution of \$500 or more** must be formally submitted using the **Proposed Gift to School Form** and forwarded to the **Superintendent** for acknowledgment and acceptance by the **Board of Trustees**.
- Donations **under \$500** may be accepted at the **school level**, but must still be documented and handled in accordance with district accounting practices.

Proper documentation ensures transparency, accountability, and compliance with state and district regulations.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

Proper documentation ensures transparency, accountability, and compliance with state and district regulations. In compliance with federal law and MPSD Board Policies GBRL and GBRM-2, the Meridian Public School District maintains a strict drug-free workplace policy applicable to all employees, including those working under federal grants.

Prohibited Conduct

Employees shall not unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use any controlled substance—including but not limited to narcotics, hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, or other substances listed in Schedules I–V of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. §812)—while on duty or on district premises. This includes:

- Any school building or property
- Any school-owned or authorized vehicle
- Off-campus locations during any school-sponsored activity, event, or trip
- Any location where work funded by a federal grant is performed

Substance Use Guidelines

- Employees are prohibited from being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during work hours or while on district property.
- Use of prescription drugs is permitted only by the person to whom the medication is prescribed and only as directed.
- No prescription or non-prescription drug may be brought onto district property or used in a way inconsistent with medical guidelines.
- Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited on school property and at school functions.

Criminal Drug Convictions

As a condition of employment, any employee convicted of a criminal drug statute violation that occurred in the workplace must report the conviction to their supervisor within five (5) days. This applies to all district employees, including those working in connection with a federal grant.

Consequences of Policy Violation

Violations of the Drug-Free Workplace and Substance Abuse Policy may result in:

- Nonrenewal, suspension, or termination of employment
- Disciplinary action in accordance with district procedures
- License suspension
- Referral to law enforcement, where appropriate

Employees must comply with the district's drug-free workplace policy as a condition of employment. Failure to do so may lead to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING
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In accordance with MPSD Board Policy GBRM-2, the Meridian Public School District is committed to maintaining a safe, productive, and drug-free workplace. **Types of Testing**

- Pre-Employment Testing: All new hires are required to undergo drug testing prior to beginning employment.
- Reasonable Suspicion Testing: Any employee suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol may be required to undergo testing.
- Random Testing of Bus Drivers: Bus drivers are subject to random drug and alcohol testing. Selection for random testing will be conducted using a neutral, random process, and selections will not be waived under any circumstances.

Notice of Medication Use

Employees are permitted to notify the district of any current or recent use of prescription or over-the-counter medications prior to testing. This information may be considered during the evaluation of test results.

Reasonable Suspicion Defined

“Reasonable suspicion” is a belief, based on objective evidence, that an employee is using or has used drugs or alcohol in violation of district policy. Indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- Direct observation of drug use or physical symptoms of impairment
- Erratic behavior, abnormal conduct, frequent tardiness, or a decline in work performance
- Credible and corroborated reports of drug or alcohol use
- Evidence of test tampering
- Involvement in or contribution to a workplace accident
- Possession, sale, or use of illegal substances or alcohol on school property or while operating district vehicles or equipment

All reasonable suspicion testing must be pre-approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Positive Test Results and Consequences

If a drug or alcohol test result is confirmed as positive, the employee will be subject to immediate termination for violating the district's drug and alcohol policy.

Employees may:

- Contest the test results or provide an explanation within 10 calendar days of notification by submitting a written statement to the Superintendent.
- Request a retest of the original specimen at their own expense at a certified laboratory of their choosing.

If the employee fails to successfully challenge the results or provide a contrary verified test result, disciplinary action will be taken—up to and including termination of employment.

Refusal to Test

An employee who refuses to submit to a required drug or alcohol test will be subject to disciplinary action, including immediate termination.

Substances Tested

The district may test for, but is not limited to, the following substances:

- Alcohol
- Opiates
- Amphetamines
- Phencyclidine (PCP)
- Marijuana (THC)
- Cocaine

EMERGENCY WEATHER PROCEDURES

At times, it may become necessary for the **Superintendent of Education** to cancel school or initiate an early dismissal due to **emergency situations**, such as inclement weather, utility outages, or other unforeseen events.

Notification of Closures or Early Dismissals

In the event of a closure or early dismissal, announcements will be communicated through the following platforms:

- **Local radio and television stations**
- **District and school social media accounts**
- **District website and parent notification systems**

Employees should ensure their contact information is up-to-date to receive timely alerts.

Make-Up Days

If a school closure occurs **without a state or federal emergency declaration** (Governor or Presidential), the district will issue **specific guidance on how the missed instructional time will be made up**, in accordance with state requirements and board policy. (For additional information, refer to **MPSD Board Policy AFC.**)

EMPLOYEE ARREST

Any employee who is **arrested or charged with a felony or misdemeanor** must notify both their **immediate supervisor** and the **Director of Human Resources** as soon as possible, but **no**

later than 24 hours after the incident.

Failure to Report

Failure to report an arrest or criminal charge within the required timeframe may result in **disciplinary action**, up to and including **termination of employment**.

This requirement ensures transparency, protects the integrity of the district, and allows for timely administrative response.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Meridian Public School District partners with Weems Community Mental Health Center to provide a comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to all employees — including their spouses and dependent children.

Available Services Include:

- Outpatient mental health therapy for children and adults
(Individual, marriage, and family counseling)
- Medication evaluation and monitoring
- Outpatient and residential substance abuse treatment
(Provided through Weems LifeCare)

These services are offered at no cost to you and are strictly confidential. No information will be shared with the district, co-workers, or family members without your written consent.

How to Access Services:

- Visit: www.weemsmh.com
- Call: 601-483-4821 or 1-800-803-0245

For more details, refer to Appendix A: Employee Assistance Program Flier.

EMPLOYEE CONTACT INFORMATION

Each faculty and staff member must have on file with the building principal or department administrator and Frontline Central his or her current phone number, an emergency phone number, and current home address. Any change must be reported immediately in Frontline Central. All notices required by statute, regulation or policy will be sent to the address on file.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Employees of the Meridian Public School District are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on both the school district and the broader community. This standard of conduct supports a safe, respectful, and productive environment for teaching, learning, and student well-being.

Guidelines for Conduct:

- The dignity of all students and the integrity of the educational environment must be upheld at all times.
- Employees are strictly prohibited from:
 - Engaging in unseemly or inappropriate dress or behavior
 - Using abusive, foul, or profane language in the presence of students
- Such behavior will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

Employees are held to high standards of professionalism, both on and off campus, and are expected to model appropriate behavior at all times. (For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GAB.)

See Appendix B: *Mississippi Code of Ethics for Educators*

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION

All Meridian Public School District employees are issued official identification badges by the district office. These badges should be worn in plain sight.

EMPLOYEE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

Meridian Public School District's employees are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, integrity, and performance. Disciplinary action should be progressive in nature so that MPSD imposes the least severe action necessary to improve undesirable behavior and moves to increasingly severe measures only if the problem is not improved. When properly administered, progressive discipline will benefit both administrators and employees.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Meridian Public School District shall not discriminate in its policies and practices concerning compensation, terms or conditions of employment on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender

identity, sexual orientation, age, non-disqualifying physical or mental disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit, and need. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GAAA.)**

The following office has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies of the Meridian Public School District:

Kimberly Kendrick
Director of Human Resources
1019 25th Ave, Meridian, MS 39301
601-484-4910

EVALUATION

All certified employees of MPSD will be evaluated yearly. Employees may check with their immediate supervisors for information in the evaluation guidelines. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policies GBI.)**

FIXED ASSETS MANAGEMENT

The Meridian Public School District Board of Education establishes and maintains a fixed asset record and inventory control system for all capital assets located within the school district. All employees are expected to care for and maintain district properties in their charge.

Standard of Care and Liability for Missing Property

1. Employees assigned responsibility for district property must exercise reasonable care to ensure that all fixed assets are properly maintained and accounted for.
2. While public employees are not considered insurers of school property, they may be held financially responsible for losses resulting from a failure to reasonably fulfill their custodial responsibilities.
3. All employees have a duty to protect and preserve district property. Employees found to be grossly negligent or engaged in misconduct that results in the destruction, theft, or loss of district property may be required to provide replacement or compensation, as determined by the School Board.

Enforcement

1. Employees may be held financially responsible for all equipment, furniture, and other fixed assets assigned to them.
2. Principals may be held accountable for all assets assigned to their respective schools.

3. Administrative heads and department directors may be held accountable for all assets assigned to their departments.
4. Any lost, stolen, or destroyed items must be reported immediately to Campus Police for investigation. The fixed asset assistant at the location will compile all necessary documentation, including fixed asset retirement forms, and submit them to the district office.
5. The School Board will review the report and determine whether the loss should be charged to the responsible individual or if no action is necessary beyond removing the item from inventory.
6. The value of lost, stolen, or destroyed items will be determined based on the original purchase cost minus depreciation, in accordance with GASB 34 (D-31, DIDA).
7. If repayment is required, the responsible employee will have up to three months to repay the assessed value of the item.

(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy DPC.)

FUNDRAISER REQUIREMENTS

The Superintendent shall permit fundraising activities deemed appropriate or beneficial to the district's official or extracurricular programs. The Board authorizes the Superintendent or his designee to approve all fundraising activities. All fundraising activities shall be treated as activity funds **(Policy DK)**. When a school, an activity, or a club sponsors a fundraiser, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Whether initiated by the school, PTO, or any other organization, fundraisers require the Superintendent's approval via a Fundraiser Request Form.
2. The activity/club sponsor shall complete the proposal (Fundraiser Activity Form located in Frontline) and submit it to the Chief Fiscal Officer for approval.
3. The activity/club sponsor will supervise the fundraiser and report the results.
4. Funds may be spent only for the sole purpose intended and stated on the fundraiser request form.
5. After the fundraiser activity is completed, a report of funds raised/profit should be reported.

Fundraising activities conducted or authorized by the Superintendent for school pictures, the rental of caps and gowns, or the sale of graduation invitations for which the school receives a commission, rebate, or fee shall contain a disclosure statement advising that a portion of the proceeds of the sale or rental shall be contributed to the student activity fund. At a minimum, the statement must read: **"NOTICE: This sale is being conducted as a fundraising event. A portion of the sale price will be contributed to the local Activity Fund."**

GRIEVANCES

The Meridian Public School District provides grievance procedures for all employees, which are addressed through established administrative channels.

Whenever possible, employees are encouraged to resolve concerns informally. If a staff member has a concern regarding the application of Board policies, administrative practices, or working relationships with other employees, they should first consult their immediate supervisor or administrator.

If the staff member is unable to discuss the concern with their immediate supervisor or if the issue is not resolved satisfactorily, the formal grievance procedure outlined in **Board Policy** must be followed.

The formal grievance process outlines clear steps and responsibilities for both the employee (complainant) and the district. In order for a grievance to be considered, it must be initiated and progressed within the timelines specified by policy. All grievances must be submitted in writing and must include:

- A clear and specific description of the grievance
- The policy, practice, or issue in question
- The resolution being requested

(For additional information, refer to **MPSD Board Policies GAE, GAEA, and GAE-R.**)

See Appendix D: Grievance Form

HARASSMENT

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is an anti-discrimination law that states no person in the United States, on the basis of sex, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This board's policy forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. The Board of Education will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees. This policy similarly applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

The Meridian Public School District has appointed an employee to serve as the Title IX Coordinator for the district. This person is authorized to coordinate the district's compliance efforts under this law. Because this policy is not amended each time the Title IX Coordinator changes, please contact the superintendent, the federal programs director, or any principal to request the name and contact information of the current Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is also identified with specificity in the district's student and faculty handbook and website.

REPORTING

Any person may report sex discrimination or sexual harassment regardless of whether the person is the alleged victim. These reports may be made in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email to the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in receipt by the Title IX Coordinator. For K-12 educational institutions, actual notice of sexual harassment is the notice of sexual harassment or allegations made to any employee.

Consistent with Title IX, a school must respond when:

1. The school has actual knowledge of sexual harassment;
2. That occurred within the school's education program or activity;
3. Against a person in the United States.

Nothing in this policy or any other policy impedes or precludes a student, the student's parents, a school employee, or school officials from directly reporting to law enforcement officials any behavior that constitutes a violation of criminal law or any applicable laws.

It is prohibited to knowingly make a false discrimination, harassment, or retaliation report or provide false information in an investigation. Individuals who knowingly file a false or misleading complaint alleging harassment, discrimination, or retaliation or provide false information in an investigation are subject to appropriate disciplinary actions.

RETALIATION

The Meridian Public School District encourages reporting all incidents of discrimination or harassment. Retaliation is prohibited against any person for the purpose of interfering with Title IX rights or because the person participated or refused to participate in any manner in a proceeding under Title IX regulations. The district must keep confidential the identity of a person who complains of or reports sexual harassment, including parties and witnesses, except as permitted by law to carry out the purpose of the regulations. 34 C.F.R. § 106.71

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participation in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will subject an individual to disciplinary action. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBR.)**

Title IX Coordinator (Employees)

Kimberly Kendrick
Director of Human Resources
(601) 483-6271

Title IX Coordinator (Students)

Dr. Jackie McFarland
Director of Student Support
(601) 483-6271

LICENSURE/LICENSE RENEWAL

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requires each certified employee to be individually responsible for maintaining and renewing their professional teaching license. Certified staff have five years from the date their certification is issued to meet all renewal requirements, which may include Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and graduate coursework.

MECCA: Educator Certification Management

All certified employees must create an account in the Mississippi Educator Career Continuum Archive (MECCA) to enter and submit their CEUs. It is the responsibility of each employee to:

- Track and maintain their own certification documentation
- Submit CEUs and other required documents through MECCA
- Contact the Mississippi Office of Teacher Certification at 601-359-2778 with any questions

Renewal Requirements by Degree Level

For educators with a Bachelor's degree (Class A):

- 10 CEUs in content or job/skill-related areas
or
- 3 semester hours in a content or job/skill-related college course (e.g., technology, methodology, cooperative learning)
and
- 3 additional semester hours or 5 CEUs in a content or job/skill-related area

For educators with a Master's degree or higher (Class AA, AAA, AAAA):

- 3 semester hours in a content or job/skill-related course
or
- 5 CEUs in a content or job/skill-related area

Note: Administrators should refer to the MDE website for specific renewal requirements pertaining to their licenses.

License Class Levels

- Class A = Bachelor's Degree
- Class AA = Master's Degree
- Class AAA = Educational Specialist Degree
- Class AAAA = Doctoral Degree

If you earn an advanced degree during the school year, you must submit the required documentation to the Mississippi Department of Education to update your teaching license accordingly.

Salary Increases Based on License Class Changes

To receive a salary increase due to a change in your license class level, you must:

- Submit a copy of your updated teaching license to Human Resources
- Submit an official transcript showing the conferral of your new degree (as reflected on your updated license)

Important:

Salary adjustments will not be made until both the license and official transcript are received by HR and the MPSD Board of Education has approved the change. Once approved, your contract pay amount will be adjusted and you will be notified when your updated contract is ready for your signature.

MISSED PUNCHES

Certified Employees

All MPSD employees are expected to clock in every day. Certified employees clock in each day to verify attendance. School clerical staff will check punches each morning. Any missed punch should be accompanied by a leave form if you are not reporting to work. Repeated tardiness or failure to clock in may result in further disciplinary action.

Non-Exempt (Hourly) Employees

In accordance with Federal Wage and Hour requirements, all time worked by (non-exempt) hourly employees must be accurately captured and reported. Daily work time for non-exempt (hourly) employees will be captured using an automated time and attendance system.

- Non-exempt (hourly) employees must scan in and out for personal errands and take daily lunch breaks of at least 30 minutes.
- When an employee fails to scan his/her time into the system accurately, a Missed Punch Report will be completed immediately via Frontline Central and submitted to his/her supervisor/administrator. The administrator will approve or deny the Missed Punch Report and then forward it to Central Office personnel for correction. Requests to Central Office to correct missed punches must be submitted within 5 business days, or the request will be denied.
- Missed Punch Forms must be filled out completely. It must include the correct date of the incident, the correct time, and the administrator's signature.
- Payroll clerks at each location must run time sheets for their employees on Monday of each week for the previous week. This will ensure that all missed punches are addressed promptly.
- Per the Superintendent, payroll clerks will run time sheets on Thursdays to check for any employee approaching overtime for the week. This will give administrators a "real-

time” view of an employee’s time and allow for better overtime management. Employees will be sent home when they reach their scheduled weekly hours if overtime has not been previously approved by the Superintendent.

- Any missed punch should be accompanied by a leave form if you are not reporting to work. Repeated tardiness or failure to clock in may result in further disciplinary action.

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT

Contact with radio, television, or newspapers should be made with the permission of the administration according to the established guidelines. The building-level administrator and public relations director should be notified. No student may have contact with the media during the school day without the approval of the administrator or parents’ permission. No employee should speak on behalf of MPSD without the Superintendent’s or designee’s expressed permission.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees shall not engage in any outside employment that interferes with the effective performance of their assigned duties, compromises or embarrasses the Meridian Public School District, or creates a conflict of interest.

Employees are prohibited from engaging in private or public business activities during the hours required to fulfill their contractual responsibilities. Additionally, district materials, supplies, or property may not be used for any outside employment purposes. For further guidance, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRG.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

The Board respects the rights of employees, as citizens, to engage in political activities. However, school property and work time shall not be used for political purposes, except as outlined in policies governing the use of school facilities by civic and political organizations.

This policy does not restrict employees from conducting appropriate, non-partisan educational activities that encourage students to become informed and engaged in the political process—whether as members of a political party or as independents.

It also does not prohibit the use of political figures as guest speakers or resource persons in the classroom when their participation supports instructional goals. For further details, refer to MPSD Board Policy GAHB.

PROCUREMENT CARDS

Classroom supply funds shall not be expended for administrative purposes. Licensed teachers who are assigned to an instructional area of work as defined by the department and are not federally funded teachers, will receive a procurement card.

Procurement cards shall be issued at the beginning of the school year. They shall be issued in equal amounts per teacher determined by the total number of qualifying personnel and the current state appropriation for classroom supplies with the Education Enhancement Fund. Such cards will expire on a predetermined date at the end of each school year.

All classroom teachers shall utilize these funds in a manner that addresses individual classroom needs and supports the overall goals of the school regarding supplies, instructional materials, equipment, computers, or computer software under the provisions of this subparagraph, including the type, quantity, and quality of such supplies, materials, and equipment.

Classroom supply funds allocated shall supplement, not replace, other local and state funds available for the same purposes. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy DJEAB.)**

PROFESSIONAL DRESS

Personal appearance plays a great part in an employee's success in his/her professional position. Each Meridian Public School District employee shall be expected to give proper attention to his/her personal appearance as required by work responsibilities. A professional appropriate dress influences the way staff interacts with students and positively affects the general environment. Each employee of the Meridian Public School District will contribute to forming a positive, professional public image by maintaining high standards of personal appearance through appropriate dress and grooming, regardless of job category.

Dress Code Guidelines

1. Employee identification tags must be worn and visible at all times.
2. Hair must be clean, neat, and well-groomed.
3. Patches, decorations, slogans, designs, symbols, tags, marks, or advertisements of beer, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or similar items or displays and/or expressions of obscenities, sexual references, or similar references deemed detrimental and disruptive to the operation of the school, education, discipline, health, or welfare of students are prohibited. Clothing that has any type of drawing or words that would be vulgar, profane, suggestive, or advertising an affiliation with drugs, alcohol, violence, or gang-related activities is prohibited.
5. Nothing should be worn to acknowledge political issues, clubs, etc.
6. Employees who are furnished uniforms must wear them at all times.
7. All male administrators should wear long-sleeved shirts and ties.

8. Warm-ups, jogging suits, windsuits and/or sweat suits, and other athletic apparel are not permissible, except for physical education, gym, and dance teachers.
9. During physical education hours, Coaches and physical education personnel may wear loose-fitting shorts no more than three inches above the knee. Shorts are prohibited for all other employees.
10. Spirit Days: The principal may designate no more than one day per week as “school spirit/blue jean day.” The principal may designate special attire except for safety officers on special days or for special events/circumstances, such as Red Ribbon Week, homecoming, and testing days.
11. Graphic t-shirts other than school spirit shirts are prohibited.
12. If you provide virtual instruction, professional dress remains an expectation of MPSD employees.

Nothing in the employee Dress Policy shall be constituted to preempt the authority of the principal or supervisor. To act contrary to statements contained herein based on his/her opinion, an employee is attempting to use this policy to disrupt the educational process or the safe and orderly climate of the school. If the employee’s supervisor determines the employee is inappropriately dressed, the employee shall take the steps necessary to correct the dress.

Pants	Tops	Skirts/ Dresses	Shoes	Accessories
Pants/trousers must have a hem or cuff. No cut-offs, cut-outs, and/or ragged edges are permitted.	Shirts/blouses shall not expose the midriff or back. Sleeveless shirts/blouses must fit the employee appropriately.	No mini-skirts, halter tops, backless, strapless, and/or cut-out/see-through dresses shall be permitted.	Footwear must be worn at all times and appropriate for safe participation in all job-related activities.	Noisy, distracting jewelry/accessories that could cause a safety hazard may not be worn.
Pants must be sized appropriately. No hip-huggers that reveal flesh are allowed. Pants must not be excessively tight or sagging.	Casual T-shirts (faded, sheer, out of shape, or inappropriately sized) are not allowed. Graphic T-shirts are not allowed unless school spirit wear.	Tights/leggings are only permitted when worn under a knee-length dress.	Shoes traditionally worn around the home (slippers, house shoes, or beach slippers) or to the beach (flip-flop/shower shoe design or thongs) are prohibited.	No hats are allowed in the building unless part of the employee's uniform or religious headgear is required to be worn by the employee's religion.
No jeans or overalls of any color or fabric are permitted except on such days as designated by the principal.	Tank tops and spaghetti strap garments are prohibited when worn as a single garment.	Dresses and skirts should be knee length.	Tennis shoes that are clean and in good condition may be worn.	
	Shirts or blouses must be tucked in unless designed to be worn outside or of an appropriate length so as not to expose the midriff at any time.			In keeping with professional decorum, earrings may be worn and ears are the only exposed areas of the body on which pierced jewelry may be worn.

PURCHASE ORDER PROCEDURES

1. Purchase Requisition must be completed (vendor/description/cost).
2. Employees must sign and submit the requisition to the school-site secretary.
3. Requisition presented to an administrator for approval/non-approval.
4. The school-site secretary requests orders through district accounting software from the Central Office—Office of Purchasing.
5. Vendors must be notified through a purchase order only to deliver items to the district.
6. The district warehouse will deliver orders to the school site.

PURCHASING PROCEDURES

All purchases of goods, services, equipment, and materials for which the Meridian Public School District will be responsible must be made using an official **purchase order**, properly approved and executed according to **state purchasing law**. All purchases must comply with applicable sections of the **Mississippi Code of 1972**, as amended.

Purchasing must be based on **careful planning** to address both short- and long-term needs. All supplies and equipment must be procured through the established process using a purchase order signed by the Purchasing Agent and substantiated by a requisition recommended by the initiating staff member and approved by the appropriate supervisor or school administrator.

No one is authorized to make purchases or charge any expense to the district without a properly issued purchase order.

Requisition Guidelines

All requisitions must include the following:

- a. A concise description of the items requested, including **quantities, pricing, and budget account number**.
- b. The **catalog number**, school/department name, date, and **recommended vendor**.
- c. Items of a similar nature should be grouped together when they can be purchased from a single vendor.
- d. Completed requisition forms must be submitted to the school/department office for appropriate signatures and uploaded to **Integrity** for processing.
- e. After a thorough review of needs and budget, the **administrator/supervisor must approve and submit** the requisition via Integrity to the Business Office.
- f. Disapproved requisitions will be returned to the originating staff member.
- g. Purchase orders will be **issued by the Business Office** and signed by the Purchasing

Agent(s). The original purchase order will be forwarded to the school or department that initiated the request for verification.

h. Merchandise will be shipped either to the **central warehouse** or the work location of the person requesting the goods/services.

i. Upon receipt, **all items must be inspected**, and a **Receiving Report** must be completed and returned to Accounts Payable.

j. The employee who initiated the purchase order is **responsible for verifying receipt** of the merchandise and resolving any discrepancies.

Quote and Bid Requirements

- Requisitions **valued between \$5,000 and \$50,000** require a minimum of **two (2) written quotes**.
- Any **purchase exceeding \$50,000** must be **advertised for competitive bids**, per state purchasing laws.

Policy Compliance

- No individual is authorized to **pick up, receive, or accept** any material, supply, or service on behalf of the district **without following the proper procedures outlined in this section**.
- **No substitutions or changes in quantity** are permitted unless **authorized by the Purchasing Agent**.
- **Failure to comply** with this policy may result in the employee being held **personally liable** for payment of the unauthorized claim.

TOBACCO POLICY

The use of tobacco products on educational property is prohibited. “Tobacco products” means any substance that contains tobacco including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, smoking tobacco, or smokeless tobacco.

“Educational property” means any public school building or bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used, or operated by any local school board, school, or director for the administrator of any public educational institution or during a school-related activity; provided, however, that the term “educational property” shall not include any sixteenth section school land or lien land on which is not located a public school building, public school campus, public school recreational area, or public school athletic field. Employees violating these policies will be subject to disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRM.)**

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION/REIMBURSEMENT

1. MPSD—Pre-Authorization Voucher and Leave Request Form must be completed.
2. Required Documentation:
 - Registration form
 - Lodging confirmation
 - Plane information
3. Meals allowance listed on the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration website.
4. Meal reimbursement applies for overnight travel only.
5. The packet must be returned to the Central Office—Accounts Payable to obtain reimbursement.

Required documentation:

- Approved packet with all attachments
- Hotel receipt
- Baggage/Parking receipts

SECTION 504

The **Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)** and **Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990** prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities in programs receiving federal assistance.

A person is considered to have a disability if they:

- Have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Have a record of such an impairment
- Are regarded as having such an impairment

MPSD **acknowledges its obligation** under Section 504 to prevent discrimination and ensure access to educational services for eligible students.

The district is responsible for:

- **Identifying and evaluating** students
- **Providing appropriate educational services** for students determined eligible

Section 504 Coordinator:
Fred Liddell
Assistant Director of Special Education
601-484-4963

TITLE IX

In accordance with **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972**, no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity operated by MPSD.

Title IX Coordinator (Employees)

Kimberly Kendrick
Director of Human Resources
(601) 483-6271

Title IX Coordinator (Students)

Dr. Jackie McFarland
Director of Student Support
(601) 483-6271

VIOLATION OF POLICIES

All MPSD policies and administrative regulations are established to support the **effective and efficient operation** of the school district.

- Administrators are responsible for ensuring that staff understand and follow these policies.
- **Continuous or willful disregard** of policies or procedures may be considered **insubordination and/or neglect of duty**.
- Such violations may result in **disciplinary action**, including **termination of employment**.

WEAPONS

The possession of any weapon on school premises or at any school-related activity by any district employee, including those employees with a license or permit for possession of a firearm pursuant to Miss. Code Section 45-9-101 and/or Section 97-37-7, unless an exception under the law applies, is prohibited. Employees violating this policy shall be disciplined accordingly, including possible termination of employment.

It is the responsibility of every employee to report to his/her principal or immediate supervisor or the person responsible for supervising a school-related activity or event any knowledge of the possession of a weapon on school premises or at any school-related activity or event by any district employee. Appropriate steps shall then be taken to carry out the intent of this policy, including notification to police officials, so that employees in possession of weapons are promptly removed from school premises or school-related activities or events and/or are refused admittance to school premises buildings, activities or events. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBEN.)**

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Meridian Public Schools desires to maintain a work environment that is safe and secure. Threats, threatening behavior, or any acts of violence against employees, students, or other individuals on the premises will not be tolerated. They may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination and/or criminal prosecution.

Any person engaging in violent behavior, such as making substantial threats, intentionally hitting, kicking, or striking a person or property on MPSD premises may be removed from the premises as quickly as possible and may be required to remain away from the premises pending investigation of the incident.

All individuals who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order that lists school sites as being protected areas must provide to the principal or supervisor a copy of the petition and declarations used to seek the order, a copy of any temporary protective or restraining order that is granted and a copy of any protective or restraining order that is made permanent.

Section II: Compensation

COMPENSATION GUIDE

Certified Employees

Nine months of actual teaching in a state-accredited public or private school is equal to a year of teaching experience. Certified employees must complete all contractual agreements before receiving the last salary payment. Parts of a year may be combined to grant a full year of teaching credit, but summer school teaching will not be allowed toward computing teaching experience. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBA.)**

Classified Staff

Compensation for classified staff is set according to the current salary schedule.

All employees will be paid an annual salary in 12 equal monthly installments based on the current salary scale.

DIRECT DEPOSIT AND SALARY

All district personnel shall be paid through a single monthly payroll with electronic settlement of payroll checks secured through direct deposit of net pay. 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 the employee worked. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policies DJC and GBA.)**

DEDUCTIONS

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Compulsory deductions include:

1. federal withholding tax;
2. state withholding tax;
3. Social Security tax;
4. state retirement (PERS): Retirement benefits are paid each pay period. Effective July 1, 2025, the district will pay 18.9% based on the employee's gross pay and the employee contributes 9.0% of the gross pay;
5. bankruptcies and garnishments (when warranted);
6. child support payments; and/or
7. tax levies.

Optional deductions include:

1. Hospitalization Group Insurance;
2. Dental Group Insurance;
3. Cancer/Intensive Care/Life Insurance;
4. Tax Sheltered Annuity;
5. Salary Protection Plan;
6. United Way;
7. Meridian Mutual Federal Credit Union;
8. Mississippi Deferred Compensation Plan;
9. Child Care/Cafeteria Plan;
10. Medical Reimbursement/Cafeteria Plan; and/or
11. Vision Insurance.

SALARY SCHEDULE

Certified Employees

All certified team members—excluding specific roles outlined by Board policy—receive their annual salary distributed across 12 equal monthly installments. This compensation is tied directly to the current salary scale, which is always accessible via the **MPSD website**.

Classified Staff

Compensation for classified staff is structured according to our active salary schedule. To ensure consistent and predictable pay throughout the year, all classified employees receive their compensation in 12 monthly installments.

Note on Access: Salary scales and schedules are updated annually following Board approval. You can view the most up-to-date figures at any time by visiting the Human Resources section of the MPSD website.

OVERTIME FOR EMPLOYEES

Classified Employees (Overtime Pay)

Classified employees are compensated for each and every hour worked. Overtime is paid at a rate of 1.5 times the employee's regular hourly rate for all hours worked over 40 in a single workweek.

- **Hourly Employees:** Overtime is calculated directly from the standard hourly wage.
- **Salaried Non-Exempt Employees:** To calculate overtime, the monthly salary is converted to its weekly and hourly equivalents to establish the baseline regular rate.
- **Dual-Role Employees (Blended Rates):** For employees working two or more different jobs within the district, overtime is calculated using a blended hourly rate.

- *The Calculation:* Total earnings from all jobs during the workweek are divided by the total number of hours worked across all jobs.
- *The Overtime Premium:* The employee is then paid an additional half-time (0.5) of this blended rate for every hour worked over 40.

Section III: Employee Benefits

CAFETERIA PLAN

Meridian Public School District offers all employees a Section 125 Plan (a.k.a. Cafeteria Plan) through Allstate Benefits. Allstate Benefits provides ongoing employee support throughout the year as needed through third-party administrator AmeriLife. A Section 125 Administration Guide is available to all employees on the employee benefits portal provided by the AmeriLife website.

COBRA

In accordance with federal law, Meridian Public School District employees and their dependents may be eligible to continue their group health care coverage on a temporary basis if coverage ends due to a **qualifying event**. This continuation of coverage is offered under the **Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)** through the State of Mississippi's group health plan.

Qualifying Events

COBRA coverage may be available when group health coverage would otherwise be lost due to any of the following qualifying events:

1. **Death** of a covered employee
2. **Termination of employment** (for reasons other than gross misconduct) or a **reduction in hours** worked by the employee
3. **Divorce or legal separation** from the covered employee
4. The covered employee becoming **entitled to Medicare** under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act
5. A dependent child no longer meeting the eligibility requirements under the plan and **losing dependent status**

Duration of COBRA Coverage

The length of COBRA continuation coverage depends on the nature of the qualifying event:

- **Up to 18 months**
For employees, spouses, and dependents when coverage is lost due to employment termination or reduction in hours.
- **Up to 29 months**
For employees and qualified beneficiaries if the employee is determined to be **disabled** by the Social Security Administration at any time during the **first 60 days of COBRA**

coverage.

- **Up to 36 months**

For spouses and dependents who lose coverage due to:

- The **death** of the employee
- **Divorce or legal separation**

A dependent child ceasing to qualify as a covered dependent

Employees will receive additional information about COBRA rights and enrollment procedures at the time of hire, during benefits orientation, and upon separation or another qualifying event.

If you have questions regarding COBRA eligibility or procedures, please contact Consuela Houston (601) 484-4923 in the Human **Resources Department**.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Meridian Public School District provides access to the **Weems Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** as a **confidential, no-cost benefit** to support the well-being of employees and their families.

Who Is Covered

The EAP is available to:

- All MPSD employees
- Their **spouses**
- **Dependent children** (up to age 18, or up to age 21 if enrolled full-time in school)

What Services Are Provided

Through the Weems Community Mental Health Center, the EAP offers:

- **Outpatient mental health therapy**
- **Medication evaluation and management**
- **Substance abuse treatment programs**

There is **no charge** for these services, and there is **no limit** on the number of outpatient mental health visits.

Note: Day treatment, psychosocial rehabilitation, case management, and court-ordered programs are **not covered** under the EAP benefit.

Weems Office Locations

Services are available at any **Weems Community Mental Health Center** location, including: Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott, and Smith counties.

You do not need to reside in these counties to use the benefit.

Issues Addressed by EAP

The EAP can help with:

- Stress and anxiety
- Depression and mood disorders
- Emotional or behavioral concerns
- Alcohol or substance abuse

Confidentiality

Use of the EAP is **strictly confidential**. Your name and information will **not be shared with the district** unless:

- You fail a drug or alcohol screen
- You are referred through a **mandatory supervisor referral**

In those cases, limited information will be shared **only with your written consent** via a release form.

How to Schedule an Appointment

To access services, call the EAP directly:

- **601-483-4821** or toll-free **1-800-803-0245**
- Appointments available Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- For after-hours emergencies: **1-800-803-0245**

When calling, identify yourself as a participant in the **Employee Assistance Program**.

EAP covers dependent children up to age 18 and 21 if enrolled full-time in school.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE

All **full-time employees** and **bus drivers** are eligible to participate in the **State of Mississippi's insurance program for school employees**. Enrollment details and plan options will be provided during new employee onboarding or upon request from the Human Resources Department.

GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Meridian Public School District carries **general liability insurance coverage** to protect employees in the responsible performance of their assigned professional duties. This insurance is intended to safeguard staff from legal liability arising from job-related incidents while carrying out district responsibilities.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

MPSD is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. However, in the event of a **work-related injury or illness**, the district provides **Workers' Compensation coverage** in accordance with the laws of the **State of Mississippi**.

Reporting Procedures

If a workplace accident occurs:

1. **Administer first-aid**, if necessary.
2. The employee must **report the injury immediately** to the **Principal/Supervisor** once they are physically able.
3. The employee and Principal/Supervisor must complete a **"Mississippi First Report of Injury"** form within **24 hours** of the incident.
4. The Principal/Supervisor must report the incident to the **Workers' Compensation Coordinator, Consuela Houston** at 601-484-4923.
5. All employees involved in a job-related injury will be required to undergo a **post-accident drug and alcohol screening**.

Failure to report an injury promptly may jeopardize eligibility for Workers' Compensation benefits.

Exclusions

Compensation may be **denied** if the injury, illness, or death results from:

- Willful misconduct
- Intentional self-inflicted injury
- Intoxication
- Refusal or failure to use prescribed safety devices or follow safety procedures

Medical Bills & Compensation

Payment of benefits will be made in accordance with the **Mississippi Workers' Compensation Act**.

Return-to-Work Policy

Meridian Public Schools is committed to helping employees who are injured on the job to recover and return to work **as soon as medically appropriate**. The district's **Early Return-to-Work Program** is designed to:

- Support the employee's recovery and job security
- Minimize time away from work
- Maintain organizational productivity
- Reduce workers' compensation costs

Return-to-Work Opportunities

- If the employee is medically able to return to **full duty**, they will be reinstated in their regular position.
- If **medical restrictions** prevent a full return, the district will attempt to provide:
 - **Modified duties** within the employee's current job, or
 - A **temporary alternate assignment** that meets medical restrictions

Employee Responsibilities

- Report all injuries **immediately or as soon as possible**
- Participate in medical evaluations and share updates with your supervisor and the **Workers' Compensation Coordinator**
- Cooperate with return-to-work assignments, including any **modified duty**, in accordance with your healthcare provider's restrictions

For more details, refer to **MPSD Board Policy GBRHA**.

SECTION IV: PAID LEAVE

EMPLOYEE LEAVE SCHEDULE

LENGTH OF CONTRACT	SICK DAYS	PERSONAL DAYS		VACATION DAYS
		CERTIFIED	CLASSIFIED	
235 Day Contract				
Less than 5 year	10	4	2	10
5 to 10 years	11	4	2	10
10 to 15 years	11	4	2	11
15 to 20 years	11	4	2	12
20 to 25 years	11	4	2	13
25 to 30 years	11	4	2	14
30 years +	11	4	2	15
220-222 Day Contract				
Less than 5 years	9	4	2	0
5 to 10 years	10	4	2	0
10 to 15 years	10	4	3	0
15 to 20 years	10	4	4	0
20 to 25 years	10	4	4	0
25 to 30 years	10	4	4	0
194 & 199 & 204 & 207 & 209 & 210 & 212 & 217 Day Contract				
Less than 5 years	8	4	2	0
5 to 10 years	9	4	2	0
10 to 15 years	9	4	3	0
15 to 20 years	9	4	4	0
20 to 25 years	9	4	4	0
25 to 30 years	9	4	4	0
187 & 198 Day Contract				
Less than 5 years	7	2	2	0
5 to 10 years	8	2	2	0
10 to 15 years	8	2	3	0
15 to 20 years	8	2	4	0
20 to 25 years	8	2	4	0
25 to 30 years	8	2	4	0

Note: 1 indicates the first year of employment. Example: 1-5 years means first through the fifth year of employment.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Any employee who has been absent for any reason must complete a leave form and report that absence to his/her principal or supervisor or he/she will lose full payment for unreported absences. To determine sick leave entitlement while employed by MPSD, experience accrued only in MPSD will be considered. (See Employee Leave Chart above.) Up to five (5) days of the annual leave allowance (personal and vacation leave) shall be carried over to the next school year and credited to the employee as sick leave in unlimited numbers. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRI.)**

Leave must be approved by the superintendent, assistant superintendent, or director. Leave for school employees must be approved by the principal. Professional leave must directly support the school/district objectives. Any leave except sick leave is to be requested and approved **two weeks before the requested dates**. Leave requests after the leave has been taken may not be approved.

SICK LEAVE GUIDELINES

Reporting Absences

To ensure proper documentation, all absences must be recorded using the Staff Absence Report. The report must clearly state the specific relationship between the employee and the family member whose illness or death required the absence.

Medical Substantiation

The district reserves the right to require a physician's statement to substantiate any illness-related absence. A doctor's note is explicitly required under the following circumstances:

1. Absences occurring on the first or last day of a contract period.
2. Cumulative absences of 5 or more days (these do not need to be consecutive).
3. Absences lasting for less than a full workday.

Bereavement Leave

The district provides compassionate leave to support employees during times of grief.

- **Immediate Family:** Paid leave may be granted following the death of a mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, child, grandchild, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, foster parent, or any blood relative who is a dependent as defined by the IRS.
- **Other Relatives and Friends:** The Superintendent has the discretionary authority to grant bereavement leave for the death of a family friend or a relative not listed above.
- **Leave Deduction:** Absences for a death in the immediate family, or for related extenuating circumstances, will be deducted from the employee's accumulated sick leave.

Annual Service Credit for Teachers

To receive credit for a full year of teaching experience, a teacher must not be absent from their duties for more than forty-five (45) days within a single contract year.

Integrity of Absence Reporting

Falsifying statements, medical notes, or reasons for an absence is a severe policy violation. Dishonesty regarding time off will result in disciplinary action, up to and including:

- Full forfeiture of pay for the period of the absence.
- A formal disciplinary entry placed in the employee's permanent personnel file.
- Immediate termination of employment.

Policy Reference: For additional details on attendance regulations and employee expectations, please refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRI.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

Employees who have been with the district for at least 12 months and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months are eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year for qualifying family and medical reasons. Employees are required to use available paid leave (sick, personal, vacation) during FMLA leave.

Concurrent Use of Paid Leave

While FMLA leave itself is legally unpaid, the district requires employees to use any available accrued paid leave (such as sick leave, personal leave, or vacation days) during an FMLA absence.

- How it works: Your accrued paid leave will run concurrently (at the same time) with your 12-week FMLA entitlement.
- The result: You will receive a paycheck by using your earned paid time off, but those days will simultaneously count toward your total 12 weeks of job-protected FMLA leave. Once your paid leave balances are exhausted, any remaining FMLA time will be unpaid.

Policy & Rights Reference: For a comprehensive breakdown of your rights, employer responsibilities, and qualifying circumstances, please review the ***Employee Rights and Responsibilities*** section below, or refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRIA.

DONATING LEAVE

The district recognizes that a catastrophic illness or injury can cause immense financial and emotional strain. To support our team members, employees may donate a portion of their unused

accumulated personal or sick leave to a colleague who is facing a qualifying catastrophic medical crisis, either personally or within their immediate family.

Program Eligibility & Criteria

To participate in this program, either as a donor or a recipient, employees must adhere to the guidelines outlined below.

For the Recipient Employee

- **Exhaustion of Leave:** You must completely exhaust all of your own accrued paid leave (sick, personal, and vacation) before you are eligible to receive any donated time.
- **Medical Verification:** You must provide the Superintendent (or designee) with a comprehensive physician's statement. This documentation must include:
 - A description of the illness or injury confirming it meets catastrophic criteria.
 - The start date of the condition.
 - A medical prognosis, including the anticipated return-to-work date.
- **Review Committee Approval:** A review committee appointed by the Superintendent will evaluate each request to formally approve the eligibility of the recipient and confirm that the medical condition meets the definition of "catastrophic."
- **Disability Restriction:** Donated leave is intended to help employees return to work and may not be used in place of, or to delay, disability retirement.

For the Donor Employee

- **Designating a Recipient:** Donors must explicitly name the specific colleague they wish to support and state the exact number of days they want to donate. This is done by notifying the Superintendent's office in writing.
- **Donation Limits:** To protect your own leave balances, the following caps apply:
 - **Personal Leave:** You cannot donate an amount that would leave you with fewer than seven (7) days of personal leave remaining.
 - **Sick Leave:** You may donate a maximum of 50% of your total unused sick leave balance.

What Qualifies as a "Catastrophic" Condition?

Definition: A "catastrophic injury or illness" is a severe, life-threatening medical condition affecting an employee or an immediate family member that totally incapacitates the employee from working, forcing them to exhaust all earned paid time off and face a total loss of compensation.

Does NOT Qualify (Short-Term)	May Qualify (Long-Term/Intermittent)
Common, short-term illnesses (e.g., influenza, measles, colds).	Cancer diagnoses requiring extensive treatment.
Standard, minor injuries with rapid recovery periods.	Major surgeries requiring long recuperation periods.
Brief, routine medical procedures.	Chronic, long-term conditions causing severe intermittent absences.

Unused Donated Leave

If the recipient employee returns to work or separates from the district before using all the leave that was given to them, the leftover whole days will be returned to the donors.

The return is calculated on a pro-rata basis, meaning the leftover time is redistributed proportionally based on the percentage of the total pool that each donor originally contributed.

Policy Reference: For further details, please refer to MPSD Board Policy GADF.

VACATION

Vacation days are an exclusive benefit provided to employees on 235-day contracts. Employees working on shorter contract periods (such as 180-day or 200-day instructional schedules) are not eligible to accrue vacation leave.

Accrual and Years of Service

Vacation allowances are structured to reward long-term commitment to the district:

- Eligible employees begin with a baseline of 10 vacation days per contract year.
- Your total annual vacation allotment will increase systematically based on your continuous years of service with the district.

Where to Find Your Allotment: To see the exact breakdown of how your vacation days increase over time, please consult the Employee Leave Schedule provided by Human Resources. For comprehensive regulatory details, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRI.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Annual Personal Leave Allocations

At the start of each school year, licensed and certified employees receive a paid personal leave allowance based on their contract length:

- **Standard Contracts:** Employees are credited with a minimum of **two (2) personal leave days** per school year.

- **Extended Contracts (205+ Days):** Certified employees contracted to work 205 or more days are credited with **four (4) personal leave days** per school year.

Standard Black-Out Dates

To ensure instructional continuity and operational stability, personal leave is generally **not** permitted on the following days:

- The first day of the school term.
- The last day of the school term.
- The day immediately preceding a school holiday.
- The day immediately following a school holiday.
- **State Testing Windows:** Personal leave will not be granted during state testing at an employee's designated school site unless explicitly approved by the Superintendent due to documented, extenuating circumstances.

Authorized Exceptions to Black-Out Dates

In strict accordance with Section 37-7-307 of the Mississippi Code, an employee *may* use their accrued personal leave during a restricted black-out window (excluding standard state testing, unless approved by the Superintendent) under the following specific conditions:

Exception Category	Qualifying Criteria
District Longevity	The employee has a minimum of ten (10) years of service with MPSD, OR has a minimum balance of thirty (30) days of unused accumulated leave earned while employed with MPSD.
Military Deployment	An immediate family member of the employee is being actively deployed for military service on that day.
Legal Obligations	The employee has been legally summoned to appear for jury duty or to serve as a witness in a court of law.
Immediate Bereavement	An immediate family member has passed away, or funeral services are being held on that day. <i>(Note: Per state law, this utilizes existing personal leave and does not create additional separate bereavement days).</i>

Prior Approval Notice

Except in sudden emergencies (such as an immediate family death), all personal leave requires prior arrangement and approval from your principal or immediate supervisor to ensure adequate campus coverage.

Policy Reference: For complete details regarding leave accumulation and rollover regulations, please consult **MPSD Board Policy GBRI**.

Procedures for Requesting Personal Leave

1. Standard Request Workflow

To ensure adequate classroom and operational coverage, all non-emergency personal leave must be requested ahead of time.

- **Advance Notice:** Staff members must submit a formal leave request through Frontline Central at least five (5) business days before the planned absence.
- **Notification:** The principal or immediate supervisor will review the request against campus scheduling needs and notify the employee of approval or denial via Frontline.

2. Emergency Exceptions

When an unexpected emergency makes the standard five-day advance notice impossible:

- The employee must secure verbal approval from their principal or supervisor as soon as they realize they cannot report to work.
- Immediately upon returning to work, the employee is required to submit the formal leave request form in Frontline Central to officially document the absence.

3. Approvals for Restricted Days (Black-Out Dates)

As noted in the district's policy regarding the first/last days of school and holiday eves/morrows:

- **Employees with FEWER than 10 Years of MPSD Service:** Personal leave on these restricted days can only be approved by the Superintendent of Education. Principals do not have the authority to sign off on these requests.
- **Employees with 10 OR MORE Years of MPSD Service:** May utilize a personal day on these holiday-adjacent dates without needing special authorization from the Superintendent, provided standard advance notice is given to your principal.
- **State Testing Window:** Absolutely no **personal** leave will be granted during state testing at an employee's school site unless explicitly approved by the Superintendent for a documented, extenuating circumstance.

4. Year-End Carryover and Conversion

The district limits the amount of personal leave that can remain in your active personal leave bank from year to year.

- A maximum of five (5) unused personal/vacation days may be carried over into the next school year.
- Any unused accumulated personal or vacation leave beyond that five-day maximum limit will automatically be converted into sick leave at the end of the fiscal year.

Grounds for Denial of Non-Emergency Leave

To protect the integrity of the instructional environment, a supervisor or the district may deny a non-emergency personal leave request under any of the following conditions:

- The employee has already exhausted all accumulated personal days.
- The request falls on a restricted black-out date without meeting the required longevity or Superintendent approval criteria.

- **The 10% Operational Threshold:** The request would cause more than 10% of the building staff to be absent on that day, which would severely hinder the optimum functioning of the educational process or department workflow.

Policy Reference: For comprehensive details on leave accumulation, transfer credits, and tracking, please consult MPSD Board Policy GBRI.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

The district encourages continuous professional growth to support instructional excellence and leadership development. Professional leave must be requested and tracked through the same workflow as personal leave, with the specific educational reason or conference name clearly noted on the request form.

Annual Professional Development Allotments

To balance professional growth with regular building operations, the district limits the number of contracted workdays an employee may use for professional development each year.

Annual maximum limits are determined by role:

Position / Role	Annual Allotment
Teachers	3 days per year
Assistant Principals / Lead Teachers	4 days per year
Principals	5 days per year
Central Office Administrators	6 days per year
Cabinet Members	10 days per year

Key Policy Exemptions

- **Mandated Training:** These annual caps apply strictly to elective professional development. They **do not include** any district-, state-, or federally-mandated training or required professional development sessions.

- **Off-Contract/Summer Learning:** For principals, central office administrators, and cabinet members, any professional development attended during summer months or designated off-contract time **does not count** toward their annual professional leave limit.

JURY DUTY

The district recognizes an employee's civic duty to serve on a jury or appear as a legally summoned witness. Absences for verified jury duty are fully job-protected and will not impact or be deducted from your personal, vacation, or sick leave balances.

Reporting and Documentation Procedure

To ensure your time off is approved and your regular compensation is not disrupted, you must complete the following steps:

1. **Submit the Request:** As soon as you receive a summons, submit a staff absence request through Frontline Central to notify your principal or supervisor of the upcoming civic obligation.
2. **Provide Proof of Service:** Upon returning to work, you must obtain an official "letter of attendance" from the clerk of court confirming the exact days you served. Send a copy of this documentation directly to your principal or supervisor to officially substantiate the absence.

Policy Reference: For further information regarding court appearances, witness summons, and related legal absences, please refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRI.

LEAVE ENTITLEMENT WITH LOSS OF PAY

To support our staff during prolonged medical challenges, the district provides a temporary financial cushion for employees who have completely exhausted their accrued sick leave balances but require additional time off due to a personal or immediate family illness.

Allocation and Compensation Adjustments

Eligible employees may receive up to **ten (10) additional days** of extended sick leave per school year at a reduced rate of pay. The reduction is calculated based on classification:

- **Certified Employees:** The current daily substitute teacher pay rate will be deducted from the employee's regular daily pay for each day used.
- **Classified Employees:** One-third (33.3%) of the employee's regular daily pay rate will be deducted for each day used.

Documentation Requirements

To qualify for these extended leave days, a completed staff absence report must be accompanied by a **written statement from a licensed physician**. The medical documentation must explicitly state the nature of the illness and verify that the medical condition requires the employee to be

absent from work.

Exhaustion of Extended Leave

The extended sick leave benefit is strictly capped at ten (10) days per fiscal year. Any subsequent absences beyond these 10 days will result in a **full loss of pay** for those missed workdays.

Note on Job Protection: Extended sick leave provides partial salary continuation, but it does not automatically grant job protection. If your medical absence is long-term, please contact Human Resources to determine if your leave qualifies for concurrent protection under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

MILITARY DUTY

The district highly values and respects the service of our staff members who serve in the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserve components. In strict compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Mississippi state law, the district provides job-protected leave for military obligations.

Paid Military Leave (Up to 15 Days)

Pursuant to Mississippi Code § 33-1-21, employees who are members of a reserve or National Guard unit are entitled to a leave of absence without loss of pay, time, or annual leave for up to fifteen (15) working days per calendar year when ordered to active duty or annual field training.

- This paid leave applies strictly to scheduled working days.
- Employees must provide a copy of their official military orders to Human Resources to secure paid military leave.

Extended Unpaid Leave (Up to 5 Years)

If an employee is mobilized, deployed, or volunteers for extended active duty that exceeds the 15 days of state-allotted paid leave, they will be granted an unpaid military leave of absence.

- Duration: In accordance with federal law, job-protected military leave is granted for up to five (5) cumulative years.
- Use of Accrued Leave: While extended military leave is unpaid by the district, employees may voluntarily choose—but are never required—to use their accumulated personal or vacation leave to maintain their regular pay during their service period.

Request and Notification Procedure

To ensure seamless operational continuity and a smooth transition:

1. Advance Notice: Employees must notify their principal or supervisor and Human Resources as soon as they receive notice of military obligations.

2. Submission of Orders: A written request for military leave, accompanied by a copy of the official military orders or training schedule, must be submitted to the Superintendent's office immediately upon receipt from the military branch.

Reinstatement Rights

Upon returning from military service under conditions other than dishonorable, employees are guaranteed reinstatement to their former position, or a position of equal seniority, status, and pay, provided they report back to work within the timelines established by USERRA.

Policy Reference: For comprehensive details on benefits continuation during deployment, retirement system credits, and specific reemployment windows, please refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRID.

PERSONAL TRAVEL

Staff members may not be excused for personal travel other than personal leave on days school is in session, except in special cases of unusual opportunity and with advance approval. Deductions will be made at the employee's full rate of pay.

SECTION V: Instructional Procedures and Expectations

ATTENDANCE (TEACHER)

All staff members are to report as scheduled by the principal and clock in immediately. If you will be absent due to illness, notify the principal or person designated by him or her as soon as possible.

Staff members who are late must contact the principal's office for arrangements to be made to cover their duties until they arrive. Excessive tardiness may result in consequences including, but not limited to, a conference with the principal, a written reprimand, and/or suspension. The following action will be taken to address excessive tardiness every nine weeks.

Except in case of emergency, and with the principal's approval, teachers are expected to remain on the school grounds from check-in until check-out time and remain in their classrooms during class sessions or on their duty posts for the entire assigned time. The principal of each school will set duty hours.

CONFERENCES

Meridian Public School District policy encourages open communication in all areas. Frequent conferences open many doors and create a well-rounded educational atmosphere. Five major categories of conferences and the corresponding guidelines are listed below:

Principal-Teacher Conference: Principal-teacher conferences will be held at the principal's discretion or upon the teacher's request. The principal will maintain a record of the conference.

Principal-Student Conference: The principal is the final school authority in matters pertaining to students. Each student's request or problem should be treated with respect and as being important to students.

Teacher-Parent Conference: It is the teacher's responsibility to take the initiative in scheduling a parent conference. The principal will determine the procedures and time. When a parent calls the office and requests a conference with a particular teacher, the teacher will confirm the scheduled conference according to procedures specified by the principal. The teacher will keep records of all conferences.

Teacher-Student Conference: Direct, open communication with students is conducive to appropriate student behavior and progress. Teachers should keep a record of the conferences. The principal or assistant principal will be present at any teacher-parent or teacher-student conference if requested and if he/she is given sufficient advance notice.

Teacher-Teacher Conference: Teachers (staff) are encouraged to cooperate directly on matters of a mutually constructive nature. Keep the principal informed.

A Guide for Effectively Addressing Parent Issues

Listen

- Allow the parent to share their concerns without interrupting
- Try to understand what caused the parent to be upset or concerned
- Empathize with the parent to view the situation from their perspective
- Acknowledge the parent's feelings

Acknowledge

- Acknowledge the inconvenience or disappointment of the issue
- Express regret for what the parent may be feeling
- If the problem is not school-related, explain what actions may be taken. Offer support.

Problem Solve

- Avoid arguing
- Ask probing and clarifying questions to understand what is causing the problem.
- Repeat the parent's concerns back to him/her for clarification and understanding.
- Explain the facts
- Emphasize what you can do over what you can't do
- Attempt to respond to the parent's issue or handle their request during the encounter

If unable to solve the parent's issue:

- Personally contact someone who can assist the parent, if able
- Refer the parent to someone in the office, if necessary
- Take ownership by ensuring parent follow-up. Check back in with the parent to ensure the issue has been resolved
- Explain the benefit to the parent for actions taken
- Exercise emotional control
- Avoid defensiveness
- Separate the problem from the parent's emotion

DISCIPLINE GUIDE

A. Teachers should:

1. Be fair and consistent. Treat each student equally.
2. Be empathetic, accentuate the positive, and avoid the negative.
3. Be thoroughly prepared for all classes and have ample work for all students.
4. Let your classroom reflect positive qualities.
5. Be professional in demeanor and maintain a sense of humor.
6. Admit your errors and apologize if you make the mistake of treating a student unjustly.
7. Let the students establish a minimum number of classroom rules and help them understand why they are necessary.
8. Correct students to prevent minor problems from growing into larger ones.
9. Be considered on duty while on campus or at school functions.
10. Speak in a respectful, well-modulated manner.

B. Teachers should not:

1. Punish the entire class for the misbehavior of a few.
2. Argue with a student.
3. Embarrass a student.

4. Refuse to consider mitigating circumstances.
5. Compare students with one another.
6. Become overly friendly and familiar with students.
7. Repeatedly show favoritism to certain students.
8. Challenge students to repeat an undesirable act or get themselves in a position of “do it or else.”
9. Administer unusual punishments.
10. Punish by leaving a student alone in a classroom, hall, or any unsupervised area.
11. Punish by requiring a student to write lines.
12. Make physical contact in an attempt to discipline. Do not place your hands on students in anger.

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS

WHAT ARE NON-NEGOTIABLES?

Non-negotiables are the things we will not negotiate on. They follow our values and principles and define not only what we will and won't accept from others but also what we will and won't accept from ourselves. They are unwavering expectations. The expectations below were used to develop MPSD's Non-Negotiables Checklist for Principals.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

We will have consistent expectations regarding formal student responses during classroom instruction:

- ☐ Expect students to speak and write in complete sentences, using capitalization and punctuation.
- ☐ Avoid slang (text talk) in speech and writing.

We will build positive learning environments with high expectations for ALL students:

- ☐ Cultivate a growth mindset: “With work, it will be easier. I may struggle occasionally, but it’s not due to my ability – it means I need to work on it.”
- ☐ Teach students to apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, empathize with others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (Social-Emotional Learning)
- ☐ Show students they are valued by establishing caring relationships. Every student should be known by name and interests, seen daily, heard daily, and valued daily.
- ☐ Support students and promote self-regulation vs. enabling/over-helping.
- ☐ Be proactive (preteach to misconceptions) vs. reactive (reteaching after failure).
- ☐ Provide ongoing building-level support for new teachers: training from CIA, district technology, and behavior support personnel.
- ☐ Get to know students through prior data so intentional scaffolding and intervention can be provided to prevent failure, not respond to failure: cumulative records, prior MAAP, IEPs, etc.

We will set up our classrooms appropriately:

- ☐ Have space/arrange seating for (1) small group teacher-guided instruction, (2) partner/cooperative work, and (3) independent practice/testing.
- ☐ Designate wall space for expectations, anchor charts, a word wall (grade 3+), a sound wall (K-2nd), and a data wall.

We will ensure safe environments conducive to high levels of teaching and learning:

- ☐ Create and monitor a space for teacher voice and input.
- ☐ Engage in PLCs based on DuFour's four questions and use MPSD's Planning Support Tool for district-approved HQIM.
- ☐ Monitor PLCs, implementation after training, next steps based on observation feedback, and student achievement data to provide support matched to needs.
- ☐ Protect instructional time.
- ☐ Plan, practice, and be prepared in the event of a crisis.

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

We will teach using an MPSD-approved curriculum and monitor the fidelity of implementation:

- ☐ Use district-approved high-quality instructional materials for tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3.
- ☐ Beginning with the end in mind, create standards-based assessments and select graded work that will be used to inform teaching and learning effectively.
- ☐ Collaboration with sped teachers regarding where students will struggle and the likely misconceptions, then preparing on the front-end for necessary adaptations: visual, audio, small group, reducing #, etc.
- ☐ Tier 1 lesson plans aligned to state standards, assessments, and pacing guides.
- ☐ Tier 2 interventions matched to student's deficits, elevated focus on ESSENTIAL state standards, and delivered as intended.
- ☐ Tier 3 interventions matched to student's deficits, elevated focus on ESSENTIAL state standards, and delivered as prescribed by TST on the student's Tier 3 intervention documentation.
- ☐ Including literacy strategies, graphic organizers, and technology integration as appropriate in weekly lesson planning and implementation.
- ☐ Follow MPSD PLCs protocol, ensuring assessments are constructed before teaching and data are used to guide instruction.
- ☐ Students use anchor charts with "tips and traps" for essential standards. Students should be taught to use them during small group, partner/cooperative work, or independent practice /testing.
- ☐ Preparing for instruction, not merely planning.

EXPECTATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION in a Standard-Based Classroom

We will provide teaching and learning activities that reflect a shared understanding of what

students should know, do, and understand and will be built around a common framework for instruction that consists of:

☐ An agenda visible for students that follows the MPSD Instructional Routine and includes the following:

- Standards /learning targets written in student-friendly language
- Bellringer
- Whole Group Activities
- Check for Understanding after the Whole Group Lesson
- Small Group Activities
- Closure

☐ Tier 1 Lesson plans that follow the MPSD Instructional Routine and are available in classrooms include all components and follow MPSD's Instructional Models, bellringer to closure. Plans must be submitted on time, reflect HQIM, be personalized based on data (not a "cookie-cutter" plan for the grade), and include sped adaptations. Assessments should be attached to lesson plans.

☐ A separate lesson plan for tier 2 interventions for students placed in tier 2 using the district's decision-making protocol: submitted on time, reflect HQIM, complete and personalized based on data (not a "cookie-cutter" plan for all student groups), and include a plan for tier 2 progress monitoring (every other week).

☐ Collaboration between gen-ed and sped for pre-planned adaptations and co-teaching is noted in the plans.

☐ Shared response to student needs between gen-ed and sped: pre-teaching and reteaching, evident in gen-ed and resource plans. We teach students, not gen-ed and sped students.

☐ A lesson plan for resource classrooms.

☐ Use of question stems that mirror assessments during instruction.

☐ Intentional use of engagement strategies and monitoring of student engagement.

☐ Intentional, consistent use of "checks for understanding" throughout lessons to guide the next steps for instruction (scaffolding or addressing misconception, not lowering the expectation)

☐ Classroom displays of the following:

- ✓ Expectations
- ✓ Anchor Charts
- ✓ Word Wall (or Sound Wall, K-2)
- ✓ Data Wall

☐ Maximizing instructional time with bell-to-bell instruction and no downtime.

- Students should not be allowed out of the classroom for any reason within the first and last __ minutes of the period.
- Distribution of supplies, transitions between activities, etc. do not delay or disrupt instructional time.

☐ Proactive monitoring of student behavior to maximize engagement and outcomes.

☐ Adaptations to guarantee access to grade-level instruction: visual, audio, teacher-led small group, and other scaffolding.

☐ Informally (and formally) checking for understanding to make necessary adjustments to instruction. This includes effective questioning, monitoring student work, etc.

☐ Meaningful feedback provided to teachers to improve teaching and learning...

- using the Classroom Support Tool for tier 1.
- using the separate WIN template plan for tier 2 intervention and enrichment.
- using Tier intervention documentation, as prescribed by TST.
- ☐ Compliance walks are based on MPSD's monthly focus.
- ☐ Monitoring technology for instructional purposes;
- ☐ Monitoring fidelity of Morning Meeting.
- ☐ Celebrating implementation successes, progress to goals, goals met/exceeded, etc.
- ☐ Analyzing intervention progress during TST meetings.
- ☐ Using mid-point and benchmark assessment results to monitor growth.
- ☐ Analyzing/monitoring growth on universal screeners.
- ☐ Monitoring fidelity of tier 3 intervention

EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT

We will provide evidence-based behavioral support to improve academic outcomes for students:

- ☐ School-wide implementation of PBIS and Leader in Me in Tier 1.
- ☐ Tier 2 support for behavior.
- ☐ TSTs focus on the "whole child" rather than dealing with behavior and academics separately.

ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS

We will monitor the progress of our students and school in tier 1 by:

- ☐ Setting SMART goals and tracking progress to goals at the school and class levels.
- ☐ Developing common assessments that are explicitly aligned to standards so standards mastery and progress can be monitored between district assessments.
- ☐ Administering benchmark assessments.
- ☐ Identifying students who are not meeting standards, meeting standards, or exceeding standards after each assessment.
- ☐ Adjusting instruction based on assessment results (differentiation).
- ☐ Analyzing data.
 - Tier 2 monthly in PLCs or 1:1 (school discretion)
 - Tier 3 monthly via TST
 - PLCs after classroom assessments, benchmarks, and universal screening for reteach/retest planning
 - Gradebook for the previous week's graded work.
- ☐ Maintaining a data folder/binder/online platform that includes the following information:
 - ✓ School goals (School Data Tracker)
 - ✓ Class goals (Class Data Tracker)
 - ✓ Student's previous year data and current year mid-point and benchmark data
 - ✓ Response to BMA Data / Standards Analysis
 - ✓ SPED Tracking Form
- ☐ Monitoring the use of technology for assessment purposes.

We will monitor the progress of our students and school in tier 2 by:

- ☐ Reviewing/weighing in on tier placement using MPSD's Decision-Making Protocol.
- ☐ Using data to identify deficits and addressing multiple skills/standards, primarily focusing on essential standards taught within the current or preceding terms. Using the Flowchart for Digging Deeper to ensure interventions are matched to deficits.
 - ☐ Engaging in tier 2 progress monitoring talks; this may be 1:1 during planning times, during a scheduled PLC for tier 2 monitoring, etc.
 - ☐ Analyzing mid-point and benchmark assessment scores to guide interventions and monitor growth.
 - ☐ Analyzing/monitoring growth on universal screeners.
 - ☐ Monitoring fidelity of tier 2 interventions: time, frequency, resources, explicit instruction, progress monitoring, adjustments.

We will monitor the progress of our students and school in tier 3 by:

- ☐ Using the Flowchart for Digging Deeper to ensure interventions are matched to deficits.

EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADING and COMMUNICATION

We will inform our students and parents about the student's academic progress by:

- ☐ Consistently entering grades into digital gradebook.
- ☐ Goal setting with students.
- ☐ Having student/ parent conferences at least once per ____.
- ☐ Notifying parents of tier 2 placement and keeping them updated.
- ☐ Formally invite parents to TST meetings and follow up if they are not in attendance.
- ☐ Monitoring attendance, behavior, etc. via MPSD's Early Warning System and partnering with parents.

We will support our teachers with by:

- ☐ Providing meaningful feedback after classroom observations (at least __ per ____)
- ☐ Conducting data talks after mid-point and benchmark assessments, including standards performance and student performance levels/growth (Performance Levels at Benchmarks; Does Not Meet, Meets, or Exceeds Expectation after Mid-Points).
- ☐ Conducting monthly walkthroughs to identify trends and allocate support to needs via professional development, consults, collaboration, and/or coaching.
- ☐ Providing support in PLCs for tier 1 and tier 2 planning, tier 1 and tier 2 data analysis problem-solving, and preparation.

COPYRIGHT MATERIAL USE

The Meridian Public School District's Board of Education intends to adhere to the provisions of current copyright laws and congressional guidelines. Copyright infringement is illegal, unethical,

and contrary to the school district’s policy. It is also the policy of the Meridian Public School District to adhere to the provisions of the copyright laws in microcomputer software. The principal at each school is responsible for establishing practices that will enforce district copyright policy at the school level.

FIELD TRIPS

To ensure student safety, proper logistics, and alignment with district instructional goals, all school-sponsored field trips must complete a multi-tiered approval process before any planning, fundraising, or announcements take place.

The Approval Workflow

1. **Campus Review:** The organizing staff member must first complete the official Field Trip Request Form and submit it directly to their building principal for initial approval in Frontline Central.
2. **District Administration Approval:** Once endorsed by the principal, the request is routed to the appropriate Central Office Administrator for district-level administrative approval.
3. **Board Approval for Overnight Trips:** Any field trip that involves an overnight stay or travel out-of-state requires final approval from the MPSD School Board.

Important Deadlines

To allow adequate time for administrative review, transportation scheduling, and board scheduling, requests must be submitted well in advance of the proposed trip date:

Trip Type	Required Submission Deadline	Final Approver
Standard Day Trips	Minimum of 14 business days prior to the trip	Assistant Superintendent
Overnight / Out-of-State	Minimum of 60 calendar days prior to the trip	MPSD School Board

Policy Reminder: No commitments should be made to students or parents, and no financial deposits may be collected, until the Field Trip Request Form has received all required administrative and board signatures.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAM (ELL)

Philosophy:

The Meridian Public School District recognizes the need and the requirement to provide ELL students with linguistic and academic instruction and support services to develop English language proficiency such that, over time, they progress through school at a rate commensurate

with their native-English speaking peers. To ensure educational efforts are consistent district-wide, the following requirements will be met:

- Language minority children will be allowed to attend school, regardless of their ability to produce a birth certificate, social security number, or immigration document.
- Language minority children will be placed within one year of their age-appropriate grade level.
- Language minority children will not fail a subject or be retained in a grade because they do not speak English.

Identification

The Home Language Survey will be completed during school enrollment to identify the students who qualify for ELL Program Services. Students identified by this survey as needing ELL services will be assessed for placement in the ELL program.

Assessment

ELL students will be tested for English language proficiency within the first week to ten days following initial identification. This assessment will reveal individual student's strengths and weaknesses to plan the student's academic placement. This assessment will include four areas of language: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing to ensure the student's language needs are properly identified and addressed. Before placement, parents will be notified, through communication they can understand, of the student's placement in the ELL program, the parent's right to visit the program, and the parent's right to withdraw the student from the program. As a part of exiting the ELL program, students will be assessed on functional abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Multiple measures will be used since no single instrument can provide all the information needed to place and exit students from ELL.

Programming Pullout

Programming services will be provided for ELL students. This service requires the student to be pulled out of the regular classroom for special instruction in English. An itinerant teacher will provide pullout instruction for individual students or small groups as dictated by the number of students and scheduling feasibility. Programming will address the four areas of language: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing.

Grading

Strict adherence to a "letter" grading system is often inappropriate for ELL students. To ensure grading consistency between teachers and/or schools and to ensure ELL students do not fail due to English proficiency, the policy for grading ELL students in the Meridian Public School District will be "Pass" or "Fail." A "Pass" will equal 70% for ELL students who are less than proficient in a subject or course due to English proficiency. These students must be ELL program students, and the teacher may award a "Pass" with the approval of the principal only. NO FAILING GRADES MAY BE GIVEN DURING THE ELL'S PROGRESS FROM LEVEL 1—ENTERING THROUGH LEVEL 3—DEVELOPING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY.

LESSON PLANS

- A. Teachers will prepare and submit lesson plans the week before instruction. If a teacher assistant is assigned, the plan will include activities for the teacher assistant.
- B. the lesson plan will include objectives, procedures, materials, assessments, and assignments for each class.
- C. Lesson plans should be placed on the teacher's desk in the substitute folder at the end of the day (except when the lesson plans are submitted to the principal for review).
- D. The teacher should provide the substitute with a neighboring teacher familiar with the class routine.
- E. Lesson plans for day one and forward should reflect grade-level standards/frameworks.
- F. Lesson plans should reflect continued instruction during the week of nine-week exams.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports integrates Response to Intervention (RtI) for academics and RtI for behavior into a unified model that recognizes the reciprocal influence academic performance and social/emotional/behavior have on each other. The main goal of the MTSS is to be prevention-oriented by knowing which students need support and implementing support as early as possible each school year. Interventions will be evidence-based and targeted to the student's needs. Progress monitoring data will be used to determine when to make changes in instruction.

TEACHER SUPPORT TEAMS (TST) The Mississippi Department of Education shall require every school district to follow the instructional model which consists of three (3) tiers of instruction:

- Tier I: Quality classroom instruction based on Mississippi College-and-Career-Readiness Standards and Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks
- Tier II: Focused supplemental instruction
- Tier III: Intensive interventions specifically designed to meet students' individual needs. If Tier 1 and Tier 2 strategies are unsuccessful, students must be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST). On those occasions when the Teacher Student Team (TST) interventions are unsuccessful, the procedures for assisting students considered at risk of academic failure will be followed. This committee will recommend improvements and/or forward the referral to the MET. This Board of Education-approved procedure is provided to principals, who chair the TST and is published in the District Policies and Procedures Manual.
- It is the policy of the Meridian Public School District that the referral of a student to the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) will begin the State of Mississippi's process for determining a student's eligibility for special services. Under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students should only be considered after appropriate instructional variations and interventions have been implemented in the regular classroom, the student continues to be "at risk," or if the student is obviously

disabled. Teachers must conduct probes and submit results according to the timelines dictated by the Teacher Support Team.

Over-the-Counter Medication

School personnel will not administer prescription medicine to a student unless the student's physician authorizes school personnel to administer the medicine and the parents/guardians have signed the Indemnity Agreement associated with this policy. The parents/guardians are responsible for obtaining a statement from the physician authorizing school personnel to administer the medicine. The statement should include:

1. Student's name
2. Diagnosis
3. Name of medicine
4. Method of administration
5. Time/s to administer the medicine
6. Amount of medicine
7. Date to discontinue or review administration of medicine
8. Physician's signature
9. Date

The parents/guardians are responsible for getting the medicine to the school. All medicine must be in a proper container with a label from the pharmacy which states the following:

1. Student's name
2. Name of medicine
3. Method of administration
4. Time/s to administer the medicine
5. Prescription number
6. Name of pharmacy
7. Date filled

(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy JGCD.)

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

When a principal or his/her designee has probable cause or reasonable suspicion, that school official has a legal right and responsibility to search personal belongings, desks, persons, cell phones, and/or vehicles for any item specifically prohibited by School Board policy. A witness should be present during any search. It is not necessary to give prior warning of a search.

The school official should seek cooperation from the student if a search is to be made of his person, requesting, for instance, that the contents of a purse or pocket be placed on a table for inspection.

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. The interior of a vehicle driven by a student on the school premises may be searched if the school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal, unauthorized contraband items are contained inside.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

- A. When the regular classroom teacher must be absent, it is the responsibility of the principal or his/her designee to obtain a substitute teacher. The principal or his/her designee must be notified as soon as possible when the teacher is to be absent.
- B. Classroom teachers shall not contact a substitute teacher.
- C. All substitute teachers will be obtained from an outside approved agency by the Meridian Public School District.
- D. Classroom teachers will maintain a substitute teacher file which remains in the classroom at all times. The file must contain any information that might be needed by a substitute in the classroom (schedule, class roll, plans for instruction, current duty assignment, etc.). (For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GBRJ.)

STAFF/STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

It is the policy of the MPSD Board of Education to prohibit any sexual relationship, contact, or sexually nuanced behavior or communication between a staff member and a student while the student is enrolled in the school system. The prohibition extends to students of the opposite sex or the same sex as the staff member and applies, regardless of whether the student or the staff member is the initiator of the behavior and whether or not the student welcomes or reciprocates the attention.

Staff Guidelines for Non-Fraternization

Staff members are expected to use good judgment in their relationships with students both inside and outside of the school context including, but not limited to, the following guidelines:

1. Staff members shall not make derogatory comments to students regarding the school and/or staff.
2. Staff members shall not exchange gifts with students.
3. Staff-sponsored parties, at which students are in attendance, unless they are a part of the school's extracurricular program and are properly supervised, are prohibited.
4. Staff members shall not fraternize, written or verbally, with students except on matters that pertain to school-related issues.
5. Staff members shall not text students nor participate in any student blogs.
6. Staff members shall not associate with students at any time in any situation or activity which could be considered sexually suggestive or involve the presence or use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.
7. Staff members shall not date students. Sexual relations with students, regardless of age and/or consent, are prohibited and will result in dismissal and criminal prosecution.

8. Staff members shall not use insults or sarcasm against students as a method of forcing compliance with requirements or expectations.
9. Staff members shall maintain a reasonable standard of care for the supervision, control, and protection of students commensurate with their assigned duties and responsibilities.
10. Staff members shall not send students on personal errands.
11. Staff members shall, pursuant to law and Board policy, immediately report any suspected signs of child abuse or neglect.
12. Staff members shall not attempt to counsel, assess, diagnose or treat a student's personal problem relating to sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental or physical health and/or family relationships but instead, should refer the student to appropriate school personnel or agency for assistance, pursuant to law and Board policy.
13. Staff members shall not disclose information concerning a student, other than directory information, to any person not authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning assessments, ability scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health and/or family background. **(For additional information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GABB.)**

STUDENT SUPERVISION

To the extent reasonably possible, all students should be supervised at all times throughout the school day from arrival on campus until departure at the end of the day. Nothing herein removes the discretion allowed to principals, teachers, resource officers and administrators to implement this policy.

1. Staff will be on duty during the school day to see all students as they arrive and leave campus, either by bus, car, or on foot. If you are assigned a duty post and are unable to be there, you must notify your immediate supervisor in advance so a replacement can be assigned to cover your post.
2. Staff will be on duty in the hallway and teachers will be standing at the doorway of their classroom; observing the students as they enter the classroom.
3. Students will only be allowed out of class for emergency or valid reasons. Usually only one student shall be allowed to leave the classroom at a time. All students will be required to carry a hall pass when they are given permission to leave for an emergency or valid reason. Exception: elementary campuses may routinely allow students to leave in pairs, but students must carry a note with them from the teacher.
4. During class periods staff will be assigned to be in hallways checking to ensure that all students not in class have hall passes and are going where they are supposed to be. Students who are caught without a pass shall be escorted back to their class and reported to a school administrator. **Middle and High Schools only.**
5. All staff will be posted so as they are able to supervise the entire playground area.
6. At dismissal when the bell rings, staff will be on their assigned duty posts to supervise a safe and orderly departure from the building, the grounds, bus loading area, parent pickup area and student driver parking lot.

SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION TRAINING

The Board of Trustees of the Meridian Public School District recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and should be taken seriously. It is the policy of this school district that in-service training on suicide prevention education will be conducted for all newly employed school district employees.

The board establishes this policy in an effort to take positive steps toward reducing student suicide through:

1. **Prevention.** To provide in-service training to all newly employed school district employees with information about the recognition of the signs of suicidal behavior; including, but not limited to, early identification and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts along with steps for reporting students who they believe to be at an elevated risk for suicide.
2. **Intervention.** To take affirmative action when an immediate referral is warranted, such as when a student verbalizes about suicide, presents overt risk factors such as aggression or intoxication, the act of self-harm occurs, or a student self-refers and to understand the emergency procedures when a referral is made and to provide support for students.
3. **Postvention.** To respond to suicide or suicide attempt, utilizing the district's crisis response, documentation, and reporting procedures.

Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, the school district shall conduct, every two (2) years, refresher training on mental health and suicide prevention for all school employees and personnel, including all cafeteria workers, custodians, teachers, and administrators. This training shall be in connection with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. The district shall report completion of the training to the State Department of Education. **(For more information, refer to MPSD Board Policy GADAC.)**

TECHNOLOGY WORK ORDERS

All requests for technology assistance must be submitted via email to TechnologyTechnology. Tickets will be assigned to the appropriate technician and prioritized.

Appendix

Appendix A: Employee Assistance Program Flier

Appendix B: Internet Acceptable Usage Policy

Appendix C: Mississippi Code of Ethics for Educators

Appendix D: MPSD Complaint Form



WEEMS COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER



Main Center, Meridian:

1415 College Dr. | 601-483-4821

Division of Children & Youth, Meridian:

1929 23rd Ave. | 601-482-7377

Bay Springs:

9 N. Second St. | 601-764-2201

Carthage:

529 East main St. | 601-267-3551

Decatur:

92 South 6th Ave. | 601-635-3342

DeKalb:

110 Hopper Ave. | 601-743-5616

Forest:

1514 Homewood Rd. | 601-469-2211

Philadelphia:

1011 Posey Ave. | 601-656-3451

Quitman:

100 Park Place | 601-776-6051

Raleigh:

355 Hwy. 37 South | 601-782-9461

APPENDIX B

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES

2026–2027 School Year

The operation of the Meridian Public School District (MPSD) network is guided by policies set forth by the MPSD Board of Trustees, district administration, the Mississippi Department of Education, and all applicable local, state, and Federal laws. This Acceptable Use Policy does not list every policy or law but sets forth some specific policies particular to the Meridian Public School District.

The goals of this policy are to:

- Ensure secure and professional technology use in educational environments.
- Protect student privacy and confidential information.
- Maintain network security and system integrity.
- Support effective teaching and administrative functions.
- Model appropriate digital citizenship for students.

A.1 TECHNOLOGIES COVERED

MPSD provides technology to employees, which may include but is not limited to internet access and wireless networks, desktop and mobile computers, assistive technology devices, Chromebooks, online collaboration platforms, email and communication tools, educational software and applications, cloud storage services, virtual meeting platforms, learning management systems, student information systems, and administrative and financial systems.

The Acceptable Use Policy applies to district-owned technology equipment, MPSD network and internet connection, personal devices accessing MPSD networks, district-owned devices used off-campus, any technology used during school functions, travel, or events, and all current and future technologies adopted by the district.

A.2 MONITORING AND PRIVACY

The MPSD reserves the right to review, monitor, and restrict any activity conducted on district-owned or district-connected devices, networks, cloud services, and applications.

If an employee uses a personally owned device to access district technology or conduct district business, he/she shall abide by all applicable Board policies, administrative regulations, and this Acceptable Use Agreement. Any such use of a personally owned device may subject the device's contents and any communications sent or received on it to disclosure pursuant to a lawful subpoena or public records request.

A.3 DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

The MPSD disclaims all liability for the content of the material to which an employee may have access on the internet and for any damages suffered as a result of the employee's internet use. The MPSD makes no guarantee that the functions or services provided by its internet access will be free of errors or defects. The MPSD shall not be responsible for:

- Any damages an employee may suffer, including, but not limited to, loss of data or interruption of services.
-

- The accuracy or quality of information obtained from or stored on any of its networks or client systems.
- Financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the systems.
- Any actions or obligations of an employee while accessing the internet or systems outside of MPSD oversight.
- Third-party service failures or security breaches beyond the district's control.

A.4 CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY VIOLATION(S)

Any district staff, including contract services, who violate any policy, regulation, or law regarding use of the district network will be identified, and corrective and/or punitive actions will be taken.

All users of the district network are required to report violations or misconduct. Users who fail to report violations may be subject to the same disciplinary actions as those who violate the policy.

While the district takes steps to protect users from inappropriate material, makes every attempt to intercept unlawful and malicious actions from affecting users, and makes every effort to safeguard users, no system is perfect. Those risks must be recognized and accepted by users who sign the Acceptable Use Policy Statement of Assurance.

A.5 CYBER SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Employees are expected to follow and adhere to security responsibilities, including but not limited to:

- Using strong, unique passwords for all MPSD accounts.
- Enabling multi-factor authentication where available.
- Keeping systems updated with the latest security patches.
- Reporting suspicious activities or potential security threats immediately.
- Participating in all required cybersecurity training.
- Handling sensitive data securely.

Password Standard: MPSD passwords must be at least 12 characters long. Never share passwords or login credentials with others. Passwords must be changed immediately following a security incident.

Highly sensitive data includes:

- Student records and personally identifiable information (PII).
- Employee personal records and health information.
- Financial and banking information.
- Legal documents and privileged communications.

Highly sensitive data should be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and care.

A.6 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Employees are expected to use artificial intelligence tools responsibly and ethically in accordance with state and federal laws and the MDE Code of Ethics. Employees who violate the Use of Artificial Intelligence Board Policy (EFC) will be subject to discipline.

Approved Use: MPSD employees should only use approved AI platforms. Acceptable use of AI includes, but is not limited to, lesson-planning assistance, administrative task automation, and professional development.

Prohibited Use: Prohibited use of AI includes, but is not limited to, the complete automation of grading without teacher review, any use that violates student privacy or FERPA, and the creation of false communications.

A.7 FILTERING

MPSD uses advanced Content and SPAM Filters. MPSD complies with the regulations of CIPA, the Children's Internet Protection Act, to provide internet content filtering services for students. Filtering services are a means of protection from objectionable sites but cannot provide 100% protection. Therefore, MPSD provides no guarantees but will attempt to protect employees from accessing such objectionable internet sites. In the event the inappropriate material is accessible, MPSD will not be held liable.

All inappropriate hits are logged along with the date/time and the IP address of the workstation making the request.

Attempts to bypass the school Internet filter violate this acceptable use policy and will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include denial of access to technology, suspension, termination of employment, or other remedies applicable under school board policy and state or federal law.

A.8 DISTRICT-ISSUED DEVICES

MPSD provides employees with devices in order to effectively complete daily tasks. MPSD devices are not intended for personal use. It is the employee's responsibility to keep the device in good working order and free of damage. If a device is lost or stolen, the employee should immediately notify the school/department's administration/director. If the device is lost or stolen due to irresponsible behavior, the employee will be responsible for restitution costs. If a device is damaged, the employee may be responsible for repair costs.

A.9 SCHOOL DISTRICT OWNERSHIP

All data transferred over the district network or stored on any district-owned equipment/media is the property of the MPSD.

Any device assigned to personnel by the MPSD remains the property of the MPSD. Downloading apps for personal use on assigned devices is discouraged, even if the apps are paid for by the personnel assigned the device. Personnel with assigned devices are encouraged to use district vouchers or other purchasing routes to acquire academic or educational apps. The district is not responsible for the loss of apps purchased by personnel from their own funds.

A.10 EMAIL

MPSD provides employees with email accounts for school-related communication. MPSD employees are not to use MPSD email accounts for personal use.

Employees with provided email accounts should use these accounts with care. Employees should verify sender identity before responding to sensitive requests. Never share your login credentials via email. Report phishing attempts and suspicious emails immediately.

Any email communications/correspondence conducted as a representative of the MPSD must be conducted within the district's email system or School Status. These communications include, but are not limited to, employee-to-parent, employee-to-student, and employee-to-employee.

A.11 DOCUMENT RETENTION

All documents created and shared with others, inside or outside the district, in the course of conducting district business should be saved. Documents include, but are not limited to, word processing documents, text files, slideshows, spreadsheets, graphics/images, pictures, and movies. Document retention should include two locations. This can be the device's hard drive, an external hard drive, cloud storage, or jump drives.

A.12 CLOUD SERVICES AND COLLABORATION

MPSD is a Google Workspace for Education district. Google Drive should be used for work-related files only. Users should regularly review and clean up shared files and folders. Users should regularly review user permissions on shared files and folders.

A.13 DISTRICT PROGRAM ACCESS

When an employee leaves or retires from the district, access to district programs is suspended on the employee's last day of employment. This access includes district email and other Google Apps products.

A.14 SCHOOL/PARENT & STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE/PARENT & STUDENT COMMUNICATION

School/parent and employee/parent communication play a vital role in a student's success in school. Technology allows this communication to occur 24/7. Communication between schools, employees, parents, and students must occur through approved channels. These outlets include but are not limited to district email, Canvas, Google Classroom, and School Status. The use of personal cell phone text messaging, personal social media messaging, and non-district-approved platforms is not an approved method for school/parent & student and employee/parent & student communication.

A.15 WEBSITE USE AS A DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

All teacher and organizational websites must operate within MPSD's approved academic portals. These portals include Parent Square and Google. A third-party company cannot host a teacher or organization website. Individual teachers cannot use Facebook and/or other social media platforms as an academic portal.

A.16 SOCIAL MEDIA USE AS A DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

MPSD employees, organizations, teams, or groups cannot create social media accounts that represent the district without written permission from the Director of Technology.

A.17 SOCIAL MEDIA

Related Board Policy: Refer to Board Policy GABBA: Use of Social Media by Teachers/Staff.

Accessing academic and professional networking during school hours is allowed. Personal social networking is prohibited during school hours. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat, and TikTok.

Those employees who choose to utilize academic/professional and personal social networking should do so responsibly. Disclosure of confidential and highly sensitive information is prohibited, regardless of when such disclosure occurs.

MPSD employees may post student photos on approved district/school/classroom “public” websites and social media outlets. The list of approved “public” websites and social media outlets is located on the MPSD website and in the Director of Technology’s office. MPSD employees should not post PreK-12 students on personal social media outlets.

Inappropriate conduct on social networking sites could adversely affect an employee’s ability to carry out job responsibilities. Employees are prohibited from posting on any site inappropriate data, documents, photos, or information that might disrupt normal school operations. Fraternization, via social media, between employees and current PreK-12 students is prohibited.

The school district, schools, and select organizations have Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) accounts that are monitored and maintained by the Information Systems Department and school/department administrators/designees. These social media outlets are meant to be a place for current students, parents, alumni, staff, and other district stakeholders to interact, ask questions, and discuss topics relevant to MPSD.

A.18 STUDENT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Student records should only be accessed for legitimate educational purposes. Never share your PowerSchool login credentials or our system information systems platform. Use district communication tools only for student-related discussions. Never use personal communication tools.

All educational platforms should be district-approved for student or employee use. Never share a student’s personal identifiable information on a non-approved platform.

Annual Requirement: MPSD employees are required to complete FERPA training annually.

A.19 GUIDELINE / PROCEDURE CHANGES

The MPSD reserves the right to change these guidelines/procedures at any time.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS POLICY

Contact Tim Boutwell, Director of Technology, at tboutwell@mpsconnect.org

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 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.

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

- 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.



MISSISSIPPI EDUCATOR



CODE OF ETHICS STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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 which 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).



For more information:

Mississippi Department of Education

359 North West Street

Jackson, MS 39201

601-359-3513

www.mde.k12.ms.us

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 establish 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 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 relationship 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.

5. 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 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.

MPSD Complaint and/or Grievance Form			
Complainant			Date
Home Address		City	State
Home Phone		Date of disagreement	
The disagreement involving the work situation because the complainant(s) believes that an injustice has been done because of: (circle one of the following) <i>(Policies dictated by law are not included in this application)</i> 1. a lack of a policy 2. a policy is unfair 3. a deviation from or misapplication of a policy 4. interpretation of a policy 5. non-compliance with state or federal law 6. Other _____			
Where and when did the incident/disagreement occur?			
Describe details of the incident as clearly as possible. Attach additional pages as necessary.			
Did anyone witness the incident?	Yes	No	If yes, name the witness(es):
What was your reaction to the incident?			
How do you feel this grievance should be resolved?			
I assert that all of the information presented is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge. _____ <i>Signature of complainant</i>			Date: