Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in July	**School Board Meetings**	**1.400**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds: **1.400**	Issued: **06/12/23; 12/14/20; 07/08/13; 09/28/09**

The Board will transact all business at official meetings that may be either regular or special.

Every meeting of the Board shall be open to the public, except for those meetings in which the law allows closed sessions.[1] Open meetings will be physically accessible to all students, employees, and interested citizens.[2]

The Board may restrict the recording of board meetings via camera, camcorder, or other photographic equipment when such recording creates a threat to public safety and welfare or impedes the conducting of efficient and orderly public meetings.[3]

REGULAR MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Board shall be held on the first Monday of each month.

In instances when any regular meeting date falls on a legal holiday, the meeting shall be rescheduled by the Chair with approval by a majority vote of the school board members.

The School Board Chair has the discretion to change a School Board meeting date with the approval of a majority vote of School Board members.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Board shall hold such special meetings as necessary to transact the business of the Board. Such meetings shall be called by the Chair whenever, in the Chair's judgment, the interests of the schools require it or when requested to do so by a majority of the Board.[4]

Only business related to the call of the meeting and details related to agenda items shall be discussed or transacted by the Board at a special meeting.

ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE[5]

Absent board members may attend a regular or special meeting by electronic means for certain qualifying reasons subject to the following requirements:

1. A quorum of the Board shall be physically present at the meeting in order for any board member to attend electronically, except in the case of inclement weather or natural disasters (permitted for a maximum of three times per year);

2. Any board member wishing to participate electronically shall do so using technology that allows the Chair to visually identify the board member; and

3. The responsibility for the connection lies with the board member wishing to participate electronically. No more than three (3) attempts to connect shall be made unless the Board chooses to make additional attempts.

Work-Related Absence

A board member may attend a meeting by electronic means if out of the county due to work; however, he/she may only participate electronically two (2) times per year for this reason. The board member shall give the Chair and Director of Schools at least five (5) days' notice prior to the meeting of the board member's intention to participate electronically.

Sickness or Period of Convalescence

A board member may attend a meeting by electronic means if sick or in a period of convalescence on the advice of a healthcare professional; however, he/she may only participate electronically three (3) times per year for this reason.

Inclement Weather or Natural Disaster

A board member may attend a meeting by electronic means due to inclement weather or natural disaster if the schools in the school district are closed; however, he/she may only participate electronically three (3) times per year for this reason.

Family Emergency

A board member may attend a meeting by electronic means if there is a family emergency that prevents him/her from attending in person. The absence shall be due to the hospitalization of the board member or the death or hospitalization of the member's spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law. The board member may only participate electronically two (2) times per year for this reason.

Military Service

A board member may attend a meeting by electronic means if out of the county due to military service. The board member may participate electronically as often as he/she is able to do so.

Legal References

1. TCA 8-44-102; TCA 49-6-804(b)
2. 28 CFR § 36.201(a); 28 CFR § 36.202
3. Tenn. Att'y Gen. Op. No. 95-126 (December 28, 1995)
4. TCA 49-2-202(c)(1)
5. TCA 49-2-203(c); Public Acts of 2023, Chapter No. 350

Cross References

School Board Legal Status and Authority 1.100
Board Committees 1.300
Notification of Meetings 1.402
Appearances Before the Board 1.404
Section 504 and ADA Grievance Procedures 1.802

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in November	**Interscholastic Athletics**	**4.301**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **07/14/25; 07/18/24; 08/09/21; 11/13/17; 01/12/09**

General

No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person, or otherwise be discriminated against in any athletic program of the school. Equal athletic opportunities shall be provided for members of both sexes.[1]

Sex shall be defined as the "immutable characteristics of the person's reproductive system that identify the person as male or female, as determined by anatomy and genetics existing at the time of birth".[2] Student athletes shall only be allowed to participate in athletic activities or events that align with the student's sex indicated on his/her original birth certificate.[3] The Director of Schools/designee shall require the parent/guardian to provide the student's original birth certificate prior to participation in any interscholastic athletics. If the original birth certificate is not available or does not indicate the student's sex at the time of birth, the parent/guardian shall provide medical documentation showing evidence of the student's sex at birth.

Interscholastic athletics shall be administered as a part of the regular school program and shall be the principal's responsibility. Principals shall ensure that school regulations regarding participation in a sport are reasonable. Athletic schedules shall be filed in each principal's office. The principal/designee shall accompany an athletic team on trips. Transportation of teams to athletic games is approved by the Board, provided the team's school reimburses the Board for mileage.

Bylaws of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association shall regulate the operation and control of athletics.[3] The Director of Schools shall develop a code of conduct for all coaches to follow in order to ensure the health and safety of athletes.[4]

INSURANCE & PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

In the event that the school's insurance provider does not extend coverage to an athlete, the athlete shall provide proof of independently secured catastrophic coverage and liability coverage, with the school district as a named insured, of not less than the limits set forth in state law.[5] It shall be the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide health and hospitalization insurance for all students participating in interscholastic athletics.

Prior to participation in interscholastic athletics, every student shall complete an annual physical examination.[6] The parent(s)/guardian(s) of each student shall be responsible for covering the cost of the examination, and these records shall be on file in the principal's office.

SCHEDULING CONFLICTS

No principal or teacher shall dismiss his/her school or any group of students for the purpose of attending the practice of any interscholastic sport during the school day without written permission from the Board.[7] This does not prevent regular physical training lessons in the daily school program.

Students shall not be required to attend a school athletic event, or event related to participation on a school athletic team, if the event is on an official school holiday, observed day of worship, or religious holiday. The student's parent/guardian shall notify the coach in writing three (3) full school days prior to the event.[8]

SEVERE WEATHER[4]

Severe weather is any type of weather that could impede the safety of any athlete by compromising the playing conditions of the interscholastic sport. Severe weather includes, but is not limited to, thunder, lightning, and extreme temperatures. When severe weather is forecasted, suspension of play shall be discussed with all players, coaches, and officials, if applicable.

All coaches who oversee or participate in outdoor training, practice, or competition shall annually complete a heat illness prevention course approved by the Tennessee Department of Health as well as receive training on activity modifications based on environmental conditions.

PROHIBITION AGAINST HAZING

Coaches, employees, and volunteers of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone, or tolerate hazing activities.[9]

HOME SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION[10]

Home school students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with TSSAA or TMSAA guidelines. If a school is not a member with these organizations, home school students that are zoned for the school shall be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics to the same extent as other students.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION[11]

Virtual school students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with TSSAA or TMSAA guidelines. If a school is not a member with these organizations, virtual school students that are zoned for the school shall be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics to the same extent as other students.

PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION[12]

While students from private schools are permitted to try out for interscholastic athletics teams, this does not guarantee that they will make the team. As with all students, those from other schools shall only be admitted to the team subject to the independent decision of the coach or other relevant school official.

Public Schools with TSSAA or TMSSAA Membership

Private school students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with TSSAA or TMSAA guidelines subject to the following conditions. These students must:

- Attend a private school that is not a member with TSSAA or TMSAA and serves fewer than two-hundred (200) students in grades six through eight (6-8) or fewer than two hundred students in grades nine through twelve (9-12);
- Satisfy the eligibility requirements established by TSSAA or TMSAA; and
- Reside within the geographic boundaries of the district.

These students shall be permitted to participate in athletic programs not offered by the private school, but only in the middle or high school that they are zoned to attend.

Public Schools without TSSAA or TMSSAA Membership

If a school is not a member with these organizations and offers its students the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletic competition, private school students that are zoned for the school shall be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics to the same extent as other students.

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Legal References

1. 34 CFR § 106.41; 20 USCA § 1681 *et seq.*
2. TCA 49-6-310(a)
3. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.08(1)
4. TCA 49-6-3601
5. TCA 29-20-403
6. 20 USCA § 1232h(c); TRR/MS 0520-01-13-.01(1)(a)
7. TCA 49-6-1002(a)
8. TCA 49-6-1002(c)
9. TCA 49-2-120
10. TCA 49-6-3050(e)(1)(B)
11. Public Acts of 2025, Chapter No. 173
12. Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 893

Cross References

Special Use of School Vehicles 3.402
Student Insurance Program 3.601
Extracurricular Activities 4.300
Attendance 6.200

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in December	**Graduation Requirements**	**4.605**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **09/08/25; 08/09/21 ; 06/08/20; 08/12/19; 03/12/18; 07/08/13; 04/07/03**

General

The program of studies shall include areas required by the State Board of Education.

Before high school graduation, every student shall:[1]

1. Achieve the specified twenty-two (22) units of credit;

2. Take the required end-of-course exams;

3. Have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct;

4. Take the ACT or SAT prior to graduation;[2] and

5. Pass a United States civics test.[3]

6. In addition to the state-mandated units of credit, students attending Houston County High School must complete at least six (6) additional electives (for a total of 28 credits) to meet local graduation requirements. The Director of Schools may waive one or more of the six (6) additional electives on a case-by-case basis based on student hardship or need.

If a middle school student successfully completes any of the State Board-required high school credits, as evidence by a passing grade in the course prior to grade nine (9), the student shall receive graduation credit for that coursework.[4]

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS[5]

Special education students who earn the prescribed twenty-two (22) credit minimum shall be awarded a regular high school diploma.

Students who have received the below diplomas shall continue to make progress toward a regular high school diploma until the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22) years old.

Special Education Diploma

A special education diploma shall be awarded to students who have not met the requirements for a regular high school diploma but have:[6]

1. Completed four (4) years of high school;

2. Made satisfactory progress on their IEP; and

3. Maintained satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.

Occupational Diploma

Special education students who do not meet the requirements for a regular high school diploma may be awarded an occupational diploma if the student has:[1,4]

1. Completed at least four (4) years of high school;

2. Made satisfactory progress on their IEP;

3. Maintained satisfactory records of attendance and conduct;

4. Completed the occupational diploma Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA); and

5. Has two (2) years of paid or non-paid work experience.

The decision to attain an occupational diploma shall be made at the conclusion of the student's 10th grade year or two (2) academic years prior to the expected graduation date.

Alternate Academic Diploma

Special education students who do not meet the requirements for a regular high school diploma may be awarded an alternate academic diploma if the student has:[5]

1. Completed at least four (4) years of high school;

2. Participated in the high school alternate assessment;

3. Earned the prescribed twenty-two (22) credit minimum;

4. Made satisfactory progress on their IEP;

5. Maintained satisfactory records of attendance and conduct; and

6. Completed a transition assessment that measures postsecondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community involvement.

STUDENT LOAD

All full-time students in grades 9-12 shall be enrolled each semester in subjects that produce a minimum of five (5) units of credit for graduation per year. Students with hardships and gifted students may appeal this requirement to the Director of Schools and then to the Board.[7]

EARLY GRADUATION[8]

High school students shall be permitted to complete an early graduation program. Students intending to graduate early shall inform the school principal of this intent prior to the beginning of 9th grade or as soon thereafter as the intent is known.

In order to graduate early, students shall meet the following requirements:

1. Earn the required seventeen (17) credits;
2. Achieve a benchmark score for each required end-of-course exam;
3. Attain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.2 on a 4.0 scale;
4. Meet the minimum ACT, SAT, or Classic Learning Test (CLT) benchmark score;
5. Obtain a qualifying benchmark score on a world language proficiency assessment; and
6. Complete at least two (2) types of the following courses:
    a. AP (Advanced Placement);
    b. IB (International Baccalaureate);
    c. Dual enrollment; or
    d. Dual credit.

The Director of Schools/designee shall develop administrative procedures to ensure that the early graduation program is conducted in accordance with state law, including reporting the total number of requests to graduate early to the TN Department of Education[9].

Legal References

1. TCA 49-6-6001; State Board of Education Policy 2.103; TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.06
2. TCA 49-6-6001(b); State Board of Education Policy 2.103
3. TCA 49-6-408; State Board of Education Policy 2.103
4. State Board of Education Policy 2.102
5. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.06; State Board of Education Policy 2.103
6. TCA 49-6-6005; State Board of Education Policy 2.103
7. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.06(19)
8. TCA 49-6-8103; State Board of Education Policy 2.103; Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 912
9. Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 1040

Cross References

Class Size Ratios 4.201
Alternative Credit Options 4.209
Honor Roll, Awards, & Class Ranking 4.602

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in January	**Compensation Guides & Contracts**	**5.110**	**8/10/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **5/13/24**

General

Certified personnel shall make a written contract at a fixed annual salary before initially entering upon their duties.[1]

The Director of Schools shall establish the salary rating of all personnel and shall recommend the salary schedule to the Board for its approval.[2]

Contracts for full-time certified personnel shall provide the following:[3]

1. A minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) working days;

2. A minimum of five (5) days for in-service education;

3. Ten (10) holidays; and

4. Five (5) days as designated by the Board (teachers shall use one (1) day for parent-teacher conferences).

The school calendar adopted by the Board each year shall become part of all certified personnel contracts.

Salaries and supplements may be paid from revenue derived from sources other than taxes, provided the revenue is deposited with and salaries paid through the Board. This includes donations or contributions from individual, civic, or other non-school related sources of funds from individual school activity funds, such as gate receipts and concessions.[1,4]

ACCRUED LEAVE & BENEFICIARIES[5]

A deceased employee's estate or designated beneficiary shall be paid the value of any unused accumulated leave. Unless an employee designates differently, the beneficiary shall be the same as the beneficiary designed for receipt of retirement benefits with the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-2-203(a)(1); TCA 49-5-408
2. TCA 49-5-402
3. TCA 49-6-3004
4. TCA 49-6-2006(a)

Cross References

School Calendar 1.800
Revenues 2.400
Payroll 2.802
Application and Employment 5.106

5. TCA 49-5-717; Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 909

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in January	**Separation Practices for Tenured Teachers**	**5.200**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds: **5.1012**	Issued: **05/11/26; 08/08/22; 09/27/21; 12/11/17; 07/08/13**

ALLEGATIONS REQUIRING TEMPORARY REMOVAL FROM DUTY

If an investigation of an employee's conduct is required, the Director of Schools shall determine whether to temporarily modify the employee's work status based on concerns for safety or to minimize disruption to the educational environment. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Reassignment to alternate duties;
- Temporary removal from the school setting.

Such action shall not be considered disciplinary in nature but rather a precautionary measure until a determination can be made regarding an appropriate return to duties, or the imposition of disciplinary action, which could include suspension without pay.

SUSPENSION PENDING AN INVESTIGATION[1]

The Director of Schools may suspend a teacher at any time that may seem necessary, pending investigation, or final disposition of a case before the Board or an appeal. If the matter under investigation is not the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation or a Department of Children's Services investigation, and if no charges for dismissal have been made, a suspension pending investigation shall not exceed ninety (90) days in duration. Under no circumstances shall the Director of Schools suspend a teacher with pay. If vindicated or reinstated, the teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension.

SUSPENSION OF THREE DAYS OR LESS[2,3]

The Director of Schools/designee may suspend a teacher for incompetence, inefficiency, neglect of duty, unprofessional conduct, and insubordination. Before a teacher is suspended, he/she shall be: (1) provided with written notice, including the reasons for the suspension along with an explanation of the evidence; (2) given an opportunity to respond to the Director of Schools at a conference, if requested within five (5) days; and (3) given a written decision of the suspension within ten (10) days. Both parties may be represented by counsel at the conference, which shall be recorded.

Under no circumstances shall a Director of Schools suspend a tenured teacher with pay. If reinstated, the tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension unless suspension without pay is deemed to be an appropriate penalty.

DISMISSAL OR SUSPENSION GREATER THAN THREE DAYS[4]

When a tenured teacher is charged with offenses that may justify dismissal or a suspension greater than three (3) days, the charges shall be made in writing, specifically stating the offenses that are charged, and shall be signed by the party or parties making the charges.

If, in the opinion of the Board, the charges are of such nature as to warrant the dismissal or a suspension greater than three (3) days of the teacher, the Director of Schools shall give the teacher a written notice of this decision, a copy of the charges against the teacher, and a copy of a form provided by the Commissioner of Education advising the teacher of his/her legal duties, rights, and recourse.

A tenured teacher who has been given notice of charges against him/her may within thirty (30) days after receipt of notice give written notice to the Director of Schools of his/her request for a hearing.

The Director of Schools shall, within five (5) days after receipt of request, assign a hearing officer from the list maintained by the Board.

The Board shall maintain a list of qualified individuals who have indicated a willingness to act as impartial hearing officers as defined under Tennessee law.

The hearing officer shall notify the parties, or their attorney, of the officer's assignment and direct the parties or the attorneys for the parties, or both, to appear before the hearing officer for simplification of issues and the scheduling of the hearing. That hearing shall be set no later than thirty (30) days following receipt of the initial request for a hearing. In the discretion of the hearing officer, all or part of any prehearing conference may be conducted by telephone if each participant has an opportunity to participate, be heard, and to address proof and evidentiary concerns. The hearing officer is empowered to issue appropriate orders and to regulate the conduct of the proceedings.

Either party may appeal to the Board an adverse ruling by giving written notice of appeal within ten (10) working days of the hearing officer's delivery of the hearing officer's written findings and conclusions. The Director of Schools shall prepare a copy of the proceedings, including all transcripts and evidence, documentary or otherwise, and transmit the same to the Board within twenty (20) working days of the receipt of the notice of appeal.

The Board shall hear the appeal on the record, and no new evidence may be submitted by either party. The appealing party may appear before the Board to argue why the adverse ruling should be overturned. In no event should such argument last more than fifteen (15) minutes unless the Board votes to extend additional time. At the conclusion of the hearing, any member of the Board may vote to sustain the decision of the hearing officer, send the record back for additional evidence, revise the penalty, or reverse the decision. The Board shall render its decision within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the hearing. In the event that the decision of the Board is appealed to the chancery court, the Board shall transmit the entire record prepared by the Director of Schools and reviewed by the Board to the chancery court for its review.

RESIGNATION

A teacher shall give the Director of Schools notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation. A teacher who fails to give such notice, in the absence of justifiable

extenuating circumstances, shall forfeit all tenure status. The Board may waive the thirty (30) days' notice requirement and permit a teacher to resign in good standing.[5]

The conditions under which it is permissible to break a contract with the Board are as follows:[6]

1. The incapacity on the part of the teacher to perform the contract as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the Board; or

2. The release by the Board of the teacher from the contract that the teacher has entered into with the Board.

Any teacher on leave shall notify the Director of Schools in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she has taken leave. Failure to render such notice may be considered a breach of contract.[7]

RETIREMENT

Retirement is a termination of services under conditions that will allow the teacher to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or Social Security benefits. Teachers eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system.

Central office personnel shall assist teachers in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to provide verification of eligibility in writing from the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to file for benefits.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-5-511(a)(3)
2. TCA 49-2-301(b)(1)(EE), TCA 49-5-512(d)
3. TCA 49-5-511(a)(2)
4. TCA 49-5-511; 512; 513
5. TCA 49-5-508(a); TCA 49-5-411(b); Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 898
6. TCA 49-5-508(c)
7. TCA 49-5-706

Cross References

Public Hearings 1.401
Teacher Tenure 5.117
Recommendations and File Transfers 5.203

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in January	**Separation Practices for Non-Tenured Teachers**	**5.201**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds: **5.1013**	Issued: **05/11/26; 08/08/22; 09/27/21; 12/11/17; 07/08/13**

ALLEGATIONS REQUIRING TEMPORARY REMOVAL FROM DUTY

If an investigation of an employee's conduct is required, the Director of Schools shall determine whether to temporarily modify the employee's work status based on concerns for safety or to minimize disruption to the educational environment. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Reassignment to alternate duties;
- Temporary removal from the school setting.

Such action shall not be considered disciplinary in nature but rather a precautionary measure until a determination can be made regarding an appropriate return to duties, or the imposition of disciplinary action, which could include suspension without pay.

SUSPENSION PENDING AN INVESTIGATION[1]

The Director of Schools may suspend a teacher at any time that may seem necessary, pending investigation, or final disposition of a case before the Board or an appeal. If the matter under investigation is not the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation or a Department of Children's Services investigation, and if no charges for dismissal have been made, a suspension pending investigation shall not exceed ninety (90) days in duration. Under no circumstances shall the Director of Schools suspend a non-tenured teacher with pay if there is a pending investigation. If reinstated, the non-tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension.

SUSPENSION OF THREE DAYS OR LESS[2]

The Director of Schools/designee may suspend a teacher for incompetence, inefficiency, neglect of duty, unprofessional conduct, and insubordination. Before a teacher is suspended, he/she shall be: (1) provided with written notice, including the reasons for the suspension along with an explanation of the evidence; (2) given an opportunity to respond to the Director of Schools at a recorded conference, if requested within five (5) days; and (3) given a written decision of the suspension within ten (10) days. Both parties may be represented by counsel at the conference, which shall be recorded.

Under no circumstances shall the Director of Schools suspend a non-tenured teacher with pay. If reinstated, the non-tenured teacher shall be paid full salary for the period of suspension unless suspension without pay is deemed to be an appropriate penalty.

DISMISSAL OR SUSPENSION GREATER THAN THREE DAYS[2]

The Director of Schools may dismiss or suspend for more than three (3) days any non-tenured teacher during the contract year for incompetence, inefficiency, insubordination, improper conduct, or neglect of duty after giving the non-tenured teacher, in writing, due notice of the charges.

The Director of Schools shall give the non-tenured teacher an opportunity for a full and complete hearing before an impartial hearing officer.

The Board will appoint an impartial hearing officer to conduct such hearings. The hearing officer will hear the case, and the teacher shall have the right to:

1. Be represented by counsel;

2. Call and subpoena witnesses;

3. Examine all witnesses; and

4. Require that all testimony be given under oath.

Factual findings and decisions in all dismissal cases shall be reduced to written form and delivered to the affected teacher within ten (10) working days following the close of the hearing. The teacher may appeal the decision to the Board within ten (10) working days of the hearing officer rendering the written decision to the teacher. Written notice of appeal to the Board shall be given to the Director of Schools. Within twenty (20) working days of receipt of notice, the Director of Schools shall prepare a copy of the proceedings, including all transcripts and evidence, documentary or otherwise, and provide a copy to the Board.

The Director of Schools shall also have the right to appeal any adverse ruling by the hearing officer in the same manner as the non-tenured teacher.

The Board shall hear the appeal. No new evidence shall be introduced. The non-tenured teacher may appear in person or be represented by counsel and argue why the decision should be modified or reversed. The Board shall take one of the following actions:

1. Sustain the decision;

2. Send the record back if additional evidence is necessary; or

3. Revise the penalty or reverse the decision.

Before any decision to dismiss is made, a majority of the membership of the Board shall concur in sustaining the charges. The Board shall render a decision on the appeal within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the hearing.

Within twenty (20) working days after receipt of notice of the decision of the Board, either party may appeal to the chancery court in the county where the school district is located. The Board shall provide the entire record of the hearing to the court.

NONRENEWAL

Non-tenured teachers are subject to the same rules and regulations and are entitled to the privileges of employment enjoyed by tenured teachers except that they have no claim upon continuing employment or tenure protections.

The principal is responsible for discussing deficiencies as part of the evaluation process with the non-tenured teacher and providing assistance for overcoming these deficiencies.

The Director of Schools is under no obligation to re-employ non-tenured teachers at the end of their contract period. If the Director of Schools determines not to renew the contract of a non-tenured teacher, the following action shall be taken:

1. The Board shall be notified at the next regular board meeting; and
2. Written notice of non-renewal shall be sent to the teacher by certified mail, overnight carrier, or by email within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year.[3] If the reason for nonrenewal is due only to a loss of funding for the position, then the notice shall include a statement listing it as the cause for nonrenewal.[4]

RESIGNATION

A teacher shall give the Director of Schools notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation.[5] The Board may waive the thirty (30) days notice requirement and permit a teacher to resign in good standing.

The conditions under which it is permissible to break a contract with the Board are as follows:[6]

1. The incapacity on the part of the teacher to perform the contract as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the Board; or

2. The release by the Board of the teacher from the contract which the teacher has entered into with the Board.

Any teacher on leave shall notify the Director of Schools in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he/she has taken leave. Failure to render such notice may be considered a breach of contract.[7]

RETIREMENT

Retirement is a termination of services under conditions which will allow the teacher to draw benefits from retirement plans and/or Social Security benefits.

Teachers eligible for retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age according to the provisions of the retirement system. Central office personnel shall assist teachers in securing retirement benefits; however, it shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to provide verification of eligibility in writing from the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) to the central office. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher to file for benefits.

(Note: Nonrenewal of non-tenured teachers after the contract year is not suspension or dismissal and does NOT follow the suspension/dismissal guidelines outlined in this policy. Rather, nonrenewal of non-tenured teachers after the contract year follows the nonrenewal guidelines outlined in this policy.)

Legal References

1. TCA 49-5-511(a)(3)
2. TCA 49-2-301(b)(1)(EE); TCA 49-5-512
3. TCA 49-5-409
4. TCA 49-5-409(b)(2)
5. TCA 49-5-508
6. ; TCA 49-5-411(b); Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 898
7. TCA 49-5-411(a)
8. TCA 49-5-706
9. TCA 49-5-411(b)

Cross References

Public Hearings 1.401
Teacher Tenure 5.117
Recommendations and File Transfers 5.203

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in January	**Sick Leave**	**5.302**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **05/11/26; 06/10/19**

PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

Professional personnel shall earn one (1) day of sick leave for each month employed during the school year, and these days shall accumulate for an unlimited number of days.[1]

Sick leave shall be defined as: illness of a teacher from natural causes or accident, quarantine, or illness or death of a member of the immediate family of a teacher, including the teacher's wife or husband, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law.[2]

A signed statement listing the cause of absence shall be provided by the employee on forms furnished by the Director of Schools and shall promptly be given to the immediate supervisor in support of all claims for sick leave pay. A falsified statement shall be grounds for dismissal. An employee absent for three (3) consecutive working days shall submit a doctor's statement verifying illness or injury of the employee or immediate family member.

Frequent use and/or suspected misuse of sick leave by an employee are sufficient grounds for requiring a physician’s certificate stating the reason for absence.

Documentation from a physician may be required in support of any claim for sick leave pay.

The principal shall notify the Director of Schools' office at once if an employee is sick beyond the limit of his/her sick leave accumulation.

Permanent, cumulative sick leave records for each active professional employee shall be kept in the Director of Schools' office.

A teacher, upon employment, may transfer his/her accumulated sick leave from another Tennessee school district, provided that the Director of Schools of the district in which the accumulated leave was held provides notarized verification.[3]

SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Support personnel shall earn one (1) day of sick leave for each month an employee is employed.

At the termination of the employment of any employee, all unused sick leave accumulated by the employee shall be forfeited.

The immediate supervisor may require documentation from a physician stating the reason for absence.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-5-710(a)(1)
2. Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 1022
3. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.04(2)
4. TCA 49-5-710(a)(5)
5. TCA 49-5-811
6. TCA 49-5-803
7. TCA 49-5-804; TCA 49-5-805
8. TCA 49-5-807
9. TCA 49-5-808(j), (m)
10. TCA 49-5-806(d)
11. TCA 49-5-801 *et seq.*

Cross References

Workers' Compensation 3.602
Orientation and Probation 5.107
Short Term Leaves of Absence 5.300
Family and Medical Leave 5.305
Physical Assault Leave 5.307

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in January	**Personal and Professional Leave**	**5.303**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **07/14/25; 07/12/21; 06/10/19**

Professional employees shall earn personal and professional leave at the rate of two (2) days for each half-year employed for a total of four (4) days per year. Any personal and professional leave remaining unused at the end of a year shall be credited to sick leave.[1]

Non-Certified Employees

Non-Certified employees receive two (2) personal leave days a year. A maximum of two (2) unused personal leave days will be credited to the employee's sick leave at the end of each year.

If, at the termination of services, any employee has been absent for more days than leave has been earned, an amount sufficient to cover the excess days used shall be deducted from the employee's final salary payment.[2]

PERSONAL LEAVE

Subject to the following conditions, personal leave may be taken at the discretion of the employee:

1. Except in an emergency, each employee shall give the principal at least three (3) days' notice in writing of intent to take leave;

2. The approval of the principal of the school shall be required:[3]

    a. If more than ten percent (10%) of the teachers in any given school request its use on the same day;

    b. If requested during any prior established student examination period;

    c. If requested on the day immediately preceding or following a holiday or vacation period;

    d. If personal leave is requested for days scheduled for professional development or in-service training, according to a school calendar adopted by the Board prior to the commencement of the school year; or

    e. If personal leave is requested for days scheduled for parent-teacher conferences, according to a school calendar adopted by the Board prior to the commencement of the school year.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

Professional leave is a short, temporary absence for the purpose of attending workshops and other meetings relating to school business or serving on boards and commissions which meet during daytime hours when appointed by a mayor, city council, county executive, or county commission.[4] Requests for professional leave must be submitted five (5) days prior to the date of the leave.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-5-711(a); Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 1022; TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.04(3)
2. TCA 49-5-711(b)
3. TCA 49-5-711(c)(1)
4. TCA 49-5-205

Cross References

Short Term Leaves of Absence 5.300
Legislative Leave 5.309

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in March	**Admission of Suspended or Expelled Students**	**6.318**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **07/18/24; 08/08/22; 07/08/13**

STUDENT READMISSION TO DISTRICT[1]

The district may continue a disciplinary investigation of a student who withdraws from the district during the investigation. If the student later reenrolls in the district, then the disciplinary investigation and/or consequences shall resume.

STUDENT DISCSIPLINED IN ANOTHER DISTRICT

The Board may deny admission of any student (except those in state custody) who has been expelled or suspended from another school district in Tennessee or another state even though the student has established residency in the district in which he/she seeks enrollment.

After a request for enrollment is made, the Director of Schools shall investigate the facts surrounding the suspension or expulsion from the former school district. [3]The principal may ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing if their student has been adjudicated delinquent for an offense listed in TCA 49-6-3051 and submit any records to the Director of Schools.[2] Based on the results of the investigation, the Director of Schools shall make a recommendation to the Board to approve or deny the request.

The Board shall not deny enrollment beyond the length of the imposed suspension or expulsion.

A student may be dismissed if it is determined subsequent to the enrollment that the student has been suspended or expelled from the former school district.

Legal References

1. Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 760
2. TCA 49-6-3051(a)
3. TCA 49-6-3401(f); 20 USCA § 1232g(b)(4), (h)

Cross References

School Admissions 6.203
Student Records 6.600

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in April	**Students from Military Families**	**6.506**	**08/10/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **08/12/19**

General

The Director of Schools shall develop the necessary administrative procedures to ensure that students with parent(s)/guardian(s) in the armed services are identified and that appropriate and available services are provided for these students.[1]

RELOCATION OF MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER[2]

A student who does not currently reside within the school district shall be allowed to enroll if he/she is a dependent child of a service member who is being relocated to Tennessee on military orders. To be eligible for enrollment, the student will need to provide documentation that he/she will be a resident of the school district on relocation. This documentation must be provided to the school district within one (1) calendar year from the date of enrollment.

If the child of a military member enrolls per this policy and has an active 504 plan, IEP, or an individualized family service plan, then the district shall take the necessary steps to ensure that services are in place when the student enrolls.

ABSENCES

Principals shall provide students with a one (1) day excused absence prior to the deployment of and a one (1) day excused absence upon the return of a parent/guardian serving active military service.

Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of his/her parent/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up school work missed during these absences.[3]

REMAINING IN THE DISTRICT[4]

If a student is enrolled in grades eleven (11) through twelve (12) and is a dependent child of a service member who relocates on military orders resulting in the student no longer residing in the school district due to relocation, the student shall have the option to remain enrolled in the same high school until the student graduates or withdraws.

Legal References

1. State Board of Education Policy 2.103
2. TCA 49-6-3101; Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 834
3. TCA 49-6-3019
4. Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 834

Cross References

Attendance 6.200
School Admissions 6.203